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NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESIDENTS REPORT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT/ AGM 24 AUGUST 2019

This will be my last report for some time from Australia; I am moving to China on 31st August indefinitely however distance will not cause any problems with managing the Association with the rest of the committee. I am fortunate I have managed to get a Q1 visa which allows me to come and go from China without all the paperwork required to get a visa.

As you are aware the committee lives all over Australia at present I am in Newcastle, the Secretary and Vice President in Queensland and Treasurer in Victoria. This has been the case for many years.

This last 12 months has seen the Association move ahead in leaps and bounds after a short period of stagnation. Here at the AGM our Secretary and or Treasurer will give you all the membership details, but we are extremely happy at the number of new Life Subscribers and Ordinary Members renewals, some had not been financial for some time.

The committee is trying to give our members some interesting reading in the Newsletter with articles relevant to our member's health and of general interest to old Gunners.

The committee is also really pleased at the numbers attending the Gunner Dinner tonight especially those who have travelled so far to attend. When looking at the 195 persons attending the Dinner both the 101 Field Battery Malaya and SVN attendees are nearly one third of people attending.

We must not forget that many of the 101 Field Battery Malaya group also went to Vietnam in particular our number one gun Sgt Jim King who served most of his adult life in the Corps rising to the rank of Major. Thanks Jim for all your service to the guns and from me personally it has been a pleasure to have known you from when I was a number 3 on the gun back in 1962 at Wacol where you were the number 7 and during all those bloody L5 demonstrations all over the place. I see Brian Flewell-Smith there, he was on the Demo gun too.

The sale of our plaques, caps etc has been beyond expectations and more stock is being ordered.

In conclusion I must thank the Committee for their tireless work behind the scenes, without them we would not be here this afternoon.

I hope you have a really good night tonight at the dinner.

There are only about half the numbers normally here but 16 AD Regiment had a huge 50th Anniversary last month so their usual couple of tables are empty. All the Regiments are either on major exercises or on leave after Ex Tasman Sabre

PROFILE **KNOX NAPIER** **1966/67 TOUR**

I began my army career when I entered RMC Duntroon in Jan '61 for four years of rigorous training. Needless to say there were diversions when I transgressed most capital offences and avoided the maximum consequences. I don't think that helped me in the long run.

December '64 saw graduation and posting to 4Fd Regt at Wacol. After completion of the YO's (young officers) course at the School of Artillery for 13 weeks, back to Wacol in May '65, I was given the job of GPO 101 Bty. From then

after 105 Bty was deployed to SVN in September '65 it was clear that 101 Bty would replace 105 in September '66, which of course we did. I remained GPO until February '67 when I was promoted to Captain and moved to FO with B Coy 6RAR after a month in HQ 1ATF Arty Tac.

On return to Australia, I was posted to BC HQ Bty, 1Fd Regt until January '68 when I went to AGWTU (Army Guided Weapons Trials Unit) Woomera, in South Australia. After two and a half years in July'70, I was posted to HQ RAA 1Div in Sydney, based on the first floor of the Koala Motor Inn in Oxford St at the height of the Viet Nam protests so very secretive and no uniforms.

In September'71 I headed to the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham in the UK for a fifteen month Army Staff Course. While in the UK, I was promoted to major but only found out when I received a payslip in January'72 with a pay rise. On return to Australia, it was to Materiel Branch, Army Office, Canberra for three years until in January'76, I was posted to Woodside in South Australia as 2IC of 16AD Regt. Two years later I was back in Canberra and after two years more this time in Operations Branch, I was posted to DTRIALS in Defence at Campbell Offices still in Canberra.

In February'82, I resigned from the Regular Army and bought a rural property near Murrumbateman in NSW just out of Canberra with the intention of building a piggery, which after overcoming many obstacles I managed to do. In 1996 I sold the property and moved to Tasmania which had been a long term objective for many years and finished here in Dover, almost as far south as you can go. I spent a couple of years working in Real Estate but did not like the way some things were done, so left it.

After Viet Nam I had never had any interest in the RSL due to their attitude but down here I was approached by the secretary of the Esperance Sub-Branch and in the end I joined. Three years later I was elected president which I held for sixteen years until I resigned in 2017. In 2018 I was made a Life Member of the League.

I started the Dover Probus Club as secretary/treasurer twenty years ago and just gave that job up earlier this year. For a long time, I have been treasurer of the U3A Geeveston group, so even in retirement I have had plenty to do. Over the last twelve months I have had trips to China and Sri Lanka and in November am off to Borneo.

We all had adventure years ago but it does not need to stop now.

PROFILE
LBDR GRAHAM BAKER
1969/70 TOUR

I was born in Perth 4.12.1947, I have two younger brothers and we grew up in Geraldton.

My family was very poor hence we used to catch fish every week to survive.

I completed a 4- year apprenticeship as a Welder. I was then conscripted for National Service in the 12th Intake , May 1968. And arrived at Puckapunyal on the 1st May.

Following basic training I was posted to the School of Artillery North Head and on completion to Enoggera where 101 Bty was being formed.

Harry Alidenes took me down to meet his family and girlfriend Adele many times in his little Anglia.

I went home to WA at Xmas by train for leave, 5 days both ways!

My father was very sick with cancer and every pay received whilst in the army I sent money home to my mother so ended up with very little for myself.

When we were at Canungra, Harry had his Anglia hidden in the area and used to go to town with a couple of other men for a cold beer.

I was on Delta gun with Brian Flewell-Smith as No 1. I enjoyed the helicopter trips to the Fire Support Bases.

I came home to Australia for R&R.

At FSB Thrust I let a Claymore Mine off just before evening stand to. Ian McCleary dared me to as he said Delta Gun crew was a bunch of fairies. I claimed water caused the clacker to short out. BK Alan Batchelor knew different as he saw McCleary and I in the gun pit together.

On discharge I found my way to Geraldton to start my life again. I got a good job at Mt Newman driving a backhoe. Worked there and at Port Headland and Karratha for most of my working life.

I have been back to Vietnam 20 times in the past 8 years. I love the people and the country and normally stay 3-4 weeks.

I have had all the Lymph Glands cut out of my right armpit, full of melanomas.

Hopefully NO more!! Graham Baker 0427108361

Secretary's Report

We still have memorabilia available. Association Ties, Association Plaques, Association Caps, 101 Bty Polo Shirts (No pocket Size Large) and 101 Bty Operation Bribie Polo Shirts (No pocket Size Large).

The newsletter has been successful and that is due to members writing in with articles of interest, so keep them coming in.

Membership Details are as follows:

10 Annual Financial Members

140 Living (that we know of) Life Subscribers

20 Previously Ordinary members who are unfinancial

42 Persons who have never been financial

81 (that we know of) members who are deceased that were on our nominal roll

4 Honour Members (relations of deceased members) Since the last AGM in August last year we have had 17 New Life Subscribers and 4 new Annual Subscribers.

Suggestions for next year's Reunion

At the AGM held last month there were 3 locations suggested for the next reunion to be held in August or September next year:

1. Dover in Tasmania which is about 80 kms south of Hobart. It has an RSL where we could have the dinner, Caravan Park with cabins available or B & B's in the area. We have never had an Association reunion in Tasmania. There is no public transport in Dover so members would have to bring their own cars across from the mainland or hire a car from Hobart airport. There are quite a few tourist attractions in the area however at that time of year it will be quite cold. Our man on the ground down there is Knox Napier.
2. The next was Cairns where the weather would be a bit warmer however we need someone in the area to be the man on the ground to help coordinate everything. There are also plenty of tourist attractions in the area.
3. The last was Coffs Harbour which is pretty central for most states and we have David Bird down there who could help coordinate the reunion. There is plenty of accommodation there and we are pretty sure the RSL would be accommodating for the dinner and meet and greet.

The committee would like member's views on where they would prefer to have the reunion and any other suggestions for locations. Please email me at my email address above or give me a call before the committee makes a decision.

End of Mission

All members, please find attached a proforma we would like you to fill out and return to the Secretary by email or post. It is for when the time comes (and it will happen to all of us!) the Association can inform other members of your history whilst in the Army.

Meet & Greet/AGM/Gunners Dinner

The above events were very successful and enjoyable and a chance to meet up with old mates. A couple of photos from the dinner are attached.

Vale Michael Allwright

Michael's wife Kath advised the Association that Mick passed away this month (August). His funeral was held on 23rd August at Caloundra. The eulogy was done by Tony Mayfield and members of the Association attended his funeral. The Association sent a floral tribute.

Mick was born on 15/11/1942 and enlisted in the army on 18/5/1964. He served with 101 Bty in SVN in 1966/67 and was on the FO Party with Steve Gower during that time, he also served with 12 Fd Regt in SVN in 1971. He went on to serve with 4 Fd Regt in 1972 and 8/12 Medium Regt in 1977, he was discharged on 28/10/1980. Mick was a well-respected and liked person of the Battery.

Below a photo of Mick (second from the left) and other members of the battery in SVN in 1966/67.



Callsign 21. Left to Right, Peter McNamee, Mick Allwright, Jock Arbuthnot and John Achilles.
Photographer: Unknown.

R.I.P. Mick Ubique

Email from Katherine Allwright

The Association has received an email from Kath asking me to pass on her appreciation for member's thoughts to her and her son Greg during this sad time. In part her email said: "Would you please pass on my thanks to members of 101 Bty who have sent messages of condolence to me and our Son Greg.

I was truly touched by the members who came to Mick's funeral, some travelled far.

Please pass on to those members my sincere appreciation for being there. Yours sincerely, Kath Allwright"

Report by Dave Richard Preston on New Zealand V4 Company Reunion

Victor4 Company Reunion, Burnham Army Camp, New Zealand, 7-9 May 2019

The Reunion marked the 50th Anniversary of Embarkation of the Company from training at Terendak (Malaysia) to South Vietnam on 8 May 1969. My wife, Chris, and I were privileged to attend and I was honoured to represent the FO Party, and indeed 101 Battery Association on the occasion. The Battery of course, was in support of 6RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion 1969-70 and our TOD dates were almost identical to those of V4 (as distinct from Whiskey 2 and 3 Companies' six months each with the Bn).

The seven personnel who served all or part of their TOD in the FO Party attached to V4 were: Lt Dennis Barrow; Bdr Don (Bull) McLeod; Chris Dunker; Tony Parrelli (Deceased); Graham Bain; Phil Blunden and myself (Dave Richard-Preston).

Chris (that is my wife) had been trying to get me to tour New Zealand for decades. When Chris (Dunker) alerted me last September to the Reunion, I put the phone down and shouted to Chris, "Darl, we're going to NZ!" This had a twofold effect: Steam pouring from her ears; yet a smile on her face. She has dined-out (on me) ever since on the fact it took just a five minute telephone call from an old Army comrade to achieve what 30 years of her urging couldn't!

In this report you'll note that I've gone a bit NZ'y, such was the profound impression our Kiwi cousins and their country made upon us over a few weeks.

Dawn Service, ANZACDay

Our tour of NZ had us in Rotorua on the eve of ANZAC Day. So we were able to attend the Dawn Service at Muriuka Soldiers' Cemetery organised by the Te Arawa Maori Returned Services League. To the stirring Rotorua Highland Pipe Band, about 200 marched from Tama-te-kapua (Meeting House) to the Cemetery (and back again for rum and coffee). The service was very moving, attended by a congregation that runs into thousands each year. I had a good chat with Tom Hemopo (Mortar Fire Controller attached to 2 Platoon), thanks to Bruce Drysdale (HQ, V4) seeking him out for me. Ex-SAS, Tom was highly regarded as a consummate professional.

Day 1, Reunion: Afternoon 7 May 2019

Registration, or check-in for those pre-registered, was in the Sergeants' Mess, 2nd/1 Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, Burnham. The S'sM was 'HQ Socialising' for the entire Reunion. Every person registered received a flash lanyard for identification and security purposes. The lanyard was mandatory wear around base. A la dog tags, I'm sure some showered and slept with it on. Everyone was also given a stylish red and black carry bag, badged V4 and printed "Burnham 2019, 50th Anniversary of Deployment to Vietnam 1969-1970".

The vast bulk of Reunion attendees (about 130) lived-in the barracks. Much of the accommodation is scheduled for refurbishment next year, and, hence, was in a tired condition – but for \$55 per person per night, meals included, I'm sure all were very grateful, and give full credit to the organisers. IT WAS AN EXPERIENCE – and a touch of déjà vu for veterans, some of whom may have slept in the same room at times across several decades. For the womenfolk, it was probably just 'interesting'. We all took regular meals in the OR's Mess. Burnham Camp was, of course, where the nucleus of what was to become V4 was formed from late 1967, and where most Company personnel initially trained. The nostalgia didn't finish there either: A historic and extraordinary feature of the Reunion was the arrival of many attendees by two airlifts from North Island to Christchurch in the same C130 (RNZAF Hercules 7002) that took V4 from Changi Airport (Singapore) to Vung Tau for commencement of TOD, 8 May 1969: 50 years later in the same plane, virtually to the same day – can it get any more spooky than that? The flights were covered by TelevisionNZ1 News that night.

Mix and Mingle – Evening of the 7th

Naturally hospitable, although a bit 'dry' until the opening of the S'sM bar was sorted! Chris and I were made very welcome and confirmed our inclusion into the V4 Family (initiated by Geoff (Dicko) Dixon when I pursued registration back in September). They don't use the term 'Association', as it is all about family (and very close-knit, at that, in V4). Indeed, in addition to partners, it was pleasing to see so many children and grandchildren, as well as friends of the vets, at the Reunion.

Wednesday 8th May – the focal day

0830h Powhiri, Official/Maori Welcome by 2nd/1Bn. This featured: Assembly by the V4 Family at a respectful distance facing a Parade by the Bn; the customary exchange between the respective women; traditional challenge (were, to further determine the intent of those approaching) by three Bn warriors; a haka of awesome intensity and duration by the entire Parade; a glowing speech by Acting OC Maj Jeremy White (ex-Artillery), his theme included the outstanding Active Service and legacy of V4 (and like Units), what the veterans have endured since, and the respect in which they are all held by serving personnel; the impassioned response by Mackie Paaka on behalf of V4 as he thoughtfully paced in front of the now broken ranks (post-haka) of 1 Bn. Oratory is much prized in the mihi process, and Jeremy and Mackie did it justice – although I didn't understand half of what Mackie said (maybe because his first delivery was, per protocol, in Maori). The V4 veterans and the Bn then passed in single file greeting each other largely in hongi custom (truly one with each other in breath and spirit – no wonder the All Blacks play so strongly as a team!) A Maori lady asked me much later whether I had a sore forehead and a flat nose for a while. Gracious conversations, many with unabashed tears, were engaged by those on the Parade Ground. The Battalion, to a person, provided an unforgettable and treasured welcome. Then it was on to a poignant, yet uplifting, Church Service in the Old Theatre. Presided by John (Fiti) White, 2 Platoon (and now a Lay Minister), and Pastor Dave Page (a Pl medic). Photos will show the thoughtful layout of the improvised shrine, featuring the seven KIA/DOW/DOAS of V4. Quin Rodda (Capt, 2 I/C, V4) delivered the address focussing on postings work of V4 personnel after return from Vietnam and noting the prominent part veteran NCOs played in running and training of Units for Active Service. I was invited to lay a wreath on behalf of 6RAR and 101 Battery. The card I added read, *In memory of The Fallen, and those since passed away of Victor4 Company, 1969 – 2019. 101 Field Battery Association (Royal Australian Artillery)*. In addition to the Roll of Honour (7), the Order of Service contains an IN MEMORIAM (57, in order of passing-away since, I understand) in which Tony Parrelli is listed. Hymns/songs sung included Mighty Quinn – shades of the "just another half-hour, please" plea when the Company boozed in Nui Dat was supposed to shut – Quin usually acquiesced. Fifty years on and the boys still held the harmony which rung out from the Never Inn each of the nights between operations. Notably, two verses of the Australian National Anthem were sung near the end of the Service (not even done at commemorations in Australia, that I've attended) – perhaps it was to balance the laudable singing of the NZ National Anthem in Maori and English (?).

A V4 Family Meeting followed (Andy Peters, Chairman). Having accomplished its immediate task, the entire Executive and Reunion Committee dutifully stood-down to acclamation for an outstanding achievement. Special thanks were extended to Gordon Nairn (Secretary/Treasurer) and his wife Glenys, to which I added, at junctures, my personal gratitude for their help to Chris and me leading-up to and during the Reunion. Morrie Edwards was appointed the new Chair of V4 Family, then I lost track of other appointees to the new Committee. There were some passionate speakers about entitlements to veterans – the New Zealanders seem to do it tougher than Australian vets. The impact upon partners and families was not overlooked. There was reference to the repatriation (Te Auraki) last year of some 28 NZ servicemen

buried overseas, including Jack Williams and Don Frith of V4. The key resolution of the meeting was that the next V4 Reunion will be in May 2021 at Masterton.

There was a screening of the documentary *VICTOR 4 COMPANY, VIETNAM 1969 – 70*. This premiered on NZ television (Maori TV) on ANZAC Day this year. It's an excellent production. The Coy flag that flew in Vietnam was the backdrop at several points. The documentary complements the Company book published in 2011, *A SOLDIER'S VIEW OF THE VIETNAM WAR: THE STORY OF VICTOR 4, V COY, 6RAR/NZ (ANZAC) BATTALION*, and includes interviews with John White, Geoff Dixon, Andy Peters, Paul Thomas, Sister Capt Pam Miley-Terry and Quin Rodda. An important segment was the very belated formal Welcome Home that NZ Vietnam Veterans got in 2008 (compared to 1987 in Australia). Note: I can provide Dicko's email to anyone wishing to acquire the doco DVD.

Presentations by 2nd/1 Bn. On the Parade Ground there were fire and movement drills and weapons displays. The V4 Family was encouraged to interact with questions. The kids seemed to like it. In the Theatre there was a comprehensive powerpoint on the Bn's establishment and equipment.

A meeting of NZVVA followed, chaired by Andy (who is President). Amongst a range of issues, more testimonies were heard.

At 1830h we gathered for the Reunion Dinner hosted by 2nd/1Bn in the S'sM. It was lavish, with about 200 seated. Placemats were printed with the V4 Shield and inscription. There were the usual toasts, such as to the Queen, 2nd/1 Bn, and the Fallen. I was asked to propose the toast to 6RAR and 101 Battery. There was no keynote address. Instead four people were picked to deliver brief insights. Sony Hona had been designated Master of Ceremonies (and had done his homework), but was somewhat usurped. The speakers grew in number and some speech grew in length. I finished up last cab-off-the-rank, so concisely: Conveyed apologies; said Tony had passed-away; related where surviving members of FO Party are now; told how pleased Dennis was to contribute to *A SOLDIERS' VIEW*; congratulated the driving forces behind this remarkable 335 page tome and all contributors, especially Dicko for his massive input; presented plaque from 101 Assn*, with special wishes from John Bertram for a memorable Reunion; on a more intimate note, presented plaque from the FO Party* to mark the occasion, advising that the Hunter-environs fellows cobbled it; explained that all the foregoing would have been Dennis's prerogative, and that I was merely deputising; congratulated Reunion organisers; and thanked Burnham Camp. In the light of *A SOLDIERS' VIEW* and his other work, it was not surprising that, during proceedings, Dicko was bestowed the position of Official Victor4 Historian (a promotion from Company Archivist!).

*Similarly worded, as appropriate: *Presented to V4 Company on the 50th Anniversary, 8 May 2019, of Embarkation to South Vietnam – From 101 Battery (RAA in support) Assn/FO Party 1969-70*

The last day (9th May)

This didn't see any of the mooted organised activities. I think most attendees were emotionally and physically exhausted. Chris and I did a bit more touring in the hire car and along with probably just a dozen others, spent the third night at the barracks.

Conclusion

The Reunion was a great experience, with the only disappointment being there was no sing-along. I would suggest to members of all FO Parties to take any opportunity to attend reunions of respective NZ companies. Given how special the 50th Anniversary Reunion of V4 was for me, put me down for the Centenary!

Dave

Attachments Below

- (1) 2nd/1 Battalion advances in Haka, Official Welcome
- (2) 2IC V4 1969 Capt Quinn Rodda receives 101 Bty Assoc plaque from Dave
- (3) Dave and Chris at the Official Dinner.

Australian Artillery's Involvement in the Battle of Long Tan

The following is Jim King's story of what led to the publication and of his episode prior to going to Vietnam and then the published article by Jim on the above topic.

"I wrote the article about twenty years after the battle of Long Tan. There was plenty written about the Infantry's role but nothing the role Artillery played during the battle. The CORP rang me and asked me would I give a presentation at what happened at the gun end during the battle. I was picked up from Bribie Island and sent to the School of Arty at

North Head for a week and met others who were in the battle. The GPO 103 Bty, Capt Hodder the FO from the Kiwi Bty, Bob Buick from D Coy, we all gave our recollection of what went on during the battle and it was recorded on cassette of which I have a copy. Sometime later 6 Battalion Assoc asked if I would write a piece on the battle so they could publish it in their Assoc magazine, which they did. As a result of that other personnel asked me for permission to use the story in books they were writing, which I gave. In reference to me going in the advance party for 101 Bty that is a story in itself. I marched out of the Regt Dec 1965 to the Transit depot at Enoggera to go to 105 Bty to take Sgt Merv Dux's place as he was not signing on. While at Enoggera I had to report to the orderly room at 0800 every morning to see if I was leaving that day, would you believe I did this to MAY 66. The powers to be decided that everyone going to Vietnam had to go through the Jungle training Centre at Canungra. I finally got to Vietnam on a QANTAS flight three days after the course, in time to assist in clearing the Task Force area with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. We waved goodbye to the 173rd and marched in to the Regt on 6 Jun 66. I stayed on with 101 Bty when they came in Sept 66."

A Gun Sergeants Recollections of Long Tan – from the gun end – by Jim King

At approximately 1330 hrs on the 18th August 1966, 105 Field Battery returned to their base camp from an alternative position within the task force area where they had been supporting an operation further north.

The previous night at about 0100hrs, 1 ATF was mortared and 105 BTY was involved in counter battery fire against the enemy for the remainder of the night

The gunners were looking forward to getting established in the main gun position so rest periods could be organized. This was not to occur.

At about 1530hrs we had just finished the normal routines such as bringing the guns back into action and replenishing the ammunition which had been fired the previous night when we heard the Kiwi Bty open up. We guessed from the rate of fire they were on to something and when "Fire mission Regiment" came over the Tannoy system we knew it was bigger than normal.

During the next three hours the battle raged and the gunners faced numerous problems on the gun line, problems which would be a real test of character and professionalism.

The first of these problems was torrential rain, the like of which we had never encountered before. It was soon after the engagement commenced that the sky just opened up and it poured rain with lightning flashing everywhere. A bolt of lightning cut the lines to a Tannoy system (where orders are passed from the Command Post to the guns), this resulted in orders having to be shouted in relays to the gun platforms until the damage was repaired.

Another bolt of lightning struck lines which caused the switch board operator to be thrown across the exchange and a member of a gun detachment was similarly stunned by yet another lightning bolt.

The combination of rain and lightning caused 105 Bty's Tannoy system to short circuit which resulted in an open line from the Command Post to the guns. The gun detachments could hear what was going on "up front" via an Angra 39 in the Command Post. I remember somebody saying "drop 50" and someone else saying that the rounds would be on their heads if this occurred. There were some choice words being said over the radio when I suddenly realized just how close we were firing in front of our own troops.

With that in mind I remember telling my detachment to make sure their laying and corrections were "spot on" as this was really close. For the rest of the battle accuracy was paramount in our minds.

The second problem we faced was with gun aiming points (GAP's) and sights, made worse with the continuing rain.

The rain was so heavy that all guns lost their GAP's during the battle, This problem was compounded by a smoky haze caused by the cordite fumes not dispersing from the gun position. To keep firing my gun we finished up using a bicycle torch attached to a star picket as a GAP. I know the other guns used the same or similar GAP's.

In the 11 months 105 Bty had been in Vietnam the guns had continual problems with condensation fogging up their sights. Each gun had three sights, one in use, one as a spare while the other sight was in a local pattern humidity box to dry out. During the battle all sights were used on the gun position including the spare sights, normally kept in the "Q" store. Small petrol stoves were used in metal ammunition boxes where the sights were placed to help dry them out quickly.

To compound the problem further the battery had received new Canadian sights two months before the battle which required different "drills" to the Italian sights we also used. Both types were in use during the battle and it was only through the experience and skill of the gunners that no mistakes were made.

Our third problem was ammunition. The ammunition issued by the US Army was unreliable. If firing different "lot numbers" at the same time, the fall of shot could have a depth in excess of 400 metres.

105 Bty had adopted the policy of having two different types of ammunition, "close target" where the one batch of a lot number was used by all guns when firing in support of our own troops and "H and I" which were small batches of lot numbers and different weighted projectiles, used to harass "Charlie" by firing at irregular intervals to keep him wondering where the next round was going to fall.

It was fortunate we had adhered to our routine of maintaining our stocks of ammunition on the gun line. We had replenished the ammunition used the previous night and each gun had 100 rounds of "close target" ammunition when "fire mission Regiment" was called.

It was soon realized that with the number of "ten rounds. fire for effect" and the periods of "continuous fire" which went for 10 to 12 minutes at a time, we would soon run out of ammunition. This was reported to the Command Post and a

massive ammunition resupply from the ammunition dump to the guns was put into effect. Cooks, clerks, medics, Q staff, RAEME and members of 131 Div Locating Bty assisted in resupplying the gun line.

Normally 105mm ammunition has the fuse attached when received. At that time the largest lot number which could be used for close target ammunition at the ammunition dump was "plugged". That is, ammunition without a fuse. This situation meant that the ammunition had to be unboxed, the projectiles removed from their canisters and have the plugs removed. At the same time, boxes of fuses had to be opened and the fuses screwed into the cavity of the projectile left by the removal of the plug. The "helpers" excelled themselves ensuring this was done as quickly as possible under the guidance of the BSM. Other volunteers were loaded with as many rounds as they could carry and raced to the guns in the teeming rain hoping to god they were not going to be struck by a bolt of lightning or slip in the red mud. Some members had to run 80 - 100 metres to reach different guns. This was a feat in itself.

At no time during the three hours did a gun have to stop firing because of a shortage of ammunition. Our ammunition supply was boosted by a Chinook arriving at approximately 0200hrs with a slung load which had to be manhandled from the helipad to the ammunition dump.

Fourthly, we had to contend with toxic gas. Although we had torrential rain there was no wind and the gases from the cordite took its toll on some members on the gun line. A clerk assisting in an ammunition bunker on one gun was overcome by the fumes and passed out. A gun sergeant had to hand over to his bombardier and others were just plain sick. The cordite fumes not dispersing developed a smoky haze around the gun position which made it difficult to breath and as already stated, made it hard for the gun layers to find their gun aiming points.

Lastly, we had to contend with the problem of fatigue. A gun detachment comprises seven men, yet in all my time in Vietnam I cannot recall having a full detachment on my gun. General duties, strong points, standing patrols, escort duties etc had to be manned, during the Battle of Long Tan, the Standing Patrol (section strength) had to move out, normally under the control of a Gun Sgt. The Strong Points also had to be manned which further reduced the numbers on the gun line.

Considering most of the members on the gun line had been awake since the mortar attack on the night of 16/17 August, by 0700 hrs the morning of the 19th, most were suffering extreme fatigue.

The ammunition expended during the three hour period was 3198 rounds of 105mm and 242 rounds of 155mm fired by the medium guns. The task of carrying as many rounds as possible to the guns which were dispersed over 100 metres from the ammunition dump in the pouring rain. the resupply by Chinook at 0200 hrs having to be unboxed and stacked, guns being brought back to full ammunition entitlement once again, tidying up the gun positions and removal of spent cartridges and cordite bags, left us, to put it quite bluntly, buggered.

A few days later, when D Coy 6 RAR returned to Nui Dat, Bob Buick, the Pl Sgt of 11 Pl came over to our gun position and put his hand out to shake mine and said "Thanks mate." To me, that said it all. I was proud to be a gunner.

Vale Vic Otway

Vic was a member of 5Pl, BCoy, 6RAR and sadly passed away in Geraldton W.A. in early July. Dave Thomas is the coordinator of the Operation Bribie Memorial Service and wrote these words about when he came across Vic after the battle of Operation Bribie:

"Thanks to you blokes (Artillery) a lot of us incredibly survived that day. The morning after "Bribie" I was volunteered to be a guide for another 6 RAR company, along with the OC of 5 platoon, John O'Halloran back into the area. How we survived the tangled mess was mind boggling to say the least!

When we found Vic in that hole was a great feeling, all he wanted was a smoke that was just out of reach."

The following are some poems written about Vic and Operation Bribie:

The Luckiest Man Alive

(1)

The luckiest man alive today
Is Vic Otway from Company B
He spent a night of pure hell
After the Bribie battle with the VC

They thought he was dead and had no hope
So Company pulled back to regroup to the north
They opened up with 50 Cals
And fired for all they were worth

Then out of the night the bombers came
And jets screamed in with napalm
Artillery and mortars did their share

(2)

He had spent the night in an Artillery bomb hole
Wounded in both legs and shocked
Without a weapon of any kind
His own could not be cocked

They brought him out and gave him a smoke
And with a smile he said "I'm Okay"
To all the men who carried him out
He said "I guess it's my lucky day"

Yes the man that fought the Cong that day
And spent a night in hell and fear
Will go back home and tell his friends

The Cong would not escape harm
Came the next day they went into see
If all was quiet in the hive
There came a shout of shock and joy
Good God there's one man alive

How he almost wasn't here
Nearly every man said a prayer that night
For this man in the crater hole
It shows what a little faith can do
And what a prayer can do for the soul

Don't Lose Their Dreams

(Inspired by Operation Bribie – 6RAR – 17th February 1967)

I saw a framed image of young men at war
Snapped just before their lives would be no more
Altogether, celebrating the first day of a new year
Happy and contented and showing no fear
They talked sweet dreams of going home
To a happy, prosperous Nation where they would roam
Alas, Mars beckoned their presence to another scene

As they quickly deployed, the New Year had hardly begun
They were ready, determined and all as one
The enemy was well dug in behind the open ground
The objective to be seized in just one bound
“I'll see you on the other side” the Corporal said
He gave the order to charge and then he led
Within a short time they were all wounded or dead

Years have passed since that terrible bloody affair
Cities now crowded and many farming towns bare
Political parties with no true compass or plan
Immigration amok, pollution, record national debt and corruption too
Thus the spirit and love left by the fallen we must pursue
We owe it to our proud past and those yet to come
A return to a happy, prosperous Nation where all are as one

Written by George Mansford

Missing Member

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Life Member Bob Piper. He was 69/70 tour and was living in England. He was receiving our newsletters via email, however the last email sent to him was returned with the comment “the email address was no longer”. If anyone knows what has happened to Bob could they let us know.

Gold Card Concerns in Relation to Productivity Commissions Report

ALERT

RECOMMENDATION 16.4 BETTER TARGETED ELIGIBILITY FOR THE GOLD CARD

The Australian Government should amend the *Veteran's Entitlements Act 1986* to remove eligibility for the Gold Card for anyone other than veterans with severe service-related impairments.

Unless they qualify through having severe service-related impairments, this would remove eligibility from:

all dependants

veterans over 70 years old with qualifying service veterans on the service pension who meet the means test

veterans on the service pension who are also receiving a disability pension above the general rate, or who have between 30 and 60 MRCA impairment points.

The Australian Government should provide financial compensation to dependants who lose eligibility for the Gold Card.

All current Gold Card holders should retain their eligibility.

RECOMMENDATION 16.5 NO FURTHER EXTENSIONS OF GOLD CARD ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the Gold Card should not be extended to any new categories of veterans, dependants or other civilians who are not currently eligible for such a card. All current Gold Card holders should retain their eligibility.

The above items have been taken from the recommendations in the Productivity Commission Report 26 June 2019. This is only a proposal at present but stake holders have been asked to make submissions and there is a lot of teleconferencing going on. Our National P.V.A. President, Heather Evans, is involved trying to get the best possible outcome for partners and we are very concerned with the issue re: The Gold Card eligibility for the future.

In the report there is a faze-out date of 1 July 2025. We don't know how this will affect you in the future. If your veteran partner already has a gold card and passes away the card is cancelled. The widow then applies for her own card, that is the current process. If you feel strongly that this is a bad decision can I urge you to read the report and please write to our Veterans Minister.

Darren Chester MP

House of Representatives

CANBERRA

The following is a submission by the TPI Association and the Partners of Veteran's Association



TPI **“Disabled in our Service, United in our Cause”**



The Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc

FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

The TPI Federation is most disappointed that the Productivity Commission's (PC) Final Report does not appear to have changed to any great degree from their Draft Report. The input by ESOs appears who have been quoted a number of times in the Final Report but, at the same time, basically ignored.

The traditional concept of the 'Anzac Digger' and the Defence Personnel who defend our Country has been totally turned around so that now, in the eyes of the Commissioners, the ADF are now to be considered as just another part of the Australian population who may have achieved something during their Service but nothing that is to be considered outstanding.

The intensification on the subject of the "Gold Card" is disproportionate and out of context of the original intent to care for those who have been severely wounded or injured in their Service and the War Widows. The Gold Card is mentioned 56 times in Volume 1 and a staggering 200 times in Volume 2. The Gold Card has been put on a pedestal by the Commissioners as something that Veterans have strived for. DVA was unable to provide the statistics that have been requested on the Gold Card so it is difficult to obtain the statistics on just who really is receiving the Gold Card for the originally intended reason of the card and then who is receiving it as a political gift.

On page 721 of Volume 2 – the TPI Federation has been taken out of context, which is highly offensive, to the effort put in by a number of participants into the original submission and the follow-up submission to the Draft Report. The Commissioners state –

*“A number of participants put forward the view that severely impaired veterans, or veterans with war service, deserved the Gold Card in recognition of their service and hardship. And yet, even accepting those viewpoints (which the Commission does not), it remains the fact that nearly half of all Gold Card holders today are dependants and not veterans, and one-third of veterans with a Gold Card do not have severe impairments. The Gold Card is also in addition to various other types of financial compensation (chapter 13). Indeed, some participants noted the superiority of financial compensation over the Gold Card — the TPI Federation, for example, said **‘Remember a Gold Card does not put bread on the table’** (sub. DR290, p. 11).”*

How does the emboldened phrase add to the original argument of this paragraph? It has been put there to deflect the true implication of this paragraph. Assuming the Commissioner's stated statistics are correct and that half are

dependents and one-third do not have severe impairments then the real problem exists not with the TPIs or War Widows but rather with the issuance of these cards for political reasons and not health reasons.

It is the opinion of the TPI Federation that the Draft Report and the Final Report are not dissimilar and that they reflect the predetermined concept that the Commissioners had from the outset.

It is highly cruel and disrespectful to have all the hard work involved by many ESOs, and many individuals, in participating in these reviews, and post reviews, disregarded to such a large degree.

It is for this reason that the TPI Federation will not be putting forward yet another submission that just reiterates the previous arguments stated in previous submissions. They are of public record and the Minister should have already read them. The TPI Federation, however, would like the following to be considered by the Prime Minister, and the DVA Minister, before any acceptance, or not, of the many Recommendations in this Report.

The whole idea of the Veteran Centric Reform process was to be indicative of the needs and wants of the Veteran Community, both in the psychological and physical fields. This review and the way that DVA has proceeded to implement many of the Productivity Commissions ideas – without consultation with ESORT – is indicative of how the thoughts and ideas of the Veteran leadership seem to be.

The Government is going to extremes in its effort to save money. The Government is at pains to restrict full pharmaceutical compensation for TPIs and it will continue to put hardship on TPIs in abiding by the proposed Allied Health 12-session treatment cycle. As grateful as the TPI Federation is for the exemption for TPIs with physiotherapy and exercise physiology for this new regime the difficulties still remain for psychologist or a diabetic and their dietician. The Government is renegeing on their previous long-held commitment to full compensation for DVA client's compensable medical conditions and medications.

The Commissioner's recommendations go so as to deny any future War Widow their legislated compensable payment of the War Widows Pension and the Gold Card after having cared for a TPI or EDA for, at times, many decades (thus having saved the Government billions). The Government can't afford to assist DVA client's families who have suffered and/or have been traumatised by having lived with a Veteran. It can't afford to reinstate the Treatment Principles for VEA clients for lawn mowing – as the younger Veteran has in MRCA – to allow them to live at home longer. It can no longer afford to maintain the compensable medical compensation in the form of a Gold Card because too many have been given the card even without any accepted disabilities – but the Veteran who really needs it will have it taken off them. It can't afford to continue to pay the VEA Veteran compensable financial reimbursement for not being able to work again – instead the Government will offer a lump sum and see them on their way.

Recommendations 16.4 and 16.5 of the Productivity Commission's Final Report is too generic, undefined and indeterminate. How are a future badly wounded or injured younger Veterans supposed to obtain a Gold Card if they cannot obtain one even if they have 50 MRCA impairment points that would not entitle them to it? How is a widow of TPI supposed to obtain her legislated entitlements if she is accepted? How is the Gold Card budget supposed to be reduced if the current 123,400 current Gold Card holders live for another 30, 40 or 50 years? What is the purpose of all this angst and upset to the Veteran community if the Government is not saving money for the younger generation or to put to the National Debt?

The elderly Veteran is no longer being cared for by DVA. They have been dispatched to MyAgedCare. As part of the Veteran Centric Review it is stated that all Veterans will be cared for by DVA from 'enlistment to death'. This is only true if you are not involved in the My Aged Care system. The cohort entering Aged Card today is Vietnam Veteran era and they worked hard to obtain the benefits that they have and they are now being looked at as being insignificant. It took them until 1987 to receive a Welcome Home Parade. They have fought hard for the benefits that the younger Veteran are now utilising without any effort or appreciation. They have represented many issues in battles with Government over the years to obtain their compensation rights. If you are sick and elderly, then DVA no longer cares for you as they once did. This now involves those Vietnam Veterans.

Is any of this being Veteran Centric? Why have we lost our way with looking after the Veteran? Why is it that looking after the Veteran no longer includes our most disabled Veterans? Why is looking after a Veteran a burden on Government and the general population? Why are they being discarded as being of no use – because they can't work?

The fabric of the ESO community is being diminished by stealth by the Government as part of the Whole of Government process. The Government's Members of Parliament and Senators are allowing this to occur. The volunteer hours that the ESO community give, and have given, to their Veterans and their families is immeasurable. Why are the concerns of the Veteran community and its ESO Representatives being ignored? Why are we walking away from the two major Outcome requirements for the DVA Budget i.e. To **Maintain and Enhance** both the "**financial**

wellbeing and self-sufficiency,” and the “physical wellbeing and quality of life” of all eligible DVA Veterans and their families.

The TPI Federation concurs with the Partners of Veterans Association with their concerns and fears that the PC Final Report instils on the Veteran Community especially those who already hold the TPI/SR or EDA entitlements. The concern arises from the timeline the PC report states –

RECOMMENDATION 16.5 NO FURTHER EXTENSIONS OF GOLD CARD ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the Gold Card should not be extended to any new categories of veterans, dependants or other civilians who are not currently eligible for such a card. All current Gold Card holders should retain their eligibility.

This statement has, since the release of the report, instigated threats of suicide just prior to the proposed cut-off date of this proposal so as to ensure that their long-suffering spouses/partners are able to still receive their rightful compensation of the War Widow Pension and their Gold Card. This hysteria needs to be quelled quickly so that those most disabled Veterans and their families can be spared this realistic concern and worry.

The TPI Federation is also most concerned that any future severely wounded and injured ADF personnel (as history has proved will occur) will not be eligible for any form of ongoing financial and health support once the Gold Card is removed from the medical requirements that they need. This will then also be followed by the proposed removal of the War Widow compensation along with their Gold Card that the younger Veteran’s families should also continue to be entitled to.

How can the Government abrogate their responsibilities to the Veteran and the Veteran Community in this way?

The Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc believes that the Productivity Commission, while diligent in ensuring each voice had the opportunity to be heard, and commendable in providing access for Public Hearings, has missed the point of what it means to be a Veteran, for a Partner to care for a disabled Veteran or to raise children of that Veteran.

Military Service, by admission of this Government and no doubt the people of this country, is unique; the fact that many times in the productivity commission report there is a comparison made with civilian Acts is untenable. How can military service be unique when the commission are recommending to Government to downgrade that service to civilian Acts and employment?

The proposed Australian Defence Veterans Covenant states:

“We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.

We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who served and promise to welcome, embrace and support all military Veterans as respected and valued members of our community”

We quote from the Productivity Commissioner’s Report:

RECOMMENDATION 16.4 BETTER TARGETED ELIGIBILITY FOR THE GOLD CARD

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- all dependants**
- veterans over 70 years old with qualifying service**
- veterans on the service pension who meet the means test**
- veterans on the service pension who are also receiving a disability pension above the general rate, or who have between 30 and 60 MRCA impairment points.**

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As President of our Association whose sole interest is partners, widows/widowers and their families, I, and my Board find these Recommendations to be ill conceived, unclear and contradictory from one paragraph to the next. It would appear from the wording that Widows/widowers, Orphans and Double Orphans of Service persons are to have their eligibility stripped from accessing a Gold Card following the death of their totally disabled Veteran or parent(s).

The recommendation to remove Widows/Widowers and families from access to the Gold Card is appalling and ill thought out. By its removal it suggests a complete lack of respect toward the Veteran, the Partner and the Family. It would be tantamount to saying to the Veteran Community, the majority of those from the Vietnam era and also those who have deployed since, that their service has no merit.

This recommendation is yet another insult to our Vietnam Veterans who were treated appallingly whilst serving in Vietnam and also upon their return. It is the Vietnam Veterans Widows who will be among the first to be impacted should this recommendation be implemented. It is also important to note that approx. half of those who served in Vietnam were conscripts.

It is not all right to deny future Widows/Widowers and orphaned children whose veteran parent died of a war caused injury or illness, the same benefit as those already in receipt of a Gold Card, it is not all right to no longer recognise these women, men and children as belonging to the Veteran Community.

“Caring for Veterans and their Families” certainly has a hollow ring when it apparently doesn’t refer to the Wife/Husband/Mother/Partner or children once the Veteran has passed away.

The Partners of Veterans have already sacrificed countless years to care for disabled Veterans with almost no help, absolutely no recognition and in many cases have had to also sacrifice their own career. Partners in the general community, if they so wish, were and are, able to have a career and accrue Superannuation for themselves, there were no impediments for them. Partner/carers of a disabled Veteran are not given that opportunity not to mention the fact that this caring has had a detrimental impact on their own mental and physical health, which has been proven by numerous studies.

What compensation is the partner of a deceased veteran whose death is combat related regardless of age, considered to be worthy to receive?

Currently they receive the War Widows/Widowers Compensation Payment which includes a Gold Card and if they meet the criteria they are able to apply for the Income Support Supplement. Younger Widows/Widowers have a choice of receiving a portion of a lump sum payment and still retain fortnightly payments, but in all cases a Gold Card is issued. We truly believe that is the least the Australian Government and its people owe dependants of those who risked their lives for this country and who paid a huge price for that sacrifice.

Members of our Association will be directly impacted by any changes regarding the Productivity Commission’s recommendation to Government to strip the Gold Card from the dependants of Veterans with qualifying service.

Some of these Partners/Carers are no longer young and those younger Partners whose Veteran may pass away from war caused injuries or illnesses, mental health issues and Post traumatic stress may have young children and are in no position to seek employment in order to supplement their income.

Would the government deny these War Widows and Widowers access to the Gold card simply in a cost cutting exercise?

Unfortunately, the partners/carers/widows are an easy target but it should not be overlooked that these are the very people who have saved the Government untold millions by caring for our disabled war veterans and now are the same people who can be targeted in this disgraceful manner.

Government would still have to pay for the majority of these dependants through the Public Health system as Private Health cover would be well beyond their means.

How many Veterans with life threatening illnesses or mental health issues will opt out of treatment or worse to ensure his/her partner is eligible for the Gold Card before the recommended year of 2025 rolls around?

I have already had a call from a seriously ill Veteran who is ready to cease treatment and give up to ensure that his wife will be a recipient of a Gold Card.

How a recommendation to have something as vital as a Gold Card stripped from dependants of a Veteran in the future while still being retained by others who were eligible prior to 2025, is a disgrace and should never have been contemplated.

The report of the Productivity Commission is a detailed and comprehensive paper and some of the recommendations are innovative and well thought out. A number of suggestions from our own association have been recommended and we thank the PC for recognising the validity of those suggestions.

We are disappointed however, that the Veterans' Dependants are seen to be of no consequence and can be treated as collateral damage. The Veterans themselves, the many who have been in contact with our Association, are disgusted and disappointed that their Partners/Carers and families have been considered to be of so little worth.

For these reasons we ask that the recommendations regarding the removal of the Gold Card for eligible dependants of a Veteran fail and that the value to the community of the support and care of the Veteran by his/her Partner be recognised in the future, as it has been in the past.

Benefits	VEA	DRCA	MRCA
Widow(er)'s benefits	A tax-free war widow(er)'s pension payable fortnightly for life in respect of death due to service. An additional income support supplement (means tested). Gold Card for life. For the current rates, see DVA Factsheet DP43	A tax-free lump sum shared between dependants. An additional lump sum death benefit. For the current rates, see DVA Factsheet MRC43	A tax-free payment payable fortnightly for life for a wholly dependent partner. The partner may elect to convert 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% of the payment to an age-based lump sum. An additional age-based lump sum is provided where the death is service-caused. Gold Card for life. For the current rates, see DVA Factsheet MRC04
Dependent children benefits	Fortnightly orphans pension (if war/service-caused death of parent). Conditions apply if child is over 16 years of age— e.g. not eligible if receiving education benefits. Gold Card while in full time education. For the current rates, see DVA Factsheet DP43	A share of the tax-free lump sum shared between dependants. An additional dependent child lump sum benefit. Weekly payment while under 16 years of age, or between 16 and 25 years of age and in full time education. For the current rates, see DVA Factsheet MRC43	A tax-free lump sum payment for each dependent child under 16, or between 16 and 25 if in full time education. A weekly payment while under 16 years, or between 16 and 25 if in full time education. Gold Card (while under 16 years or between 16 and 25 if in full time education). For the current rates, see DVA Factsheet MRC04

Yours sincerely



Ms Pat McCabe
OAM President
TPI Federation of Australia



Mrs Heather Evans

Early Wacol Days

John Pollock has provided some photos of Wacol barracks as we remember them. We will show a couple every newsletter. (See below).

HOW DID THE WORLD GO FROM THIS...



TO THIS ???

Photos



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



(L-R) Herb Lynam, John Kokoschko, Trevor Madeley at Gunner's Dinner



(L-R) Trevor Plant, David Bird, Ross Teschendorff at Gunners Dinner



101 Bty Orderly Room 1962



Transport Compound 1962

END OF MISSION

Family Name:.....

Given Names.....

Nickname (optional):.....

Date of Birth.....

Date of Enlistment.....

Decorations/Medals.....

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Wounds(if any).....

Brief Career Synopsis/units, dates, promotions etc.

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(if not enough space, please print on the rear of the page or if email add another page)

Career Highlights.....

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Humorous antidotes that may be included

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