



Honour The Dead And Fight Like Hell For The Living

# The Slouch Hat

Issue 1, 2006

31/3/2006

*This Newsletter is a publication of the Geelong & District Sub Branch of the Vietnam Veterans of Australia Association.*

- It's time to plan for ANZAC Day 2006
- The 2006 Veterans Day is the 40th anniversary of Long Tan
- Largest turnout for the Bushwalkers
- New-look Slouch Hat

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## Where The Bloody Hell Are You?

Unless you are living in the wilderness or are without access to a television set, you will have heard about the government's 'bloody' campaign to attract more tourists to the land of Oz.

It seems the Poms took some exception to the use of the word 'bloody' and have banned the ad from the telly. Bloody hell, I thought that's where the word came from!

Did you know that the Geelong and District has one of the highest membership ratios in the VVAA?

Our District covers Greater Geelong, Anakie, Lara, Bannockburn, Teasdale, The Bellarine Peninsular, the Surf Coast, The Otways, through to Birregurra, Winchelsea and Colac.

It's estimated that some 500 Veterans live in the District. Our veteran membership currently sits at 262, a take-



up of more than 50%. But where the bloody hell are the rest?

The value of your membership comes from knowing that we're here for you when you need help. But we need to know that you're out there!

Ours is a vibrant, welcoming organisation offering camaraderie and friendship.

But first and foremost, we are an Association that primarily exists for the welfare and benefit of Vietnam Veterans and their families.

If you know a Veteran who is not a member, give Mick Hoare a call on 5250 2673 (or back-up Michael Byrne,

5278 5500). Mick will record contact details and with discretion extend the Veteran an invitation to join the Geelong & District Sub Branch of the VVAA.

## The Slouch Hat – A New Look

After many years of using Word software we have switched to Publisher, a more appropriate software for newsletter editing and production

This change has brought about a new look for The Slouch Hat.

We hope you like the new format and would be interested in receiving your feedback.

At the 2005 Vietnam Veterans Day Dinner, Rosemary and I sat with Neil and Linda Smith. Linda was the first editor of the news-

letter and told me about the frenzy of typing, printing and distributing the newsletter in those pre-computer days. Thank goodness for technology.

*Michael Byrne, Editor*

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Honour The Dead And Fight Like Hell For The Living

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*The G&DVVAA gratefully acknowledges the support given by Kwik Kopy for the production of The Slouch Hat.*

# The President's Report

Kevin Bate

It has again been a great pleasure to be President for this later term. 2005 was indeed a year to remember and one that demonstrates the support given to this Association by so many. It demonstrates the cooperation and friendships that bond us all together as Vietnam Veterans so strongly including our wives, partners and families.

2005 culminated with our 30 year celebrations and gave us an opportunity to thank our founders for putting things in place those many years ago. Proudly, and with many years of struggle, this organisation started, nurtured and now share the Veterans Welfare Centre with veterans of all conflicts.

We have a very active social group and also conduct many other activities from bush walking to tennis, badminton, golf and yoga. We take part in the Relay for Life and owe so much to the monthly barbecue group in Pakington Street. All of these activities have to have leaders and to these people this association salutes you and is proud to have you as active members. We offer you our support and encouragement as it is you people that make this group what it is.

## 2006 Committee

Kevin's report (above) was written just before the Annual General Meeting. Indeed, the standing members of the Executive were all re-elected as was new committee members Gary Ryan, Allan Woodyard and Brian Harley.

The position of Secretary is still vacant. Yes, Mick Mutton will be a hard act to

I said I would offer myself for a two year period – that is now up. I have nominated again, but I will be away for a very large part of the year which covers many important items on our calendar. These include Veterans Day and the State Conference to be held here in November which will of course create a heavier workload for the Vice Presidents. I believe that the person in the role of President has to be involved in State issues, attending the quarterly conferences.

Mick Mutton, our very valuable Secretary, is not renominating as he intends to put more time into our website and the bush walking group. He also puts in many hours in our office at the Welfare Centre. Now that we have our laptop, Mick assures me that providing his replacement is semi capable with a computer, everything they need is in place and only names and dates have to be changed to be in full charge of events. Mick Hoare has renominated as Treasurer and to Mick we say special thanks for we all know that this role involves a lot, especially when he gets instruction from State telling him how to do his job.

follow but with some gentle persuasion we hope to see a new Secretary appointed by ANZAC Day. If you would like to fill the position, please give Kevin Bate a call.

Your 2006 Committee, and contact details, is listed opposite.

Nigel and Aivar have been great support for me in many aspects and, should the team of President and Vice President be voted back in, the following change has been suggested by Mick Mutton and the Executive have agreed it would be beneficial that we create portfolios for the Vice Presidents, one of Ceremonies and the second of Appeals with the President being responsible for State matters and welfare issues.

We cannot forget our trusty Minute Secretary. To Jocelyn we thank you for your valuable support to the Secretary and hope that you accept this role again.

This year again, we have lost valuable members which reminds us all that we are approaching that time when we have to look after ourselves. I encourage you all to make the most of what we offer in the way of activities. This not only creates a healthy body but an active mind.

It has been a privilege to be your President, a position that has brought me much pleasure. To you all, I say thank you.



*"2005 culminated with our 30 year celebrations and gave us an opportunity to thank our founders for putting things in place those many years ago"*



Kevan Reilly (doing nothing) with Geoff Miles, Andy Treffry and Nigel Wilson working their buns off.

# Bushwalking Mick Mutton



Ted Grey sets the pace!



On March 15 we completed our 17th bush walk, this time to the Hepburn Springs Regional Park. Most of the group walked a distance of 7.3 km but we had a few forward scouts who thought they knew where they were going. These athletes walked a further 1.53 km past the track turn-off.

Thankfully, mobile phone coverage was excellent in the area and we successfully managed a rendezvous.

A pleasant 23 degrees C meant conditions were perfect. A record turnout of 26 walkers although Dave and Joan did their own walk after getting lost on their way to the start from Inverleigh. Dave's inputting of GPS coordinates into his Land Rover's advanced navigation system obviously

needs some improvement.

A meeting with the lady from the local wildlife refuge almost got Frank's blood boiling but his shortness of breath from tackling a few hills probably saved her from a brow beating.

After the missing five walkers were retrieved from their wayward path and punished with a steep climb that had them on their knees, the group finally arrived back at The Blowhole only to find the Parks people had closed the last 50 metres of the track and expected everyone to backtrack a further 1.6 km. The obstacle being quickly bypassed by a group decision to ignore the warning of unstable cliffs brought us back to the car park and a timely end to a great walk.

Just goes to prove that Vietnam veterans are capable of weighing up a

situation and making their own assessment of the dangers (or lack thereof).

A pleasant few hours were spent in Daylesford as the group chose a variety of eating establishments and the ladies were let loose to sample the shopping. A big welcome to Michael Byrne on his first walk and thanks to Ian who did the driving on the day.

*Editor: It turns out I was the 50th person to join the bush walking group. I got a free stick as a prize.*

See our web site [www.geelongvets.org.au/GDVVAWEBSITE/bushwalking.htm](http://www.geelongvets.org.au/GDVVAWEBSITE/bushwalking.htm) for more information on G&D Vets bushwalking.

*"A pleasant few hours were spent in Daylesford as the group chose a variety of eating establishments and the ladies were let loose to sample the shopping"*

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## Lost Members

Please contact Mick Hoare if you know the whereabouts of:

- Shayne Bourke** (Hamlyn Heights)
- Barry Jones** (Stoneyford)
- Rodney Paech** (Omeo)
- Bob Read** (Winchelsea)
- Doug Stewart** (Highton)

Prior location shown in brackets.

## In Memoriam

The President and Members of the G&DVVAA mourn the loss of the late Jock McMillan.

Jock was a founding member of the VVA and a Past President.

We express our sympathy to Jocelyn, Jess and Adam.



Anne Reiher makes her come-back

## Sensational Sausage Sizzle

You just have to take your hats off to Managing Director Frank Cunningham and the regulars who sizzle the sausages in Pakington Street on the last Saturday of the month (except for December).

Sponsored by Heritage Meats, the Sizzlers raised, on average, \$350 per month. for the Welfare Fund. That's \$3,850 for 2005 alone!

Our Sub Branch is grateful Heritage Meats for the opportunity to raise these funds.

Regulars manning the grill include Nigel Wilson, Mick Hoare, Andy Treffry, Ian Reither and Kevin Riley, all of whom are



Pictured in Pako (from left) Nigel Wilson, Andy Treffry and Geoff Miles (with Kevan Reilly and Mick Hoare in the background). Frank, as usual, is nowhere to be seen.

very grateful for Frank's (see right) managerial guidance and leadership skills.

If G&DVVAA-approved Veterans recreation groups man the grill funds can be used to support their activities.



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## A Game of Badminton? Mick Hoare

A group of Vietnam Veterans play badminton every Tuesday evening at the Belmont Community Youth Club Hall at 237 High Street, Belmont.

Play commences at 6.15 pm and continues until approximately 7.45 pm, with players rotating after each game. The group caters for all standards of player, from beginner to

wily. Geoff went to Indonesia for three months for special coaching, Richard has made a couple of cameo appearances and Jack is believed to be in secret training for his debut.

Table Tennis is now available at the Youth Club, thanks to a table and accessories donated by Jim. Players can now relax with a quiet hit of table tennis

between games on the bigger court.

The badminton group provides the opportunity for regular low impact exercise and companionship with fellow veterans at a central location. Racquets are provided and costs are subsidised by the G&DVVAA.



Using Commonwealth Games-speak, Mick Hoare (above) is the Badminton Chef De Mission.

## Tennis Nigel Wilson

Veterans and partners have continued getting together for a hit of tennis on the **second Wednesday of each month** and included in the numbers are some people who haven't played tennis for over 40 years.

The Tennis group meets most months with the important aspect being the exercise component and the social side.

Since the Christmas holidays, the numbers been quite high. This month, there was an all time high attendance of 14 players and two spectators. It was also good to see Anne Reither back playing again after recent surgery.

The group plays at All Saints' Tennis Club, Noble Street, Newtown at 10.30am; so again we extend a welcome to Vets and partners who would like to have a social hit. Please come along and join us.

BYO drinks, tea and coffee available, racquets for loan are also available

We look forward to seeing you on:

**12<sup>th</sup> April,  
 10<sup>th</sup> May and  
 4<sup>th</sup> June.**



Nigel Wilson, Tennis Chef De Mission.

**eyewear on pako**  
 eyewear to have about  
 chris benning  
 1a yuille street  
 geelong west 3218  
 p 5222 5353  
 f 5222 6606



## 4-Day Camping Trip to Barmah State Forest

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May through to Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May



This trip will be a relaxing time with friends in beautiful, peaceful surroundings and we want as many members as possible to join us. Accommodation will be caravans, tents, swags whatever you can muster. If you don't possess any of these, perhaps family or friends could help out by lending theirs to you. We do have two tents that can be borrowed plus possible accommodation in annexes. Food can be purchased by leaving the Park and driving some distance, so I suggest you bring food with you, however the choice is yours. Gas cooking can be used or a trench can be dug in the ground. Boats/dinghies can be launched from the campsite if desired so don't forget to have a current boat licence and fishing licence. If you are on a pension you will not need the fishing licence. Departure time will be 9.00am from the Lara RSL Hall and we will travel as a group.

If you can't get a caravan, tent etc, and don't have camping supplies don't count this as a non event, please call me and we will do our best to ensure you can join us. Everyone is welcome and the cost will be minimal. If you can help out with extra tents, etc let me know also. Bring your musical instruments for some entertainment around the campfire.

Call Wendy on 0439 001 388 to put your name down, or to offer assistance. She

### Upcoming Social Events

Watch The Slouch Hat for details

**Melbourne Aquarium and either the Prahran or Queen Victoria Market**  
September 27

**Glenelg River Holiday at Nelson**  
September 29 to October 4

**Christmas Break-Up taken by coach to a surprise destination**  
November 18

**Beach Cricket Match**  
February 2007

## Geelong VV Memorial

Nigel Wilson

The City of Greater Geelong replaced the Memorial sign in July 2005 (pictured below) and it



is now of a similar style to the Boer War Memorial near Kardinia Park. Metal VVAA badges were also added to the sign. It certainly looks very smart and enhances the Memorial. Many thanks go to the City of Greater Geelong for carrying

out this work.

It had been observed that the lettering on the faces of the Memorial had faded. Contact was made with the original contractors, Buckle Brothers, who agreed to repaint the lettering. This work was completed in early August 2005, just in time for Vietnam Veteran's Day. We thank Caroline Buckle for arranging to get the work done so quickly.

The Memorial remains very much on public display and it was important that the repairs and maintenance indicated above were able to be done to keep it in good shape. Many thanks also go to Frank Cunningham and others, who con-

stantly keeps a look for any other item of maintenance that may need attending to.

Recently, the Memorial floodlights have been causing problems, so we are working, again with the City of Greater Geelong, to arrange for replacement floodlights.

To enable us to be a part of the Osborne Park management, our Sub Branch regularly attends meetings of the Osborne Park Association. This keeps us up to date with happenings at Osborne House and the Osborne Park area and very importantly gives a strong indication that have a pecuniary interest in the area, by way of our Memorial being situated where it is.

# ANZAC DAY SERVICES - 2006

## GEELONG

### CENOTAPH, JOHNSON PARK

**4:15 am**

Followed by breakfast at the Geelong RSL

### JOHNSON PARK 11:00 am

Form up in front of Officeworks at 10:30  
to march off at 10:45

## TORQUAY

### POINT DANGER

**6:00 am**

Form up in Price Street at 5:30 to march off at 5:45

## COLAC

### Dawn Service at 6:00 AM

### Church Service at St Mary's at 11:00

Followed by a march back to the RSL

## New Bike Group

Michael Byrne

I am interested in establishing a Bike Group for all members of the G&DVVAA and their partners or friends.

This includes members from Colac, the Otways and other outlying areas in our District.

Bike riding is an invigorating, low impact activity that will help you maintain good levels of aerobic fitness and situational awareness.

Age need not be a barrier. Many veteran riders ride well into their seventies. I met one such rider last week on the Grammar School bike path, a local Nasho, who rides more than 230 kms a week.

Yes, winter is not too far away but with layers of warm clothing and gloves, a brisk bike ride on a chilly day gets you outdoors and some beautiful

clean air into your lungs.

I am happy to arrange one or two rides per week. We'll start on the Barwon River and other local bike paths and will build up slowly to longer rides.

Great rides in the district include the many excellent Geelong bike paths, the Bellarine Rail Trail, the Skipton -Ballarat Rail Trail, Angahook State Forest, and some quiet roads in the Western District.

To get started you will need a bike with gears and good brakes. Bikes with thin rims and tyres aren't suitable for bush tracks. Mountain bikes or hybrids (cross between a

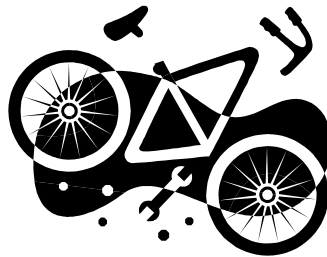
mountain and racing bike) are best

If you don't have a bike and would like to buy one, used or new, and you don't have any bike experience, feel free to contact me for assistance.

You will also need good a quality helmet that affords you protection for your good quality head, a shower-proof jacket, and as the weather gets colder, warm gloves.

We'll plan some flexibility into our riding schedule to avoid riding in strong winds or heavy rain.

Riding speed will be in the order of 15-25 kms/hr on the flat. If some riders wish to ride at higher average speeds, or take longer rides we can form two groups.



*"Bike riding is an invigorating, low impact activity. It helps you maintain good levels of aerobic fitness and situational awareness."*

Phone Michael Byrne on 5278 5500 (or email him on [mpbyrne@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mpbyrne@ozemail.com.au)) if you are interested in joining the Bike Group.

**The rides will take place each Thursday commencing at 10:00 AM.**

The first of four weekly 'Getting Started' rides commence on April 6th and will take place on the Barwon River Bike Path (one loop). These rides will commence from the car park under the Queens Park Bridge on the city (eastern) side of the river.

# Vietnam Veterans Day 2006

Peter Liefman

**2006 is the 40th anniversary of Long Tan making this year's Vietnam Vets Day an important milestone for the Vietnam Veterans community.**

*"There is now an average of about 2000 veterans each year, who march the short distance up the Shrine forecourt, led by the Australian Army Band."*

*This is a memo from Peter Liefman, the Chair of the VVAA's Victorian Branch committee for the 2006 Vietnam Veterans Day, to the Sub Branches.*

The Victorian Branch of the VVAA is the host organization for the annual Vietnam Veterans Day commemoration at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.

This event at the Shrine has grown considerably in the last decade and a half, in terms of both the numbers of veterans in attendance and as to its level of recognition. There is now an average of about 2000 veterans each year, who march the short distance up the Shrine forecourt, led by the Australian Army Band. The Governor usually graces us with his attendance, the US and NZ Consuls and other ex-service organization State Presidents also attend. The Premier has indicated that he is likely to attend again this year, particularly because it is the 40th anniversary of Long Tan.

In that regard, the maker of the original Long Tan cross has agreed to make us a full size replica and we propose using it as a centrepiece for the day. One of my local VVAA Sub-Branch (West Gippsland) members is Denise Drysdale and subject to the approval of the Council at the State Conference this coming weekend, she and another Vietnam entertainer Marcia Jones, will

sing a song dedicated to the men.

Like other similar events, this gathering of veterans, their families and friends at the Shrine is a public affirmation of service and for that reason it is an important part of the journey, home and a focus for the Ceremony at the Shrine. The State Government, through the Premier's office have offered to support the event and discussions are underway about the form and substance of that support.

The Federal Government has also determined to provide particular support for the 40th anniversary of Long Tan and Admiral Simon Harrington, a Repatriation Commissioner has been given the job of overseeing its form and substance. At the suggestion of the ESO committee put together by the Repatriation Commissioner, state level committees have also been established. The Victorian group is made up of representatives from the VVAA, VVFA, TPI Federation and the RSL, with the DVA Deputy Commissioner as the Chair.

That committee is in front of some of the other states, in that we have now met twice. The actual amount of funding to be made available will be decided around the budget in May, although there has been some allowance for necessary decisions, which are required because of e.g., the time it takes to organise events.

The State ESO Committee are presently investigating the feasibility of the holding of civic

receptions across the state, in the week leading up to 18/8 and prompted by letters of encouragement to all the Councils from Government (perhaps by both the Premier and the Veterans Affairs Minister ?).

The committee are also looking at the possibility of a Government House based reception (perhaps on the Sunday after 18/8), to which Long Tan veterans and members of the families of deceased Vietnam veterans (who enlisted in Victoria in our case) would be invited to attend.

Given the short time frame between the announcement of the actual amount of funding and 18/8, the committee's aim is to try and do as much of the groundwork as possible. Given the state wide focus, both the ESO committee and the VVAA (Shrine related) committee would appreciate any input they might receive from the Vietnam veteran community and ideas and suggestions are more than welcome.

***The Geelong & District Sub Branch usually has 10-20 members turn out for the march to the Shrine.***

***Is there any reason why we can't get 50 there in 2006?***

## ADVISER GROUP FINANCIAL PLANNING

*For personal financial advice including Centrelink and DVA issues*

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# Orange Arm Bands Roger Tingley M.C.

I read have read the variously reported comments of Do-bell/McLeod and co with interest, and a degree of empathy.

Here are my personal observations. Hopefully, they will accord me the same rights: to calm, free, speech.

1. I firmly respect the rights of those proposing the orange armbands to free speech and the sharing of ideas! Many of us fought for that. It is supposedly one of the cornerstones of our society and a core principle for all of our elected officials.
  2. I too believe that the care of ex-service personnel is not only steadily, but also quite stealthily and deviously, being eroded and, certainly, not keeping up with economic times.
  3. ANZAC Day is one of the few public occasions still left in this country that is still universally accepted, in peace and 'across the board' by the Australian people as a time for quiet reverence, for harmony, for respect and for sharing - for all ages and strata of our society (especially our kids!)
- So if any group wants to protest at/on/in our national ANZAC Day, even by just wearing orange coloured armbands, these are my concerns:
- History reflects that, especially in more recent society, no protest ever remains silent, spiritual, dignified, non physical, or the sole property of its originators for very long. So there is a degree of apprehension.
  - The choice of orange armbands is curious, as there is a frighteningly well-documented, very violent, very bloody history, irrevocably attached to the wearing of orange armbands. Might that be an excuse (some need little, if any, to incite fringe reaction).
  - Does anyone really want to encourage that, or accept indirect responsibility here?
  - If medal-wearing defenders of the nation and (who are) very much in the public eye on ANZAC Day, use that hallowed event to be seen, across the nation, as protesting from within the ranks of the event itself, that will become history and no one will ever be able to erase that, ever!
  - The gate will then have been demonstrably opened with the assumed sanction (and assumed 'in principle' support) of those who displayed their armbands to any group in society that might choose ANZAC day as an appropriate or 'useful' national forum to be seen to protest, about anything.
  - Where will orange armband wearers draw the lines for future ANZAC Days? How will they control that? Who will still want to march?

- Whatever your admirable principles and high morality, you will be actively contributing to another (and possibly fatal) question mark over the future of ANZAC Day.
- Whether you like it or not (and you won't have any say because this is the very society of free speech that you are for - the nature of the Australian.
- People is such, that if anything goes wrong, they are likely to remember the time as "those blokes who helped to wreck ANZAC Day".
- We don't have that many traditions left in this country. Society seems to be intent on tearing down and trampling all that are left. The countries that don't have any traditions are often a real mess.

So please protest if you must. I will support you when and where appropriate.

My personal record of protest, over the decades, at various public injustices, and my own submission for the Clark Report, are a matter of written record.

But please do not denigrate ANZAC Day, even indirectly!

---

*Editor's note: Mr Tingley's email has been reprinted with very minor editing. Please email me if you wish to have a copy of the original email as forwarded by State.*

*You may have noticed in one of the papers, a few weeks ago, a story about two Vietnam Veterans (not from this state) who planned to protest the erosion of veterans benefits by wearing an orange armband during the ANZAC Day March*

*This matter was not raised or discussed at our sub branch meeting on March 20.*

*On March 21 an email was passed on from the State Branch. The email is from Roger Tingley, MC. It is re-printed without comment.*

*If anyone is considering wearing an orange armband during the Geelong ANZAC Day March could they please contact our president, Kevin Bate, and make him aware of your intentions. Kevin can be contacted on 0428 822 723*

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MIA MEMBER

# It's Time For Some R&C



Email me your best jokes. If we have room - and they are not too off colour, we'll give 'em a run.  
mpbyrne@ozemail.co.au

After a long night of making love, he notices a photo of another man on her nightstand by the bed.

He begins to worry. "Is this your husband?" he nervously asks. "No, silly," she replies, snuggling up to him.

"Your boyfriend, then?" he continues. "No, not at all," she says, nibbling away at his ear.

"Is it your dad or your brother?" he inquires, hoping to be reassured. "No, no, no!!!" she answers.

"Well, who the hell is he, then?" he demands.

"That's me before the surgery."



As Camilla was making last-minute preparations to walk down the aisle, she found that her shoes were missing. She was forced to borrow her sister's, which were a bit on the small side.



When the day's festivities were finally over, Charles and Camilla retired to their room, right next door to the Queen's and Prince Phillip's.

As soon as Charles and Camilla were inside their room, Camilla flopped on the bed and said, "Darling, please get these shoes off. My feet are killing me."

The ever-obedient Prince of Wales attacked the right shoe with vigour, but it was stuck fast.

"Harder!" Camilla yelled. "Harder!" "I'm trying, darling!" The Prince yelled back. "It's just so bloody tight!" "Come on! Give it all you've got!"

There was a big groan from the Prince, and then Camilla exclaimed, "There! That's it! Oh that feels good! Oh that feels sooo good!"

In the bedroom next door, the Queen turned to Prince Phillip and said, 'See? I told you, with a face like that she was still a virgin.'

Back in the bridal suite, Charles was trying to pry off the left shoe.


"Oh, my God, darling! This one's even tighter!" exclaimed the heir to the throne.

At which Prince Phillip turned to the Queen and said, "That's my boy. Once a Navy man, always a Navy man!"

## Vets Merchandise

- 
- Beanies with VAA colour bar logo \$12.00
  - Peak Caps with VAA colour bar Logo \$12.00
  - Polo Shirts with VAA Logo \$28.00
  - Stubby Holders \$8.00
  - Denim Shirt only in long sleeve \$32.00
  - Windcheaters with Logo, crew neck \$30.00, V Neck \$32.00 all colours
  - Chambray cotton blue shirt long sleeve \$32.00, Short sleeve \$ 31.00
  - 1/2 Zip Windcheater with collar \$ 39.00
  - 1/2 Zip Fleece Jumper \$32.00
  - Full Zip Fleece Jumper/ Jacket \$ 44.00
  - Geelong Sub -Branch name tags \$15.00
  - Medal Holder (Plastic) \$7.50
  - Colour Bar Stickers Small \$3.00 Large \$5.00
  - VVAA Lapel Badges, Small \$6.00, Large \$ 7.00
  - Key Rings various \$7.00
  - Number Plate surrounds ( 4 Types, Set of 2 - White - Aust Viet Veteran, Set of 2 - Black We Were Winning etc, set of 2 - Black - A Proud Viet War Vet, Set of 2 - White - Aust War Veteran \$ 12.00.
  - Belt Buckles various \$26.00
  - Hopefully we will have some embroidered Ties by ANZAC Day

All items on sale at the Vets Office and ANZAC Day.



**Corio Bay**  
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- Sports Psychology
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**TPI Travel Group** - Brian Harley, Ray Watt and Bill Meeke are three local members of the TPI's Travel Group that regularly link up with up to 20 other vet campers from Victoria and NSW. Trips planned for the next 12 months or so include Bright, Wentworth, Corowa, Lake Pyans and Port Fairy.

If you are interested in joining the group, contact Laurie Woods (from Bairnsdale) woodie@tadaust.com.au.

# Genetic Haemochromatosis A Local Veteran

About five years ago, I wasn't feeling all that flash. I felt a little run down and lacked energy.

So the family doctor decided to 'run some bloods'. A few days later he unceremoniously announced that I had haemochromatosis and that it was incurable.

"What's next? Do I book the funeral? Are they going to drop me off on a deserted island with a cut lunch and a pistol?" But by the look on my doctor's face, I knew that I wasn't about to kick the bucket any time soon. If detected early, haemochromatosis is one of the most treatable disorders you can have.

So what is haemochromatosis and how the hell did I get it?

Haemochromatosis is a blood disorder, an inborn error of iron metabolism that causes the body to absorb more 'iron' from food than usual.

And it's all my parents' fault! The disorder is quite common in people of Celtic descent (Irish and Scots).

Here's the kicker. If you have haemochromatosis, and it goes untreated, the excess iron in your body will ultimately enlarge and damage your liver, and will lead to other problems such as cirrhosis, heart disease and a whole lot of other crap you don't want to know about.

Both sexes are at risk but women tend to develop the condition later in life as regular menstrual periods deplete the body of blood.

It seems that my mum or dad (or possibly both) were a carrier of the haemochromatosis gene and passed it onto me. Fortunately, not all carriers develop the condition themselves - but they still may pass on the mutated gene to their children. My brother and sister, for example, have been

tested and don't have the disorder.

However, here's another kicker. One in seven people carry the gene and therefore are at risk.

The symptoms may be quite insidious, like mine were. Often the disorder is difficult to diagnose (without the blood tests) because its symptoms are similar to those caused by a range of other illnesses.

Now the good news. First, if you think you are at risk. Ask your GP to arrange a blood test for iron studies. The test is simple and quick.

Second, if you are diagnosed with haemochromatosis, treatment is by venesection (blood letting). This procedure is similar to making a blood donation. Once your iron levels have normalised, your doctor will arrange for you to have regular blood lettings to maintain the appropriate levels.

*For more information about haemochromatosis, contact the Haemochromatosis Society Australia's web site: [www.haemochromatosis.org.au](http://www.haemochromatosis.org.au)*

*"...haemochromatosis is one of the most treatable disorders you can have."*

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## Honour The Dead And Fight Like Hell For The Living

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You may find some errors in this Newsletter. That is in keeping with our policy of having something for everyone.