

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND SUB BRANCH
PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT
1 February 2004

Nick Quigley – President

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Meetings and Barbecues this year have been well attended and once again we need to thank **Pauline and Phil Aplin**, who do the catering. Phil also keeps the members informed by Email and letters.

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://kershawgardens.tripod.com> we thank the Rockhampton City Parks & Gardens Department who maintain this area and provide access on BBQ days.

ANZAC Day in Rockhampton was a credit to all the organisers. Held in the City on the Riverside CBD. A small number of Veterans attended schools because ANZAC Day fell on a Friday and in school holiday time

Prior to ANZAC Day this year Veterans **planted another tree** at the Kershaw Gardens Vietnam Memorial. This year we planted a Harpullia Pendula, which is similar to those planted in East Street Rockhampton

ANZAC Day 2004 will be on Sunday 25th at 1050 and this year we will have a visit and reunion of the Veteran Tracker Dog Handlers. 80 or so handlers and partners will be in Rockhampton from the 22nd to the 26th April.

Vietnam Veterans Day 18th August 2003 was for the second time at Cockscomb Veteran Camp. A huge success and a very memorable day with a short service by **Chaplin Kaye Ronalds. Tony Dawes Ex 104 Sig Sqn.** took control of the morning. The Catafalque party mounted the Memorial at 1055 and at 1100 the sound of a helicopter could be heard. Not just a coincidence, but a special flyover by **Pilot Officer Ryan Marr of 162 Recce Flight**

Townsville. The Kiowa made several circling passes over Cockscomb and brought back some incredible memories for those on the ground. Hairs raised on the neck, tears in the eyes and incredible smiles on the faces of Vietnam War Veterans. No doubt the highlight of the morning and something our Veterans will remember for weeks to come.

The first wreath was laid by **Tony Stepney 2781795**, first intake National Service 1965-1967, served with 6 RAR D Company at the Battle of Long Tan. The **42RQR** provided the guard and **Piper Lester Soblusky** played the Lament. Families of Veterans who have died since Vietnam, laid Wreaths. Ten new Plaques for past Veterans were placed on the memorial. The day ended with a BBQ lunch with more than 200 Veterans and their families attending. Veterans Day 2004 will be at Cockscomb on Wednesday 18th August, at 11am

Baby Kerry Nyree Missingham became our first baby born on the 18th August 2003 at the Rockhampton Base Hospital. 2910 Grams at 0629am a sister for Tyler and second child for Lesley Schembri and John Missingham.

The "BEARCAT GRUNTS" Newsletter was produced in April 2003 with a story on Motivation. It also covered one of our own local Veterans Dave Morgan who is a weather technician on the Australian Antarctic Base.

Dave goes back to Casey Base on the 2nd Feb 2004 for another 12 months.

Central Queensland Veteran Support Center <http://talk.to/veteransupport> is into its fifth year of operation. With a very good success rate, Veterans of the Central Queensland region must thank the Pensions Officers and Advocates who put many voluntary hours into the pending cases.

Working out of the Lone Pine building at 6 Archer Street, Monday to Friday between

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0900 and 1300 there are now seven pensions officers, 2 case officers and one Advocate.

The **Rockhampton Drop In Center** 310 Quay Street has had a steady flow of Veterans both local and visiting. It is not run by the CQVVAA but is part of the Veteran Community. It is a place where you can relax with a cup of tea or coffee and talk over any problem, go back in time and tell a few stories or get some help on a subject or just talk about the weather. The Australian Navy Cadets TS Rockhampton owns the building. \$2 is collected from each attendee to help pay for the consumables. Internet and Email is generally available for those who don't have it at home. The rent each year is \$240 and very soon we may need to fund raise to pay the rent. Robert Busch has been opening up this year and he ensures we have fresh milk and something good to eat.

Cockscomb Veterans Camp
<http://veteranretreat.tripod.com> 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 working bees on Tuesdays starting at 0900. If you haven't already, you should get a copy of the Cockscomb Chronicle to keep up to date with goings on at Cockscomb. To obtain a copy ensure that Nick Quigley has your Email address or if not your postal address. The Christmas BBQ was well attended and enjoyed.

Rockhampton Veterans Just Walk It leaves from Central Queensland Community Sports Centre 1715 on a Wednesday. We walk for approx 45min and lap the CQU Campus.

The Heart Foundation supports the Just Walk It program and walkers are rewarded for their efforts with certificates, caps, water bottles and Tee shirts. Walking is free and just like Gym work it is good for your ongoing health.

For those who feel that Gym work and weights is too hard to attend, why not consider coming to the Over 60s slow Aerobics class at 0830 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm sure you'll enjoy the 45 minutes with our instructor. Membership to the **Community Sports Centre Gym** is approx \$250 a year and includes Gym, Pool and Aerobics.

Ongoing FREE computer lessons provided by **COIN Rockhampton** with the basic class covering everything from plugging in, turning on and through to operating Windows, Internet and Email and now more advanced classes are also available. If you are interested you should **RING the COIN center on 4923 2561 Monday to Friday between 0900 and 1600**. Classes are daytime only.

Jean Williams has launched the second edition of "Children of the Mist" at the Nambour Library. Jean is 78 and still working extremely hard as an advocate for Vietnam Veterans.

After 10 years at Legacy as a Welfare Officer, **Helen has retired**. She has a yardstick of jobs she wants done, but I'm sure she'll enjoy retirement. We have a few trips in mind and I hope my health remains good so we can get out and about

Many changes are taking place in our Veteran Communities and Government support is not always on the side of the Veteran, you need to ensure you keep well informed about your rights, renew your membership with the Association and add your voice, write to your politicians when you are not happy. You've done the time