

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND SUB BRANCH
1998 PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT
1 Feb 1999

Nick Quigley – President

A quieter year, although some may have felt a little uneasy with some developments earlier in the year. I hope this has not quelled the good that the Association has done in the past and will do for the future. Whilst trying to do the best for our fellow veterans, matters got a little out of hand and some drastic measures were taken to prevent this happening again.

Thus **Meetings and Social barbecues**, although held on the same day, are and will be totally separate. No business, welfare or any other subject is to be brought up at a BBQ. BBQs are to be a happy Family Social.

At the present time, much to the disbelief of our Brisbane counterparts, we are getting along very well with the **Vietnam Federation** in this area. The Federation officers are providing case assistance for all veterans lodging a claim to the Dept of Veteran Affairs.

The Federation are not a Welfare group and all welfare problems must be directed to the Vietnam Veterans Counseling Service and/or an Area Representative, and not handled by the Association, nor the Federation.

The **VVAA Qld Branch held its EGM** meeting in Rockhampton. So successful, that the same venue has been booked again for this year. Our thanks go to Tony Dawes, Pat Wilson and the ANZAC Club. Thanks also to Sandra Hunt the Qld Secretary VVAA and Councilor Rose Swadling Rockhampton City Council for making it all happen.

I hope to be in Rockhampton for the 1999 meeting.

During this year the **VVCS has conducted a Heart Safe Program** at the UCQ Gym. Attended by 12 Veterans from this district and this program has been a great success. The UCQ has offered participants a package to continue their gym work and the VVCS is looking for new veterans to start the 1999 program. Interested Veterans should contact Libby Mulholland at the VVCS.

Due to the Heart Safe program, the numbers at the **Drop in Center** has been lower. 332 Veterans signed in for the 12 months, averaging 6 per week, it is still a viable operation to continue.

During the year a Digital Computer was donated to the Drop in Center and shortly we hope to add the Internet and Email. Both the Veterans and the Naval Cadets will use the Computer and it is there for all to learn and become a little more computer literate.

The Naval Cadet Association continually looks for funds and as much as some think that the Royal Australian Navy keep them supplied, this is not true. Much of the work carried out at TS Rockhampton has been done with hard-earned fundraising and voluntary workers.

The Naval Association applied to Veterans Affairs for a grant to use the funds in association with a joint venture with the Drop in Center. However, the Joint Venture schemes are designed to assist Veterans and the purpose of the grant was disallowed.

ANZAC Day 1998 was remembered by a good number of South East Asian Conflict Veterans.

(Vietnam, Malaya, Borneo and Korea). Our numbers are growing and as we get older, we need to continue to remember the significance of ANZAC Day. Those with the WWW can look at the ANZAC DAY Site at address <http://www.anzacday.org.au/>

Our ANZAC Day Baby born at 0902 on 25th April 1998 to Corrina and Cameron NEW, a sister for Tiffany; **Emily New** became our specially recognised baby for this years ANZAC Day. Baby Emily received a Certificate and a Pooh Bear, while Mum received a bouquet of flowers.

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Along with our tradition of many years we presented a Cheque for \$50 to the CWA Ladies to assist them with the ANZAC Day Breakfast.

Vietnam Veterans Day 18 Aug 1998 (Long Tan Day) saw a Burdican Plum tree planted at the Kershaw Gardens, and talks for a plaque in the shelter remembering all who served in Vietnam. The Rockhampton City Council Parks and Gardens have renovated a section of the Kershaw Gardens to provide the Vietnam Veteran community with an area they can call their own. A flagpole and poles for the banner and a Veterans garden has been developed near the shelter. Our thanks go to Councilor Rose Swadling for her continued assistance and support to Veterans and to Ron Robertson Ex 8RAR Vietnam for his assistance too.

At 0023 18th August 1998, **Jemma Watts** became our **Vietnam Veterans Day Baby**. Weighing in at 3.86kgs, she is the first child for James and Julie Watts of Yeppoon. A very proud Julie was pleased to receive the Pooh Bear and the bunch of flowers and our Certificate.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to **Cadets from North Rockhampton High School** who provided the Catafalque Party. Also to our young Bugler **Luke Harris**, who was a Grade 8 student at Glenmore High School and to **Captain Graham Longbottom** from the Salvation Army.

To assist the **Capricorn Rescue Helicopter Service** and to thank the dedicated work done by **Mike Reynolds**, Ex 161 RECCE FLT, one of the pilots, our Association made a small donation to help keep the service running.

This year the **newsletter has been posted to the World Wide Web** at the address www.cqnet.com.au/~bearcat and it has drawn good and bad comments. The newsletter has been written with no malice intended. In fact I write the newsletter and try each time to support the Veteran Community at large. Of course it is not possible to keep everyone happy, but maybe those who disagree should write an article to be included in the next edition of **Bearcat Grunts**.

The WWW is an open source of information and for those of you who have access; Vietnam home pages are growing in numbers every day. Some articles for Bearcat Grunts arrives from other Veterans via Email and some is gleaned from sites around the world. No items for publication have come from our own membership.

Disappointing as that may sound, It will not daunt me, the Newsletters will continue to roll off the printer and into your mail boxes, if you still want this type of communication.

The up and coming year leading onto the year 2000, and 28 years since the Vietnam War ceased. Let us look for a project that will help our Veteran Community, our own families and our children to lead better and happier lives.

My thanks to Lorraine McConachy our Secretary, Pauline Aplin our Treasurer and Phil Aplin our mail collector and all veterans, friends and their families who have attended Meetings and Barbecues through the year.

Nick Quigley
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