

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND SUB BRANCH
1999 PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT
6 Feb 2000

Nick Quigley – President

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Barbecues and meeting this year have been very quiet; however, those attending have been well catered for by Pauline and Phil Aplin Ex 1 RAR, who purchase the food.

Our Barbecues have continued to be held at the Kershaw Gardens in the shady area of the Memorial to the right of the entrance off Fraser Street.

Rose Swadling opened the Kershaw Gardens Vietnam Memorial at a short service on Vietnam Veterans Day 18th Aug 1999.

Thanks go to **Ron Robertson Ex 8 RAR, Councillor Rose Swadling**, Paul Muscat Ex 161 Indep Recce Flt, Barry Gill Ex 110 Sig Sqn and Nick Quigley Ex 104 Sig Sqn for the concept and design of a Vietnam Memorial area at Kershaw. The area is in remembrance of all who served in Vietnam and especially those who did not return.

There are two known National Servicemen from Rockhampton who did not return...

Pvt James (Jim) George Cox 7 RAR 1731426 killed in action 26 Jun 1967 age 22 years

Pvt Kevin John Prior 9 RAR 1734329 Killed in action 2 Oct 1969 age 22 years

Our thanks also go to **Rockhampton Parks and Gardens staff** for their devotion and preparation of the memorial area. Kevin Quinn, Graham Bell, Cory Maher, Gary Strandquist, Richard Frew, George Ganter, Paul Baker and William Smith.

On 27th November the Queensland VVAA held the EGM meeting in Rockhampton. Forty-four (44) Veterans and their partners arrived from the south on the Tilt Train. A package deal was arranged through the ANZAC Club Restaurant for all travellers who had Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner at the Club on the two days that they were in Rockhampton. Rockhampton Maxi Taxis provided transport for the troops from the station to the Cambridge Hotel. Our local Association provided Meet and Greet nibbles at the ANZAC Club on the Friday night. After the Saturday meeting a Christmas Dinner was held at the ANZAC Club and was enjoyed by all attending. 38 Veterans attended the EGM meeting, coming from the areas of Bribie Island, Logan & Albert, Burnett, Townsville, Brisbane North, Victoria, and three (3) members from Rockhampton.

On the Sunday Phil Aplin and I arranged a Capricorn Sunbus tour to the Kershaw Gardens for a BBQ lunch. Kevin Quinn took our visitors on an enlightening tour of the gardens.

It was then on to Cockscomb Veteran Retreat, where the visitors had afternoon tea (amber liquid) and enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere of the retreat. Bruce Acutt had the billy boiling and the troops enjoyed their afternoon.

The VVCS Heart Safe Program continues with good attendance. The benefits of directed and controlled exercise are paying off. Members are feeling better; some have lost weight and gained a bit of muscle. Some members who attended the first program have paid a subscription to continue for a second year.

The Drop in Center numbers increased this year and the average weekly is 7.5 Veterans each day. During the year Veterans under the guide and skill of Graham Swadling painted the meeting room and kitchen. Taubmans kindly donated the paint and although the job is not complete, the room is 100% better than it was. R & R Cabinet-Makers Geoff and Kelvin Richardson also donated a bench with cupboards under and Denis Hubbard Ex 7 RAR, installed this. The cupboards provide storage space for both the Veterans and the Cadets. The Naval Cadets, who own the building are of course the long term winners, but no one can say we have used the building without putting something back.

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The Drop in Center has seen Veterans from many parts of Queensland, but later in the year we had a visit from Col Dunkly.

Col was visiting his children in various parts of Australia when on his way to Rockhampton his car caught fire. Col was a member of 17 Construction Sqn while in Vietnam and he is now the Vice President of the Mildura VVAA.

On ANZAC Day we presented flowers, a certificate and a Teddy to Carol and Rhett Stubbs of Olive Estate Parkhurst and their **first son Thomas Jefferson Stubbs**.

On Vietnam Veterans Day we did the same for Jenny and Peter Aisthorpe of Monto and their **first son Luke Dylan Aisthorpe**. Both couples were honoured and said that they would try to remember what the significance of the Teddy and Certificate was when their children had their first birthdays.

The Vietnam Veterans Day Service at the Botanical Gardens Cenotaph was well attended. Salvation Army Officer Graham Longbottom delivered the address. Luke Harris played Reveille and the Last Post and after the service participants moved to the ANZAC Club for dinner.

Bearcat Grunts Newsletter is E-mailed to 160 Veterans and Veteran Groups across Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Locally, all members should be receiving their copy via the mail and or hand delivered. Copies are made available at the RSL, ANZAC Club, the Drop in Center, and at the University Gym.

The Bearcat Grunts Web Page took on a different angle and has become a little more than just a snip of what is going on in CQ. Bearcat Grunts is a multiple site housing my personal web page, the Queensland SES, the Rockhampton RSL, the ANZAC Club, the Drop in Center and local photos of interest and has been visited by many world viewers. The newsletter no longer gets posted to the web site. The new Web address is <http://go.to/bearcatgrunts>

During the year Veterans put in many hours of assistance at Cockscomb. Things that we take for granted in the City, like water, is now available from the 15,000-litre poly tank. Partly paid for by Rose Swadling and Bruce Acutt and donated by Adrian Browne of Beta Poly Water Tanks, the new tank was placed in position by Ray Wilson Ex 110 Sig Sqn, Brian Donnelly Ex 1 Fld Sqn Engineers and Nick Quigley. It is plumbed to fill off the annex roof and overflow into the small concrete tank. The tank is so positioned, that when the kitchen is built the water will gravity feed to this area. A support has been added to the main supply, so watch where you walk next time you're down there.

Our thanks go to **Robin Bauer for keeping the Veterans Wives Group** running. Our wives meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Robin can be contacted on 49281152

Pensions and Welfare Officers are available at the Rockhampton RSL in Archer Street each Tuesday and Thursday from 0900 to 1300. It can't be stressed enough; you should get assistance with pension claims right from the start. There is no guarantee, but it is better to get it right the first time.

My thanks this year go to Helen, my wife for her continued assistance and support. To Lorraine McConachy who has been the Central Queensland VVAA Secretary for four years. To Pauline Aplin our Treasurer and Phil Aplin, my right-hand man. To Jim Drever Ex 2 Sqn RAAF, who looks after the Drop in Center when I'm away and to the Veterans and their families who attend meetings, barbecues and functions.

Nick Quigley