

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND SUB BRANCH
2000 PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT
4 March 2001

Nick Quigley – President

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Barbecues and meeting this year have been very quiet; however, those attending have been well looked after by **Pauline and Phil Aplin**, 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. You can look at the KGVM on the Internet at <http://talk.to/veteransupport> and click on the Kershaw Gardens link. We thank the Rockhampton City Parks Department & Gardeners who maintain this area and provide access on BBQ days.

On **ANZAC Day 2000** we presented a Certificate to baby Kiarna McLennan born at 0920 to Steve and Linda McLennan. The morning March took on a new route, from Archer Street to William Street and down onto the new completed Riverside CBD.

Once again Jim Drever was the Parade Marshall and after he continued the tradition he has lead for the last 25 years on the floor with the 2up. This year Jim will not be available for either jobs, the RSL needs some volunteers.

It was with a little sadness that I learnt that the 1999 ANZAC Day baby passed away 3 days later. I ran into Carol and Rhett Stubbs in Shopping Fair and asked how the baby was going and they told me the sad news. Carol is pregnant again and I wished them happy and healthier times.

Vietnam Veterans Day 18th August 2000 we again presented a Certificate to Natasha Sear, 3rd child for Leanne Sear, born at 0345, a sister for Larissa and Darcy. Harry Mimi donated a special white rabbit basket from Tall Pines Kmart Plaza. After the service at the Botanical Gardens Cenotaph, visiting Veterans and families attended an informal dinner at the ANZAC Club. A Brown Pearwood, native tree of Australia was planted at the Kershaw Gardens Memorial by Jim Seaton, Paul Hardy, Phil Aplin and Nick Quigley.

Our thanks go to the Rockhampton City Gardeners for providing this tree and preparing the site. Our thanks also go to the 14 Rockhampton Cadet Unit for providing the Catafalque Party, Luke Harris for playing the Last Post and Rouse, to the Salvation Army for the address and Lester Soblusky for playing the Bagpipes.

The "BEARCAT GRUNTS" Newsletter continues without a great deal of input from the Veteran Community. But there is always something to write about and it still provides a means of getting information to the community. Approx 130 copies go via E-mail to other Clubs, individuals and Associations and Phil posts a copy to all our financial members. Copies are available at CQVSC and the Drop In Center.

If you have some in-put, by all means either send it to me or E-mail it and it will be in the next newsletter.

The Bearcat Grunts Web Page took on a different angle and has become a little more than just what is going on in CQ. Bearcat Grunts is a multiple site housing my personal web page, the Rockhampton RSL, the ANZAC Club and local photos of interest and has been visited by many world viewers. Back issues of the newsletter are available in an Adobe Acrobat *.PDF format on the CQVVAA page. The Web address is <http://go.to/bearcatgrunts>

The future of the **Central Queensland Veteran Support Center** is well established and after reading the Annual Report the Department of Veterans Affairs would like all ESO groups to adopt the same guidelines used by CQVSC. With ESO parties from the Vietnam Veterans Federation, the Rockhampton RSL, Emu Park & Mt Larcom RSLs and our own CQVVAA Association working together for one united purpose, to provide a pensions and advocacy service to all veterans. Working out of the Lone Pine building at 6 Archer Street Monday to Friday between 0900 and 1300 there are now eleven (11) pensions officers and two (2) Advocates. At mid February there were 63 cases archived either completed or pending

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veteran intervention, 40 cases to be heard by the VRB and 94 cases applying for increases or pending other reports. Pensions Officers recently underwent specialised training with the Department of Veterans Affairs and further training provided by CQVSC and an outside computer trainer.

The **Rockhampton Drop In Center** has had a steady flow of Veterans both local and visiting. It is not run by the CQVVAA but is part of the CQVSC. It is a place where you can relax with a cup of tea or coffee and talk over your problem, go back in time and tell a few stories or get some help on a subject or just talk about the weather. We recorded 336 visitors for the year.

Cockscomb Retreat has attracted many visitors from outside the Rockhampton area. The CQVVAA has nothing directly to do with the running of Cockscomb. It is managed by the Cockscomb Veteran Community who hold regular BBQs to openly discuss future planning and funding. The kitchen is completed except for the floor and form-work has been set up ready for concrete as it becomes available. The next stage is to build an accommodation unit near the toilet block. The unit will be in the old settlers first house style. The unit will be approx 6m by 3m providing two rooms.

The VVCS Heart Safe Program has taken on a name change, now to be called **Heart Health**. The program can only start when there are fifteen (15) applicants. Aaron Coutts has won the tender to supply a Gym program and ancillary services for twelve (12) months. The benefits of directed and controlled exercise are paying off. Previous members are feeling better; some have lost weight and gained a bit of muscle. Some members have paid a subscription to continue for a second year and a third year.

After twelve months of organising the **Rockhampton Veterans Just Walk It** group I can report that we are still walking. Each Monday at 1715 from the corner North Street and Victoria Pde to the end of the path near Derby Street and back, approx 3.4 kilometers and 45 minutes of walking. Then again on Wednesday at 1715 from the Central Queensland Community Sports Centre at the University. A lap of the Campus and approx a 30 minute walk. The Just Walk It program is supported by the Heart Foundation and walkers are rewarded for their efforts with certificates, caps, water bottles and Tee shirts.

The Wives Night Out has continued this year and thanks go to **Robin Bauer** for keeping the group running. Our wives meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Robin can be contacted on 49281152

It is a growing industry and an entertaining one too. **The Internet** has become a household topic and our Veteran Community is not lagging behind. Earlier in the year Phil Aplin bought a computer and has learnt to master the Email system. Phil and Pauline are able to keep in close contact with their daughter and the veteran community. Jim Drever has put many hours into the Internet at the Drop In, but now Jim connects from home. The Internet can be both frustrating and entertaining and if you want more information, there is plenty to learn. Don't put it off, do something today...get connected.

My thanks this year go to Helen, my wife for her continued assistance and support. To Phil Aplin who has made a great job of being the Central Queensland VVAA Secretary. To Pauline Aplin our Treasurer and to Jim Drever, who looks after the Drop in Center when I'm away and to the Veterans and their families who attend meetings, barbecues and functions.