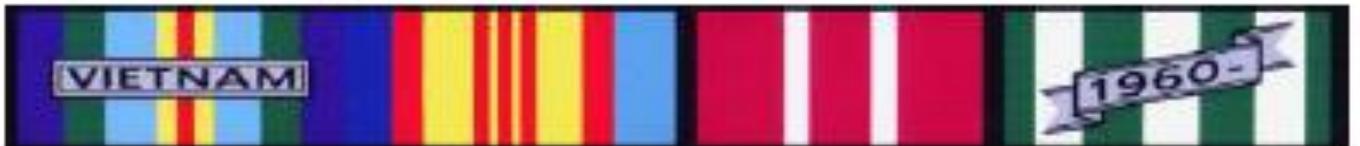




# CONTACT!



**Honour the dead, but fight like hell for the living.**



## June 2016

We have completed a successful ANZAC Day, and now we need to concentrate on making sure that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan (August 18, 1966) is done with due reverence and style.

The repatriation of the bodies of servicemen killed in Vietnam and buried in Malaysia has just taken place, and as one colleague said, "It is important to give them the welcome home that we never got!"

Photograph from Richmond RAAF.



## **Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia W.A. Branch Inc.**

### **President's Report. CONTACT June 2016.**

In this report I would like to address the life expectancy of the Western Australia State Branch. It is my considered opinion that this needs to be acted on sooner than later. Conservatively I consider the state branch could be able to operate for another 5 years, at a maximum 8 to 10 years. In saying this, we have to consider the variables; 1. Membership numbers. 2. Financial viability. 3. Ability to maintain a State Executive. 4. Support of the membership.

To expand on the above listed items that will control the **V.V.A.A. W.A's future**. Reducing membership, reduces our income and ability to fund raise to supplement the reduced income. Again lower member number will reflect on maintaining a State Executive, the current executive have been "re-cycled" for the past 4 or 5 years, with minimal changes. Yes, we need to aware of these points and only good membership numbers and support, will keep the V.V.A.A. W.A. viable in the coming years. Over the coming years, we have to consider our obligations, to members and Vietnam Veterans' representation on Veteran Forums and our standing/recognition within the ESO community.

The V.V.A.A. Motto, "Honour the Dead and Fight Like Hell for the Living". We need to be able fulfil these obligations, ANZAC Day and Vietnam Veterans' Day, "Remembrance" our 2 main days of the year. In addition to this, consideration needs to be given to "Veteran Support", pensions and welfare support. With regard to the latter, "welfare", at this time I consider this should be the main focus of our support. This can vary from, financial assistance to veteran or his family in need or direction for help with a medical or mental health issue or hospital visiting.

In recent times the bulk of calls I get, can be from a hospital "social worker", a Veteran hospitalised, wanting visitors or to check that his wife will be OK, and get the War Widows' pension. Perhaps of most concern is the call/e-mail, from a widow or family member, calling following the death of the Veteran/husband/father, to see what entitlements/funeral benefits, they are entitled to or can apply for. Of concern in these instances, the Veteran has never applied for a disability or service pension/gold card, not considered a DVA client and this makes it difficult to access any benefits for the wife/family.

I guess the worst call, from a family member, advising of the death of a Veteran, some known to me, some not, asking for assistance with "Funeral" arrangements, be it obtain the Veteran's "Record of Service" or assist in any other way.

In the above circumstances, member support is needed, the Veteran might be a mate of yours, visit him in hospital or the worst case scenario, attend his funeral. We the V.V.A.A. W.A and members can only assist in the above, if we know. Calls from hospitals, social workers, neighbour or a member of the public, can be the only alert to these cases.

**The current situation in other V.V.A.A. State branches**, Northern Territory's administration is now under control of South Australia, with the NT branch, basically being a sub-branch of S.A and a social club only. In the larger states, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, sub-branches are closing or amalgamating. In the near future it is expected that the ACT branch/membership will become part of the St Mary's [NSW] sub-branch.

Here **the R.U.O.K system** can work for us, keep in touch/check on your veteran mates, visit them, be it at home or in hospital and let others know. I can say, that in recent times, the majority of Veterans that I have visited in hospital or attended their funeral, were not known to me, from my Army/Vietnam days.

It is planned to table a draft proposal, for the wind down of the V.V.A.A. W.A. at the 2016 AGM, it will be that, a draft proposal that can be amended as time passes, to suit our changing situation. The critical concerns will be, financial viability, ability to maintain an executive or management group and at the end of the V.V.A.A. W.A's viable life span, acquittal of the association's assets.

**The V.V.A.A. National council and Congress meetings**, Canberra, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May. Without referring to my notes or reading the minutes of both meetings [received today], the council discussed the future direction/life span of the association, national meetings, do we need to meet twice a year, cost factors or meet face to face once a year and have one video meeting. Short term we will continue to meet in Canberra, each May and Adelaide in October, this will be open for review as time progresses.

**Some discussion regarding the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and Vietnam Commemorative Grants.** The grant application procedure/criteria, should each state been allocated a set amount of money, to be allocated at state level by the Deputy Commissioner DVA. This process could have been done better, the point was raised with the Minister.

Debrief magazine. Due to the cost of producing and circulating 2 Copies of Debrief each year, at this time costing approximately \$20,000.00 per year, the single biggest cost to the national budget. It was agreed by council that the 2016 Winter edition of Debrief will be the last hard copy magazine. All future editions of Debrief will be produced and circulated electronically. Unfortunately, shrinking membership, shrinking budget and good financial management requires this action.

Guest speakers at Congress, covered an interesting number of topics and some insight to some future planning and projects associated with DVA and Vietnam history.

Once I have read the minutes of the 2 meetings I will distribute them to all members on e-mail.

**Vietnam Veterans Day 2016.** A list of events associated with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Long Tan and the Commemorative Year for the Vietnam War, will be included in “coming events”.

Of importance will be those events and services being arranged by the V.V.A.A. W.A. As you are aware for the past 10 years, we have had a commemoration of our KIAs remembered and buried within the Perth War Cemetery and Karrakatta Cemetery. This year planning is in hand to expand this Commemoration to include all KIA grave sites within Western Australia. While we were not able to get DVA funding under the CVWG allocation, some costings did not meet the criteria. I have now re-thought the project and applied for Lotterywest funding and hoping that approval is given in the coming month.

It is planned, with the support of RSL Sub-Branches and local communities, to place wreaths at each grave site in W.A. with a simple service held at each location. This will take place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016, at 2.00pm.

**The Kings Park Memorial Service**, will be held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August at 11.00am. Following the service there will be a “sausage sizzle” lunch provided and entertainment by the Perth Military Band. With 2016 being a “special” year and anticipating good veteran and family support, additional chairs and under cover seating has been arranged for the service.

Note; it will be BYO drinks for the “sausage sizzle”. Kings Park does have a No Glass policy, drink responsibly and dispose of your empties, in the bins provided.

The grant application to DVA, for recording a video on the oral history of Vietnam Veterans has been approved. This will allow us to move ahead with planning this project. Over the coming month I will be approaching veterans and members, for people to participate in interviews, this will be limited to 10 or 12 people, from a cross section of the Vietnam Veteran community. Filming and recording the interviews is planned to take place in October, for editing and completion in December. Stay tuned.

**Rolling Thunder Vietnam.** This stage show is returning to Perth in 2016, with a “Special” Veterans’ opening night, at Crown Theatre on the 17<sup>th</sup> August, with a 2 for 1 ticket offer, to veterans and ADF members. For information see details within this newsletter.

*Richard*



Re-interment Service for  
**Sergeant Ronald Thomas Carroll**

17 December 1936 – 4 August 1968



Perth War Cemetery

Nedlands, W.A.

7 June 2016



**MARINKO 'TICH' TOMAS MEMORIAL REDEDICATION SERVICE**



**8<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Marinko "Tich" Tomas, memorial re-dedication 11.00am. Nannup.**



<http://echonewspaper.com.au/12118-2/>

Lester Leaman and his band of volunteers are providing a unique men's health program operating out of Forrestfield Forum. Picture: SARAH BROOKES

**OPERATION LIFELINE (Forrestfield Forum)**



*Hobart served in Vietnam*

HMAS

**INVITATION**

After the Service Refreshments and light lunch  
RSL City of Cockburn Sub-branch  
73 Frederick Road,  
Hamilton Hill WA 6163



*Medical evacuation team at work in Vietnam*

Returned & Services League of Australia  
City of Cockburn Sub-branch

**VIETNAM WAR VETERANS  
MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**  
50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan

**THURSDAY  
18th AUGUST 2016  
10.30AM**

Memorial Hall Monument  
Cnr Rockingham Road & Carrington Street,  
Hamilton Hill, WA 6163





**Frank Mallard: Indigenous Servicemen Speech at Kings Park (May 2016)**

Your Excellency, State and Federal members, Councillors, Senior military Members, Exo's of RSL, Legacy, Reconciliation, other invited guests, Indigenous Servicemen and Women, Members of the wider veteran community, boys and girls, and the public.



Good morning to you all. Firstly, as an elder of the Yamatji people of Northampton, I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, on which this event takes place.

On this recognition day, I would like to say a few words about the involvement of A&TSI men and women in our military. What better way to cover this than to give a brief history of my family. Here in WA more specifically Kalbarri area the Yamatji had contact with the Dutch 100 years before settlement in Sydney was established. I refer here to my family group who are genetically connected to the survivors of the wreck of the Dutch Ship "Zuytdorp." So when my great-grandfather who was here as a convict and given ticket of leave to work in the Northampton area married an Aboriginal woman the mixture of Dutch, English and Aboriginal, produced a mixed race of people like myself and other family members who had European features. However, this did not exempt us from the Colonial treatment handed out to Indigenous Australians.

We like many others were isolated to specific areas, had our children taken away and lost the ability to speak our own language, however we rose above all these hardships and are here today with the hope that reconciliation will work.

My family alone is recorded to have had 28 serving from WW1 to the present time. WW1 (3), WW2 (18), Korea (3), Vietnam (2), Army Reserve (2).

On the front line there was no time for racism or bigotry, as each soldier relied on the next to survive. In the time of war mateship flourished and white servicemen and black were all in it together. By the time I joined the Army in 1962 things were a little better, because of the closeness of the mateship in the military we were all soldiers, there was no colour, except the green of the uniform. In 1964 I was sent to Sabah (North Borneo) during the Indonesian Confrontation, from there in 1965 I went to Vietnam with Australia's first commitment of fighting troops, going all the way with LBJ. In the troop of Engineers that went to Vietnam in 65 there were 4 of us indigenous soldiers. This troop of Engineers was to become known as the "Original Tunnel Rats", and we were a part of the 1RAR Group, who served with distinction alongside the American 173 Airborne Brigade. (For our efforts we earned the right to wear the American Presidential Unit Commendation. Gazetted by the Australian Government in 1991 and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Unit Citation Gazetted in May 2015. Fifty years after the event). After that I spent a few years in South East Asia (Malaysia/Singapore). I retired from the regular Army in 1985 and joined the Army Reserve.

My heart though was still in the Military, and when war broke out in Bosnia/Croatia, I took leave from the reserve and my job at the prison and joined the UN in Croatia. I stayed there for almost four years from 1993 to 1996. When I returned to Australia I went back to the reserve and to work in the prison service (which by now was called "Corrective Services"). In 1999 I retired from all work suffering from PTSD.

(Photograph Page 8).

**Re-interment Service for Sergeant Ronald Thomas Carroll. 17 December 1936 – 4 August 1968.**

Ron Carroll's military service began at 19 years of age, as a National Serviceman in 1955, before later transferring to the Regular Army. As a member of 3 RAR, Ron served in Singapore, Malaya, Borneo, Malaysia and South Vietnam. Ron Carroll, transferred to the SAS Regiment, following injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident, during SAS training, he transferred back to 3 RAR. During 3 RAR's 1967-68 tour in South Vietnam, Sgt Carroll was killed while leading his platoon, in an assault on an enemy base camp, Operation Hamersley, in Bien Hoa Province, on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1968.

Current members of Townsville based 3 RAR, formed the bearer party for the coffin with Sgt Carroll's body. Battalion CO, Lt-Col Giles Cornelia, told the service that the regiment was humbled to help bring one of their own home. Lt-Col Cornelia, read Sgt Carroll's record of service. Former army mates, Curly Tremble, Bunbury and Neil Eiby, travelled from Queensland to attend the service. Both were in action the day their mate was killed.

Padre Richard Whereat, read a message from Sgt Carroll's daughter Joan and son Peter, in which they thanked the people of Malaysia for looking after their father for 48 years. "We are sorry to disturb you Dad with this process but we trust you will believe it is for the better, so that for us that remain, we can finally say goodbye".

**Lest we forget.**

**Coming events.**

8<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Marinko "Tich" Tomas, memorial re-dedication 11.00am. Nannup.

10<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Memorial Plaque, Richard Aldersea. Subiaco RSL Sub-Branch.

12<sup>th</sup> August 2016. KIA Graves Commemoration. Perth War Cemetery and Regional locations. 2.00pm.

13<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Vietnam Dinner. Riverton RSL. 7.00pm. Contact Bill Collidge or Riverton RSL for details and bookings.

14<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Day Service. Kings Park. 11.00am

17<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Rolling Thunder Vietnam. Crown Theatre. Burswood. 7.30pm

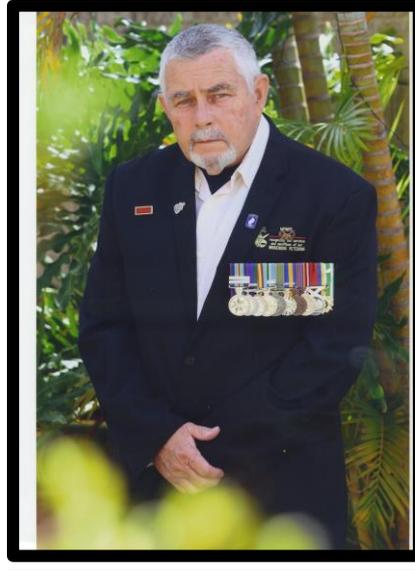
18<sup>th</sup> August 2016. City of Cockburn Vietnam Veterans' service, 10.30 (see below)

18<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Vietnam Veterans' Day Service. Mandurah. 10.00am

18<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Vietnam Veterans' Day Service. North Beach RSL. 10.00am.

19<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Vietnam Commemorative Service. St Georges Cathedral. Perth. 4.30pm.

20<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Vietnam Commemorative Service. City of Stirling Memorial Gardens. Cedric St. Stirling. 10.00am.



Frank Mallard



Dr Neil MacNeill & Richard Williams (Pres.)

### Memorial Day (US)

The Memorial Day service is held on the last Monday in May, every year. In the United States on this day people visit the graves of all those men and women who died while serving in the Armed Forces, and they decorate the graves with flowers or flags.

In Western Australia the North American Veterans' Unit (NAVU) organises this service at Kings Park, and it is attended by key political, religious and service personnel.

A highlight of the service was President Obama's address, Captain Donnelly's speech and Michael Munjak's perceptive delivery of the Gettysburg Address, without notes.

Because of our close relationship with our American allies, the Vietnam Veterans' Association strongly supports NAVU.