

SNAFU

THE VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH INC



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2016

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ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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1000h—1500h MONDAY to THURSDAY

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 Warradale SA 5046

Eyre Peninsula
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Yorke Peninsula
 Chris Soar (Bublacowie) W

Executive Committee

Acting President: Mal Thiele JP
 Acting Vice President: Bob Ellis OAM
 Secretary: George Craig
 Treasurer: Robin Carbins

School Visits
 Bob Ellis OAM
 Peter Haran
 Ron List

Committee Members

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 Kim Brumfield JP Chris Norman
 Butch Daly JP Dee O'Brien
 Bill Denny AM BM Evelyn Pitt
 Fay Ellis Peter Rogers

Welfare Officers/ Hospital Visits

Dave Harding (Gawler) North
 Phil Lambert South and country

Padre

Malcolm Thomas OAM

Reception Officers

Monday: Karl Schwung
 Tuesday: Brenton Myall
 Wednesday: Phil Lambert, Mal Thiele JP
 Thursday: Keith Tainsh

Pension Officers and Advocates

John Gillman PO/A/W/MRCA
 Jim Leslie PO/W/MRCA
 Rick Wylie PO/W
 Alan Hook PO/W/MRCA/AAT
 war widow
 Craig Mitchell A

Committee meetings

Held on the Wednesday before the BBQ.
BBQ: Second Friday of each month

SNAFU Editor

James Woite

Email all correspondence to

editorofsnafu@gmail.com

Key-

PO = Pension Officer (VEA)
 W = Welfare
 A = Advocate
 MRCA = Military Rehab Compensation Act
 AAT = Administration Appeals Tribunal

Broken Hill

Des Kennedy (RSL) PO: 0412 458 054

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bob Ellis for all of his hard work and wisdom during my absence on the sick list.

Since taking over as the Acting President and Bob as Acting Vice President we both have attended a number of functions on behalf of the VVF and continue to do so.

To all of those who have been on the sick list I wish you a speedy recovery and hope to see you all around the Club in the not too distant future.

Since my last report we have had confirmation from the National Liberal party that we are to receive funding for Solar Panels to be installed at the Club and also at Camp Andrew Russell (C.A.R.) at Alawoona. This was something that came out of the blue so to speak, but which was met and discussed with gusto, by members of the Committee that were available at such short notice, and, as a result of these discussions money was to be made available for solar panels for C.A.R. in addition to the Club rooms, a total of \$15,000. I know it is an election promise and they sometimes do not eventuate, but there has been a press release to this effect and your committee is actively following this up.

Additionally, Bob Ellis has completed a grant which has been submitted to DVA and we wait hopefully for their approval. This grant will provide more equipment for C.A.R. which will make it more attractive for other veterans' groups like Soldier On and Trojans Trek to utilise the facility.

We have received advice that the annual BEST

Grant has been reduced markedly and this will have a big effect on our Pension Officers and Advocates over the next twelve months.

During my absence another Bunning's barbecue, along with a couple at Dan Murphy's, have been and gone, and I thank all those who helped out with these activities. They really do provide much needed funds for the Club.

On the 18th August, Vietnam Veterans Day, we held a service in memory of all those who served their country and made the supreme sacrifice during the Vietnam War. This year was the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and our service was held at 3.00pm which was about the time the battle began. We had approximately 30 people in attendance with 18 of those present placing a tribute of a single red or yellow rose in memory of each soldier who was killed during the battle. It was a moving service and our thanks go to Bob Ellis OAM, Eric Ciracovitch OAM, our Padre Malcolm Thomas OAM and Keith Harrison from the RSL for their contribution to the day.

Diona, who are using half of our car park at the moment, are expected to finish their work this month and will return the car park to what it was when they got it. Additionally, they will make a number of repairs to the curbing and the pavers. At the October monthly BBQ we expect the car park to be back to normal.

As my leg improves I hope to get back in to the swing of things and I hope to see you around the Club.

Mal Thiele
Acting President



SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL THE HONOURABLE SIR PETER COSGROVE AK MC (RETD)

On the occasion of Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day Service, Canberra, 18 August 2016

"Good morning.

Looking out upon you, I notice the large number of you who are Vietnam veterans. Being one of you, I think I'm entitled to say that we are a funny mob; perhaps even in some ways a bit weird - certainly we are 'different'!

Although some 50 to 60,000 of us served in South Vietnam, in the scheme of things in Australia's military history, that pales somewhat when compared to the numbers in the first and second AIF and indeed now is just about on par with the number of young men and women of the Army, Navy and Air Force who have served over the last 13 years in the Middle East.

So, why are we different?

Well for a start, not too many returned veterans in wars before or since were sometimes booed and occasionally even reviled by their own countrymen and women (by no means all of course!) - that will make you feel a little un-loved and fragile.

Secondly, in company with Australian warriors of all conflicts, we found it a little hard to convey the sorts of experiences, operating conditions of the war and the sorts of pressures so many of us endured.

The World War I and World War II veterans equally would have found it difficult to convey these sorts of understandings to civilian Australians, but at least they tended to have lots of fellow veterans generally close at hand.

They had these informal ways to perhaps purge or mitigate some of the traumas they had internalised. Our generation of veterans - and indeed the present day veterans who have left the services - cannot conjure up lots of nearby and available friends and neighbours who know what it was like.

So, not to put too fine a point on it, many Vietnam veterans felt alienated by the wider community from which they sprang, and in many cases by the government which sent them and even most regrettably by the ex-service organisations which did not seem to embrace them.

To me it always seemed that in this regard the most fortunate among the Vietnam veterans were those who served on for a while within the Defence Force.

For those who separated immediately upon return to Australia or very soon thereafter, classically the Nashos, they were pitchforked back into a largely unknowing and often uncaring society, in days where veteran services were somewhat rudimentary, especially for mental health care.

For those who continued in uniform, in the rough and ready way of the ranks of the military, people doing it tough adjusting back to ordinary service life in Australia were amongst friends and colleagues who knew what the pressures were like.

It was my impression that the Australian community started to understand that the political anti-war activism that was so strong and virulent in the late 60s and 70s had unintentionally marginalised and stigmatised Australians - who after all were doing the same sort of job as those wonderful men and women treated so reverently in the aftermath of the two great global conflicts.

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL THE HONOURABLE SIR PETER COSGROVE AK MC (RETD)

In the great national series of "welcome home" parades around Australia on 17 October 1987, the Australian community started to put things right.

Given that my own service spanned the next 'round' of conflicts, I can testify that the problems redressed in 1987 did not recur and it seems to me that the Australian people quite properly no longer conflate those who serve in uniform with the policies which direct their efforts.

Now I want to inject a reminder and a plea to those present senior citizens of the wider veterans' community, the Vietnam veterans: we are now all in our 60s and many up to 2 decades older.

Essentially we are about as old as were the World War I veterans when many of us served in Vietnam.

We are now considerably older than most of the World War II veterans were when we came back from the Vietnam War.

It rankled many of us when the elements of Returned and Services League, vastly dominated by those World War veterans, seemed somewhat lukewarm, even disparaging of the veterans of Vietnam.

That was unfortunate.

Veterans should always welcome and embrace other veterans with respect - that's as much part of the military ethos as the prized cohesion during conflict.

But we can ensure that for the next generation of veterans - soldiers returning from Iraq, Afghanistan and across the Middle East and beyond - do not encounter indifference from any of us, now the senior citizens of the veterans community.

Let us dedicate ourselves today to that cause, as our ongoing service to our nation and to our departed colleagues as the core of our legacy.

On this day, Vietnam Veterans' Day, in this place hallowed to all Australians I extend on behalf of the nation to all Vietnam Veterans - those living and those who have passed and their loved ones - the gratitude and reverence for their service in a faraway place in a bygone age, when young men and women served so loyally and well in the finest traditions of their *forbears*."

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

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VVF – AGM

at the clubrooms

11am

18th September 2016

Positions becoming vacant,

NOMINATIONS CLOSE 8th August 2016

VICE PRESIDENT (two years)

SECRETARY (two year)

10 COMMITTEE MEMBERS (one year)

Other positions to be filled

Fundraising (Outside BBQ) Co-ordinator

Grants Officer

WILL YOU VOLUNTEER TO HELP KEEP THE FEDERATION STRONG.

It's over to you, our members.

Notices of Motion to be with the Secretary by the 8th August

THE SOUTH COAST VETERANS ASSOCIATION INC.



VETERANS HEALTH WEEK Community Event Everyone WELCOME!



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SUPPORTING



SUPPORT YOUNG VETERANS WALK

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER AT 1030 HOURS
WALK, RUN OR ROLL AROUND THE RIVER TORRENS



Funds are needed to continue **Trojan's Trek**, a program to help with the rehabilitation of young veterans returning from combat duties. Four different event options with prize money on offer:

1. 5km walk (families, prams, and pets on leash are welcome). **Two \$50** random spot prizes.
2. 5km FEMALE run. Prize of **\$100** for first place.
3. 5km MALE run. Prize of **\$100** for first place.
4. 5km TEAM OF 3 EVENT. Prize of **\$200** for first complete finishing team.

WHERE River Torrens, directly north of the Torrens Parade Ground.

NOTE Parking **WILL** be available on the Torrens Parade Ground.

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REGISTRATION FORM • 30th October 2016 starting @ 1030 HRS

Please note: you can also complete this form and pay online at www.trojanstrek.com

Note: We order more T-Shirts than we estimate, however to ensure correct sizing please enter before **13th October**

NAME/S

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE/S TEAM NAME

T SHIRT SIZE/S ☐ 5XL ☐ 4XL ☐ 3XL ☐ 2XL ☐ XL ☐ L ☐ M ☐ S Sizes are generous & we would like you to wear the shirt on the day.

Shirts may be collected from an AEP Clinic as indicated below (preferred) or at the start point from 0830 hrs.

Please indicate your collection intention and enter in your diary accordingly.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noarlunga | 70 Dyson Road Noarlunga Centre | Wednesday 26th October between 12.00pm and 3.00pm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ridgehaven | 1017 North East Road Ridgehaven | Wednesday 26th October between 12.00pm and 3.00pm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> St. Mary's | 1187 South Road St. Mary's | Wednesday 26th October between 12.00pm and 3.00pm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodville | 699 Port Road Woodville Park | Wednesday 26th October between 12.00pm and 3.00pm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At the start | | from 0830 please |

COST \$30 per person includes a T shirt

OPTIONAL DONATION Tax Deductible

PAYMENT OPTIONS

☐ On line: Visit www.trojanstrek.com to pay via PayPal or credit card.

☐ Cheque: Post to: Moose Dunkop OAM, 135 Upper Sturt Road, Upper Sturt SA 5156 *Remember to include this completed registration form*

VETERANS' SUPPORT WALK



I WANT YOU!

On Sunday 30th October to walk, run or roll around the River Torrens at 1030 hours

Funds are needed to continue Trojan's Trek, a program to help with the rehabilitation of young veterans returning from combat duties.

- Free parking, partners and pets welcome, coffee, sausage sizzle & BIG Raffle draw
- \$100 Cash prize for first male and first female across the line
- \$200 Cash prize for first team of 3 across the line, and
- \$50 Cash x 2 spot prizes

Entry \$30 per person includes a T-Shirt

Visit www.trojanstrek.com for program info & registration details



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT OUR YOUNG VETERANS?

Trojans' Trek is a program which helps with the rehabilitation of young veterans returning from combat duties. All funds raised will contribute to its all-important continuation.



Vets on Air brings you news within our veteran community and current events along with music requests. The program is broadcast via the world wide web to all including our serving overseas forces as well as nationally and internationally i.e. Germany and England. It is well received with many positive comments and requests from the forces and other veterans emailed to the program.

Messages to our overseas forces can be emailed to :
info@coastfm.com.au (Subject line: Vets On Air).

These messages will be inserted into our broadcast and we are sure, will be a great moral boost for our service men and women serving overseas. If you can't pick up 88.7 Coast FM on your radio, fire up the computer and bring up the website, www.coastfm.com.au and activate radio reception, 6pm - 8pm (Adelaide time) every Tuesday.

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- ▲ **Noarlunga** 70 Dyson Road
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- ▲ **St Marys** 1187 South Road
- ▲ **Woodville Park** 699 Port Road

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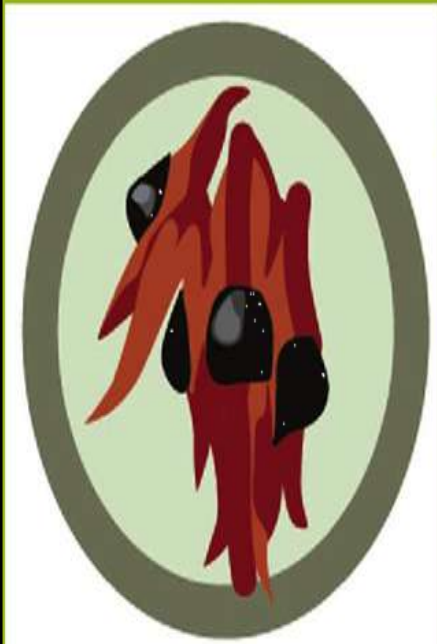
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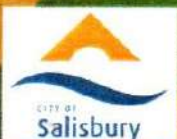
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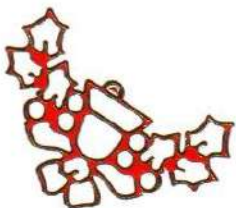
Please purchase your tickets at the Office from the
September BBQ.



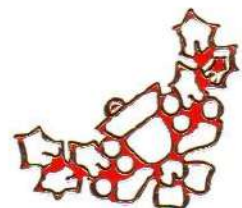
30th November is the last day to purchase tickets.

We are not able to reserve tickets without payment.

For catering purposes there will be **NO** tickets available on
the day.



DON'T FORGET
NO TICKET NO ENTRY



MYTHS & LEGENDS CONT...

7. “Veterans have multiple unstable marriages”

This common myth is definitely not supported by our data: 79% of veterans had been married once only – compare this with up to 40% of Australian marriages ending up on the rocks. At the time of interviews, 3% had never married, 4% were separated, 3% were widowers, and 10.5% were divorced. When these are compared with Australian population (Bureau of Statistics) data, it shows that there is no essential difference between the marital status of veterans and the marital status of the population.

Moreover, the level of domestic violence is exactly the same among veterans as in the general Australian population. While about 25% of veterans admitted to marital punch-ups, this was almost exactly the same as my study a few years ago of domestic violence in the general community showed. Most of it was a single incident, mostly many years in the past. Veterans are not necessarily “walking time bombs”. But they can be challenging to live with, particularly if PTSD, depression and alcohol come into the picture.

The data shows that PTSD is in fact clearly linked to the risk of domestic violence, and men with PTSD have less marital satisfaction than men without PTSD, as do their wives. However, the average length of marriage was more than 31 years and, in spite of veterans’ struggles with alcohol and PTSD, their wives ‘hang in there’. Even despite differences between PTSD veterans and non-PTSD veterans, their wives’ measures of marital satisfaction do not fall within the so-called ‘clinical range’, which means they are within ‘normal’ limits when it comes to marital adjustment..

8. “They would have been like that anyway”

This is one of the most insidious, arrogant and destructive myths that I have heard expressed around DVA and Defence. From our paper that examined the risk factors for PTSD (that was published in 1998), we took information from different time periods – at school, between school and the Army, in the Army before going to Vietnam, and in Vietnam.

We tested 100’s of items. We asked veterans if their father was in the military in World War II, in combat, and whether he was affected by his service. Interestingly, father being affected by his WWII service came up as a predictor of PTSD, so much so that I had a long exchange with a journal editor and an anonymous journal referee who wanted to emphasise the possible genetic influences on PTSD. Our psychiatric assessments showed that a few veterans had symptoms of depression and agoraphobia before going to Vietnam. And there was some association between having depression and agoraphobia before going overseas and later development of PTSD. So it seems the myth may be correct. But we are talking very small amounts, although statistically significant.

The in-Vietnam variables that were the most strongly predictive of PTSD were: corps group, being wounded, and the amount of combat trauma experienced. These items swamped the other variables. Corps group in particular is interesting: the highest rates of PTSD found in the study were among Royal Australian Engineers. This is in spite of their having lower mortality rates in Vietnam and having generally lower scores on the various combat measures we used. This suggests that their role is inherently dangerous – that’s a bit bleedin’ obvious, for a bomb and mine disposal team – and that direct enemy attack and combat is not the full story about PTSD, particularly for non-combatants. There is some small indication that there may be predisposing risk factors for PTSD, but without the experiences of Vietnam and combat, they would not have been like that anyway. The threats faced by Field

MYTHS & LEGENDS CONT...

Engineers would certainly qualify as a “malevolent environment”.

9. “Veterans biggest problem is PTSD”

No, the veterans’ biggest problem is not PTSD. In wave 1 we found PTSD to have occurred in 20% of veterans and it was current (i.e. symptoms in the past month) to the level of 10%. But alcohol abuse and dependence were much more prevalent – in wave 1 it was approximately 47% of veterans with alcohol disorders, more than double the PTSD rate.

In wave 2 we found PTSD had increased to about 25%, while alcohol disorders had come down to about 28%, but they were still the highest prevalence of the psychological disorders and were many times more prevalent than the background Australian population. High cholesterol, hypertension, deafness, haemorrhoids, osteoarthritis, gout and back pain were all at much higher prevalence’s than PTSD, as was general anxiety disorder.

The good news is that, in spite of the Army teaching men to drink and smoke, the current smoking rates of veterans were no different from the general population, but there were far more ex-smokers than the population, so this tells me that veterans have often heard the health message about smoking and given up.



MYTHS & LEGENDS CONT...

10. “We don’t have to worry about the wives until they become widows”.

It seems important to governments to gather data about veterans, and so it should be, but veterans don’t exist in a vacuum; most have wives and children who might be at risk of “ripple effects” of their veteran’s service. In our study of veterans’ wives and partners, we found that the partners of veterans are not just struggling with their impaired partner but are suffering elevated rates of serious psychiatric illness, especially severe, recurrent depression, even 3 decades after the war.

A statistical analysis of factors associated with wives’ depression showed that veteran combat, PTSD and ongoing depression were clear and strong risk factors. That is, aspects of veterans’ war service seem directly predictive of their partners’ rates of depression. There is also a disparity between the wives’ rates of psychiatric disorder and their rates of healthcare utilisation.

In particular, wives who have veterans with PTSD have lower rates of health service utilisation than other wives. This suggests that greater attention is needed to ensuring adequate assessment and treatment of veterans’ partners, particularly if the veteran has PTSD.

Concluding Remarks

Our results reinforce the need to continue surveillance of veteran health and to take into consideration the impact of war service and combat exposure on veterans’ intimate partners when future studies of veterans are undertaken. Higher rates of mental ill-health in both veterans and their partners may have major implications for the mental health of their offspring.

I am currently (2012-14) pressing ahead with a study of the veterans’ children – to get whole families into the study would be a unique resource to study the long term effects of war service on veterans and their families and to pinpoint ways in which interventions might be put in place in a timely way to head off the problems that I am now seeing in the veterans of Vietnam and their wives.

I would urge you to get behind this effort and tell governments and possible sponsors that studies of this nature are not just political exercises to assuage the cries of the strident masses, but have the potential, not just for saving money in compensation, but for improvement of the lives of the men and women who serve their country as part of Australia’s defence commitments.”

OLD CHRISTMAS AND GREETING CARDS WANTED

To help Barbara help us she has asked that if any Members have any old CHRISTMAS CARDS could they please leave them in a parcel at the VVF office “Marked Bruce Mitchell” and I will collect them for her. We only need the Card FRONTS. Other greeting card fronts will be gratefully accepted.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Social groups of the Vietnam Veterans Federation South Australia Inc.

Embroidery and Sewing Group	Monday 10.00am - 3.00pm
Quilting Group	Tuesday 10.00am - 3.00pm
Gem Vets	2nd and 4th Tuesday every month 10.00am - 3.00pm
VCC&ORG	Monday after the VVF BBQ 10 am
Lead Light/Glass Fusion	Wednesday 1.00pm - 3.00pm
WACAS (We All Care and Support)	Social outings for partners - contact Wendy 0400 570016
Federation monthly BBQ	2nd Friday of each month/cost \$8.00 begins at 11.30am

OR, RING THE VVF OFFICE DURING OFFICE HOURS FOR CONTACT INFORMATION

**VVFSA 21ST Birthday
Celebration**

Saturday 29th October 2016

At 7.30pm

Silly Night

Let's look ridiculous

Prizes for Best Costumes
Door Prize

Entry Fee "A Ridiculous price of \$5.00 pp"

Tickets available from: The office as of
13th May 2016
Max 100 tickets

PLEASE BRING A PLATE OF SUPPER FOR YOUR TABLE TO SHARE

Leadlight Group

An update on our Leadlight/Glass Fusion group

Our group is somewhat depleted at the moment with some away so we don't have much to report.

Don't forget to contact the Office on 8296 2411 if you would like to join us to learn a new hobby or just come and see what we are doing.

The leadlight Cross in the main hall and the Tri Services window in our room are works done by our group and certainly worth a look if you have not seen them before.

Including Glass Fusion

QUILTING GROUP

During the last 3 months the quilting group has been running with 3-4 members attending.

The rest of our members have been trekking around Australia and some overseas, catching the sunshine while we brave the cold winter.

During this time we have submitted 3 quilts to the bbq raffle including the latest fathers day quilt..

Some of our ladies who regularly make charity quilts recently made a large donation of over 20 quilts of mixed sizes to Malvern house for children and mothers.

Hopefully we will be back to full attendance of members soon when the rest of the holidaymakers return from their travels.

Quilting group.

WACAS

WACAS Barossa Valley Trip

On a warm sunny early spring morning eleven ladies boarded a bus for a trip to the Barossa Valley. Our first stop was at the Lyndoch Bakery for morning tea. Off to Tanunda with a stop in the main street where the Lolly shop was a popular place to visit.

At Maggie Beers Farm shop we were able to taste her delish food and then a walk around the lake before boarding the bus and off to Seppeltsfield. The jam factory and wine tasting was popular at Seppeltsfield and a walk in the beautiful grounds.

Lunch was the next stop at the Vine Inn Hotel with a couple of the girls slipping off to the butcher to buy some German small goods. A drive on some back country roads found us at Menglers Hill and Sculpture Park.

Our journey home took us via the whispering wall, although I believe someone missed this stop all together as they were asleep and didn't even know we had stopped. We arrived back at the VVF a bit later that we thought we would after battling peak hour traffic, red lights and trains. A good day was had by all.



Casino outing

A very enjoyable day was had by 8 ladies, 3 of whom went on the Memorial walk before enjoying a scrumptious smorgasboard lunch at the casino buffet.

We sat around enjoying each others company catching up and chatting until about 2.30pm. A good day.

Just a shame more people didn't come and take advantage of the outings we plan for you.



WACAS

Coming Events

MONDAY 24th OCTOBER

BLOKES BUS TRIP ~ DESTINATION AND ACTIVITY TO BE ADVISED - 9.00am to 5.00pm

TUESDAY 25th OCTOBER

JESTERS MURRAY RIVER CRUISE AND LUNCH - BUS FROM VVF ~ **LADIES ONLY**

SATURDAY 6th NOVEMBER

KANGAROO ISLAND BUS TRIP AND FERRY TO MARKETS, LUNCH, AND VISIT TO CAPE WILLOUBY LIGHTHOUSE ~ **COMBINED**

WEDNESDAY 14TH DECEMBER

WACAS CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT GOODWOOD HOTEL ~ **LADIES ONLY**

ALL BUS TRIPS REQUIRE A \$10 FEE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

FAY 0418 839490 or MARG 0402 844954

MONTHLY BBQ MEMBERS DRAW & DOOR PRIZE

**YOU HAVE TO BE THERE TO WIN
IF MEMBER IS NOT IN ATTENDANCE THE AMOUNT
JACKPOTS EACH BBQ UNTIL WON
Member draw**

May	Member No 006	G Howell \$120
June	Member No 402	L Caldwell
	Member No 117	G Johnston
July	Member No 351	C Seychell
	Member No 323	N Ilnycky
August	Member No 329	I Morrison
	Member No 029	L Floyd

The lucky winners of the Door prize

May	M Culley
June	B Ellis
July	J Leslie
August	R Ryan

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LUCKY WINNERS

AUSSIE HEROES QUILTS AND LAUNDRY BAGS

Whilst Peter and I were travelling to places much warmer than you were over winter, we managed to catch up with one of the recipients of the quilts that I sent overseas to the troops. This particular quilt went to a Warrant Officer (Kevin) in the RAAF who was stationed in the Middle East. I found out from him that this was referred to as “The Sand Pit”. He met us at the security gatehouse of the RAAF Base in Darwin, signed us in, and drove us all around the planes. Fortunately for us the Exercise Pitch Black War Games were about to start and Kevin was in Darwin to manage the maintenance of our FA-18 Hornet planes.

There were several different countries represented and we were shown a great many of the different types of planes, all lined up in a row on various tarmacs. To watch them touch down and takeoff was something spectacular, with hardly any time/space between each landing and takeoff.

As a thank you for the quilt, Kevin also sent me (apart from the lovely letter) a small Australian Flag which came with a certificate to say that the flag had been flown on a bombing mission in the Middle East. The certificate was signed by both the Pilot and Wing Commander. The first photo shows me with Kevin standing by the exact plane which flew that mission.



The second photo is a shot to show just how big the plane is compared to us. Whilst there, Kevin introduced us to his immediate superior and also one of his crew, both of whom had been recipients of an Aussie Hero Quilt.

It was very satisfying to hear them talk about what a morale boost it is for the troops to receive something from a person other than family and to know that organisations like ours also support the troops overseas.

We asked how quick the FA-18s were and were told that it is 11 minutes from wheels up at Darwin to Wheels down at Katherine.

As an aside to this Aussie Hero Quilt story, I am the one who has caught the biggest fish on this trip – an 85cm Fingermark - but apparently we aren't talking about that!

Marg Rogers

TRIP TO MATARANKA

Ron and Evelyn spent 7 weeks at The Elsey National Park at Mataranka in the Northern Territory fishing (for Barramundi) , resting and generally enjoying the warm weather.

Here is the evidence.

Ron made a collapsible boat for the trip and Members of the VVF have been asking how his little boat faired.

Well, to be truthful, he had a few problems with some leaks which he managed to fix. After a few trials all went well and he was able to travel up and down the Roper without incident until the motor stopped and he had to row back. He did manage to fix the motor.

Last year our friend Kevin, who is by the way a Kiwi, with a few odd attributes, called Ron Gilligan because of his silly hat. So this year he decided to call Ron's little boat Gilligan.

Kevin was supposed to take a friend out fishing on his boat but due to a bad back he asked Ron to take her out, but in Gilligan. What a disaster! She panicked, started bailing out some water and accidentally threw Ron's camera into the river. Ron was not happy! All those happy snaps gone.

We are now home, after a quick 4 day trip, in this cold and wet state, wishing we were still in the nice warm weather.



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\$500 Deposit Voucher* on New & Used Cars for VVF Members.

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