



VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA - GEELONG & DISTRICT SUB BRANCH



31 Mt Pleasant Road, Belmont.

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“THE SLOUCH HAT” – NEWSLETTER *JULY 2020*

Welcome to the July 2020 issue of the Geelong and District Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Newsletter – *“The Slouch Hat.”*

Your “Vietnam Veterans Centre” is located at
31 Mt. Pleasant Road, Belmont.
Telephone: **03 5243 3700.**



As from June 10th, the Centre has re-opened, and is again open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday (except public holidays) from 10am to 3 pm. Call in and have a coffee, a social chat, or to just get the latest gossip.

The number of people allowed into the Centre is currently limited and social distancing is required as per State Government Covid-19 Regulations. These conditions will be adhered to within the Centre until further notice. Anyone entering the Centre are required to record their name and contact details. If you have cold like symptoms or feel unwell, DO NOT VISIT THE CENTRE, and consider making arrangements to be tested.

*****URGENT: More volunteers are still required to help staff the office, so if you have a free day, and would like to be a part of the team, call the office, or drop in and find out more about how you can help, and keep the centre open.**

Check out the Geelong Vietnam Veterans website as above (or call our office) for any information regarding meetings, lunch dates or events happening throughout 2020.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members

This year has certainly been out of the ordinary so far. Few of us have experienced a pandemic and its subsequent impact on the lives of those who contract the virus, the doctors and nurses who treat them, those who are in isolation and the huge economic consequences. For too many, life will never be the same!

Your Association responded to the pandemic restrictions by contacting all members by phone and asked ‘Are You OK?’ I am glad to report that in the majority of cases our members and their partners were coping and were being supported by their immediate family members and neighbours.

In a few cases we provided direct assistance. As most of us make up the vulnerable age cohort particular restrictions such no contact with grandchildren was especially difficult. Also, in some cases our ability to buy necessary supplies. We will never take toilet paper for granted again!

It was a great shame that we were unable to hold public ANZAC Dawn services, attend wreath laying ceremonies or participate in the ANZAC Day parade. But we found new ways to honour our fallen comrades through the 'Light up the dawn' event, where people stood in silence in their driveways with candle in hand. It seems the salute was given across Australia.

Just before COVID 19 restrictions were imposed members of the Committee removed many of our museum memorabilia items from storage in Osborne House. Some of our Committee have been going over these items and identifying the owner who donated them. It is our intention to return these items to those who left them in our care. Other items may be donated to the National Vietnam Museum in time. It is a lengthy process as there are more than 2000 items. We also have the display cabinets and other furniture still in storage, which we will have to deal with in the future.

Discussions continue over the future of Osborne House and I have attended several face-to-face and Zoom meetings in support of the Osborne Park Association campaign to see the property restored and re-occupied. It is now clear that our Association will not return to Osborne House. We should be thankful that for over seven years we enjoyed a wonderful venue, held memorable events and enjoyed the company of our mates in a place with the million-dollar views of Corio Bay.

As part of our history there are many records of our Association which we hold. I am looking for a person (s) who would enjoy getting our historical records into some order. I suggest one or two days a week could be devoted to the task. All the records are held at the VV Centre in Belmont. If interested let our Secretary, Gary Ryan, know.

You may have noticed that the Vietnam memorial on Melbourne Road has been cleaned and revitalized. We also had new VVAA flags made. We have a couple of gardeners looking after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. The park looks great. Thanks guys.

I have completed the application to CoGG to hold our Geelong VV Day march and service on Sunday 16th August. We are hoping COVID19 restrictions have been lifted by then. I am assuming that the Melbourne VV Day on the 18th August will also go ahead. We will keep you informed. Current issues we are working on include:

- The reopening of the VV Centre, Belmont (Now open from Wednesday June 10th).
- Return of Committee and General monthly meetings. **First meeting Monday July 13th.** (Committee members only)
- The proposed sale of Vasey RSL Care and the impact this will have on the Vietnam, and other veterans, living in the independent living units at Vasey Village Bell Park.
- The future of Osborne House as a community asset.
- Our museum memorabilia return.
- Social activities for members.
- Return of 'pay day' lunches at the Geelong RSL.

I hope that Victoria, and all of Australia, will return to a new normal soon. I look forward to catching up again.

Rieny Nieuwenhof – President G & DVVAA

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Special Notice ####:

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 18th AUGUST 2020:

The Melbourne Vietnam Veterans Day March scheduled for August 18th, has been cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Due to the requirements of the City of Greater Geelong in regards to events and gatherings, the Geelong Vietnam Veterans March and Memorial Service in August **has also been cancelled.**

Meetings: Monday July 13th, 2020. (**Committee only, due to Covid-19 restrictions**)
Monday August 11th, 2020.
Monday September 14th, 2020.
Monday October 12th, 2020.

** Meetings commence 10.00am: at the Vietnam Veterans Centre, 31 Mt Pleasant Road, Belmont.

As yet, fortnightly Pay Day lunches, regular Ladies Lunches and Pako B.B.Q, do not have a scheduled re-commencement date, but as soon as Covid-19 restrictions are further relaxed (or removed), you will be advised.

Below are the regular arrangements for these events when they return.

Pay Day Lunches:

** All lunches commence at 12.00noon, at the Geelong R.S.L. (Newlands Room), Belmont – check the website or regular emails from Gary Ryan (Secretary) for updates on any changes. Contact the Veterans Centre Monday, Wednesday or Friday to make your bookings, or telephone the Centre on 03 52433700 and leave a message. Bookings must be made no later than the Wednesday prior to the lunch date for catering purposes.

Ladies Lunch Dates:

Ladies, please keep your eye out for regular emails outlining the Ladies Lunches, held on the third (3rd) Thursday of each month, at various venues in the Geelong area. If you require further information please contact the Centre (03 52433700) or Sue Ryan (0413 743900) for details.

'Pako BBQ': Still postponed indefinitely due to Covid-19 restrictions.

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NEWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING OSBORNE HOUSE MUSEUM MEMORABILIA: In February, your committee made the decision to remove all of the items held in storage, following the closure of the Museum at Osborne House. This decision was made after much discussion regarding the long-term future of Osborne House, and the possibility of the museum being relocated to alternative premises which may be provided by the City of Greater Geelong. It was felt that the extended time frame for a decision on the Museum premises was an unacceptable situation. A large portion of the memorabilia was retrieved from storage at Osborne House and placed in our Mt Pleasant Rd office. The remaining items will be retrieved as soon as we have access to the Osborne House premises.

All items are being identified and catalogued as to who donated them to the museum. Once this process has been completed, all donors will be contacted and arrangements made for them to pick up their items, or determining what should happen to them. Individual contact will be made with each contributor when items are ready for their return.

Contact details for most of the contributors are known by Curator Les Fuller. Below is a list of contributors whose contact details are unknown, so if you know any person on the list, or know somebody who does, please contact Les Fuller with any information you may have.

Stephen Bond	John Brown	Geoff Cantrill	Thomas Cavanagh
Michael Chadwick	Laurie Clark	Geoff Connors	Adrian Dickson
James Emond	Don Gerling	James Guthridge	Peter Hedrick
Murray Lewis	Graham McMaster	Ian McNaughton	Matthew Sherriff
Bill Smart	Lisa Smith	Mark Szulc	Dan Thatcher
Chris Yeoman			

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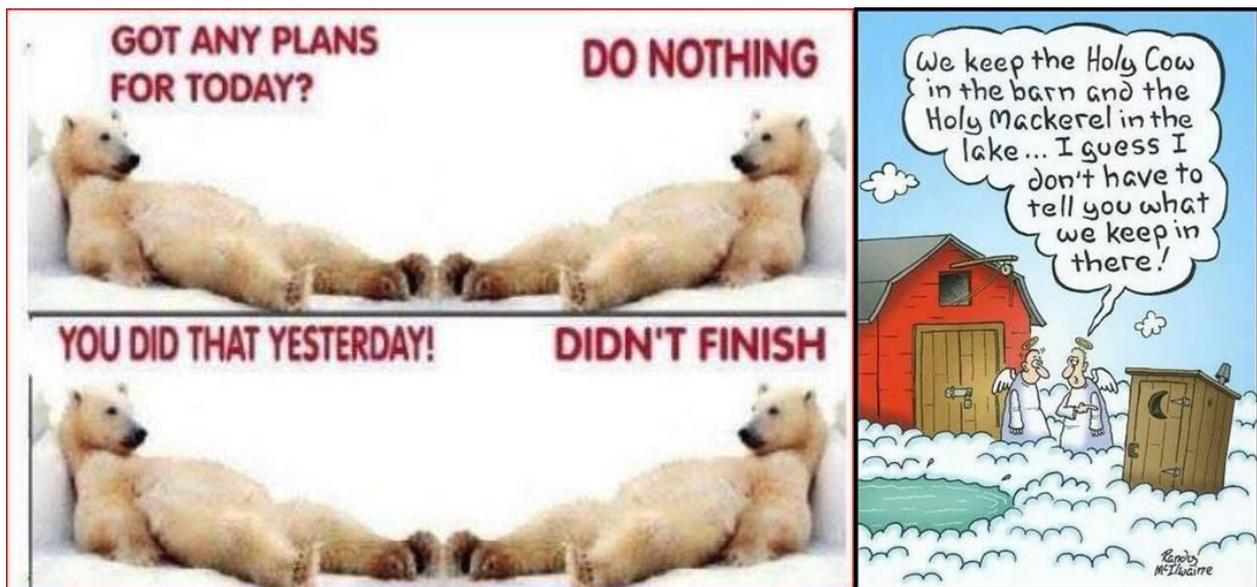
Thanks to Andy Treffry's "eagle eyes", the graffiti that had been sprayed on panels in the Avenue of Honour and at our Memorial by some brain-dead moron, has been reported to council and subsequently removed. The cleaning of the Memorial and the plaques and the restoration of the lettering has also been completed, around the middle of May this year, and looks great. The photos that follow don't do the job done true justice.



On April 25th, ANZAC Day, a small group of members led by President Rieny, attended at the Memorial for a brief wreath laying ceremony. Wreathes were laid on behalf of the G. & D.V.V.A.A., City of Greater Geelong, and the Geelong R.S.L. Several people had earlier left flowers at the Memorial.



SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT



VALE

It is with sadness that we advise the passing of Brian Charles HARLEY, Service No. R58321, on 15th June 2020. Service History, 27/1/1963 to 8/11/1971 on HMAS Quiberon and HMAS Derwent.

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Anzac Day, 2020

It feels quite strange, and lonely too, not being with me mates.
After all, it's Anzac Day, a special day, of many varied fates.
It's a hollow feel, of NQR, like Nineteen Sixty-Eight,
When I flew off so boldly far, and learned just how to hate.

When I first marched down Swanston St and onwards to the Shrine,
I wondered if I'd earned the right, is this honour justly mine?
But soon I knew, indeed I did, that I belonged all right.
'Cos there, along the route, a most unexpected sight.

They clapped and cheered, these refugees, they'd shout "cảm ơn, cảm ơn!"
And hold aloft a beaming child, an Aussie flag there son?
But what's this mist across my eye, and tightness in my chest?
A soldier doesn't cry my boy, don't stumble on the test!

And yet my feet went left and right, left, right, steps on air,
For marching right beside me, a wraith, a head of snowy hair.
Fighting on the Western Front, he'd copped one in the head,
Yet lived to tell the story, to a grandson, of that piece of lead.

So on I strode, my throat just locked, choking back the pride,
My mates, and Pa, chins aloft, arms swinging by our side.
And now this bloody virus has tipped that out the ute!
No dawn to greet, side-by-side, no march to the salute.

No jangle of the medals, no shouts from ragged ranks:
"Mind the horse shit coming up, damn those bloody tanks!"
No mates around, no beer in hand, two-up gone belly-up.
A year to forget, this twenty-twenty, stick it in yer cup!

Yet again, faces to the foe, at dawn and through the day,
On drives and balconies, pipes and bugles still came out to play.
Yet again The Ode bestrode the dawn, and we remembered them,
Across the land, we bowed our heads, never to forget.

Yet again we raised a frothy glass, a lonely one perhaps,
But maybe that's all we need to say a word of thanks.
For "we are one, and we are many, and from many lands we come"
To honour those before us, who made Australia "Mum".

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Foxholes of the Mind – Media Release.

Bernard Clancy's riveting stage play about PTSD, Foxholes of the Mind, is all set to go on a national tour in 2021, to be performed in SA, WA, TAS and ACT. This initiative is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (go to www.dss.gov.au for more grant information).

A detailed touring schedule follows soon.

Foxholes premiered at La Mama theatre in Carlton in 2010 to virtually full houses and toured regional Victoria in 2016. It had a profound effect on veterans, first responders, wives and families and was widely acclaimed by critics and audiences alike.

Playwright Bernard Clancy, a Vietnam veteran, says: "I'm very excited to see Foxholes go national. It's a terrific opportunity to highlight PTSD and just how damaging it can be to our community, particularly our defenders and first responders. I'm extremely grateful to the Australian Government Department of Social Services for supporting this community initiative.

"I originally wrote Foxholes because I wanted to highlight the tragedy of PTSD, to try to stop the terrible waste and destruction of the human spirit that PTSD entails. "Much is being done to try to counter PTSD, not only in the military sense, but also for first responders who deal with trauma, sometimes extreme, on a regular basis.

“Foxholes is a non-clinical story about how a family, and its extended contacts and friends, are affected by PTSD. It shows how it can be identified and managed; it’s about caring for those who come home from conflict, in our name, with wounds of the mind. “If the play prompts just one veteran, police member, nurse, firey or ambo with PTSD to seek help, then I’ll be very happy indeed.” The play will be directed again by Wolf Heidecker. His production company, WHAM, is the producer on behalf of the Geelong Sub-Branch of the Vietnam Veterans’ Association of Australia, of which Bernard is a Vice President; Auspice/Insurance by Auspicious Arts Projects Inc. Bernard Clancy is also the author of the acclaimed Vietnam war novel Best We Forget and the comedy The Zipper...

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For further information on any of the abovementioned events, please contact our Vietnam Veterans Centre, Belmont, on 03 5243 3700. The above list of events is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, so don’t forget to check out the Sub-branch Website: <https://geelongvietnamvets.com> to see latest details.

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