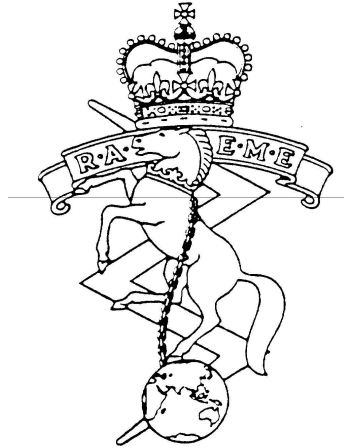


17 CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON WORKSHOPS



VIETNAM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume

AUGUST 2005

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Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th June 2007

Message from President Bob

Welcome, we are now about two years from the next Reunion. It will be in Darwin Northern Territory on Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th June 2007. We are excited about having it in Darwin and welcome you all to come and see the whole of the NT, not just the Top End.

June is the best time to visit as the nights are below 20 and the days 32 degrees, being the best time it is also high tourist season. We encourage you to make a holiday out of the Reunion by either coming up early and tour the NT, or stay a little longer and take in all that the Territory has to offer. What ever your choice, or mode of travel is, please prepare and plan now.

To assist us in organising the accommodation for the three days at one location, so we can all enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie, together, please fill in form attached. We would like you to leave your caravan etc in the caravan-park and come into Darwin and stay at the one venue for the three days, same as Sydney, which was so successful.

Who's coming to Darwin in June 2007?

To assist us please fill in the attached Reunion Registration. We are currently investigating appropriate accommodation so we can all be together for the Reunion. Please support YOUR reunion by subscribing to all fund raising raffles being organized to make the reunion a great one.

Big thanks go to Adrian and Helen Blackburn for undertaking fundraising through chocolate sales for the 2007 Darwin Reunion, you're fantastic.

It is important that the deposit is paid before the end of November 2005 so that we can make firm commitments on the numbers attending the function venue.

Reunion Registration Costs - the committee has set these fees at \$110.00 per person. This is requested to be paid in two parts; an initial deposit of \$60.00 per person is required before the end of November this year 2005. The balance of \$50.00 per person is to be paid by 31st January 2007. You can pay the \$110.00 up front if you want to

As an incentive to cough up the deposit on time, all registrations received before the 30th November 2005 will be eligible for 6 draws of \$50.00, thus receiving the balance of their

**Patron
Member
George Jones**

**Foundation
Member
Danial J Garlin**

registration FREE.

Reunion Accommodation Costs – The three nights accommodation will of course be at your own expense, we are still negotiating with several venues to get the best possible deal.

**WIN
\$500**

100+ Club Raffles – we intend to conduct 2 100+ Club Raffles each year with the prize being **\$500 cash**. The cost of participation is \$20 per 100+ Club or \$40.00 to be in both Raffles Remember these 100+ Club Raffles are for **YOUR REUNION** so please support the raffles and other fundraising activities that we will have over the next two years.

DESTINATION DARWIN

Darwin is the capital of the Northern Territory and is the main point of entry to visitors arriving by plane. For the most of you however, you will probably be arriving by road or rail and the three main entry points are the Stuart Highway from South Australia, the Barkly Highway from Queensland and the Victoria Highway from Western Australia.

Which ever way you choose to come we are planning a fantastic Reunion to compliment your visit to Darwin.

Darwin is a modern, multicultural (we were multicultural before anyone else and didn't even know it) city offering you a unique tropical climate, especially in June when you'll be venturing north. The Reunion was changed from August to June as it was felt that the Dry Season would be more suitable with less humidity. Excellent days of 32 C and lovely tropical nights of 17 C and 18 C.



The diversity of the Top End guarantees each of you a vast range of holiday experiences, that will suit your special interests as well as catering for those wishing to experience it all. From five-star comfort overlooking the beautiful Darwin Harbour, through to wilderness adventure tours or trying to catch the sometimes-elusive barramundi. (My worst days fishing always beat my best day working)

Maybe a night or two under the stars or travel to one or more of the Top End's unique and remote areas.

If you into the less strenuous adventure have no fear we can cater for you – for those who seek to go to remote areas but want it soft, we have specialist operators who offer a wide range of touring opportunities to suit your needs.

To the north of Darwin lie the fabulous Tiwi Islands, Bathurst, and Melville abundant in traditional arts and crafts and the wonderful culture of its inhabitants the Tiwi people.



To the South lies the magnificent waterfalls and wildlife of the Litchfield National Park and to the East you will discover the untouched wetland beauty of the Mary River Region. You will marvel at the amazing array of birds and wildlife.



You can then travel onto the world famous and one of our greatest treasures, the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park.

Travel further east and be astounded by the untamed beauty of Arnhem land, the historic Cobourg Peninsula's water wonderland – sailing, game fishing or scuba diving.

All of this is there for you to enjoy and within easy reach of Darwin, it is one of Australia's most picturesque tropical capital city. We are famous as having something for everybody all you have to do is decide on what.



So in June 2007 make it **DESTINATION DARWIN** for your **REUNION** and **HOLIDAY**

President Bob

Start Your Planning - Mike Sheahan

It's just under two years away to our 6th Reunion. So it's time you started to think about planning your trip.

Over the next few newsletters we will supply you with information to help you plan for this important occasion.

For example if you plan to travel up to Darwin by Caravan or Campervan etc we will give you tips on what to see on the way up, where to stay, best fuel buying towns so you don't get caught paying up to 20/30 cents/litre more by not filling up at the right locations.

We will tell you where the best caravan spots are and some of the free spots for overnight stays. If you have the time, take it. Don't drive through some of the best scenery in Australia at 110 kph. Just to get there and turn around and do the same speed back home.

Think about spending 5 days plus the Reunion in Darwin, 5 days in Kakadu, and the same in Litchfield Park. Throw in a few days at Katherine, Katherine Gorge, Edith Falls and overnight in Tennant Creek and visit the Gold fields and dam. You can see that 4 weeks will go very quickly and you are still on your way up and still in the Northern Territory.

What about the Red Centre, the Alice, Ayers Rock, Kings Canyon do them on the way back or up depending from where your coming.

You can plan a good trip or a quick trip but whatever you do you will enjoy this reunion in a unique state.

From the Gold Coast to Tennant Creek

This trip takes in Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Gympie, Kilkiven, Gayndah, Mundubbera, Monto, Biloela, Banana, Rolleston, Springsure, Emerald, Barcaldine, Longreach, Winton, Cloncurry, Mt Isa, Camooweal, Avon Downs and Tennant Creek.

Top Spots to see and stay

Spend a day or two on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, there is plenty to see and do and too many places to stay for me to write about.

Cania Gorge – Top Tourist Park, good scenery and great walks in the National park, gets cold but well worth the stay.

Rolleston – Free overnight parking in town as well as caravan parks. Good trip to Canarvan Gorge.

Sapphire – West of Emerald, Sunrise Caravan Park, good facilities and camp kitchen, go and dig for sapphires.

Winton – Matilda Top Tourist Park, has a bush poet and there is a free park behind the Gregory Hotel.

Mt Isa – Plenty of Caravan parks to choose from. Free camp at Fountain Springs 60 km West of Cloncurry, halfway to Mt Isa; visit the Irish Club and the Mines.

Avon Downs – Free Overnight Park

Barkley Homestead Caravan Park \$28.00 per night

Tennant Creek – Go south from the “Three Ways” for cheaper fuel than “Three Ways” or travel North to Banka Banka Station, famous old Cattle Station and cheap stay.

Cheap Fuel stops on this route.

Gold Coast, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast - Woolworth's and Coles use shopping docket.

Biloela - Woolworth's

Emerald – Coles and Woolworth's

Mt Isa – Coles and Woolworth's

Tennant Creek – BP

Katherine – Coles and Woolworth's

Darwin – Coles and Woolworth's

Stops for fuel in between can be 15 – 30 cents/litre dearer.

In general all the major cities that have a Coles or Woolworth's have cheaper fuel providing you have the shopping docket. If you wanted to go all the way up the Queensland Coast to Townsville and the across to Mt Isa don't forget to call into Chalkies Place in Mackay.

Mike Sheahan – Traveling Secretary



NT Legislative Assembly Building

From the Treasurer – Ryan Critchlow

Our current bank account stands at around \$6000 and was carried forward from previous reunions. It's nice to have that amount as insurance, but it's our intention to fully fund the Darwin Reunion over the next two years, and to pass this amount on the next Reunion Committee.

Adrian and Helen Blackburn have already started adding to the bank account. These two are irrepressible!! Helen rang me out of the blue a couple of months ago, telling me she's just distributed more of her chocolates, and wanted our bank account number so she could deposit the proceeds.

Helen has distributed more chocolates since then, and the money continues to come in. I can't thank them enough for what they're doing. Helen has been in hospital, having her bionics augmented, (other knee replaced) and we all wish her well, and a speedy recovery.

We need to know fairly accurate attendance numbers for 2007 for planning and bookings. We will be asking for an early commitment to the reunion in the form the deposit before Christmas 2005. Bob has a great event planned and your early commitment will ensure he has everything booked and organized in one of Darwin's most popular months.

Your 17 Construction Wksps Liaison Officers

Western Australia	Garry Whykes	(08)9276 1920
South Australia	Michael Culley	(08)8294 3820
Victoria	Cliff Richards	(03)5443 0457
Queensland –Sunshine Coast	Secretary Michael Sheahan	(07) 5493 4080
Queensland – Gold Coast	Steve Chapman	(07) 5525 3039
Queensland – Far North	David Chalk	(07) 4954 7565
New South Wales	Robert Callinan	(02) 4953 2616
Northern Territory	President. Bob Shewring	618 8983 1493
Tasmania	Roy Geale	



Sailing on Darwin Harbour

Missing Members

Hi Everybody, From John Curtis

We are on the hunt again for missing members. I have two for this morning:

We have Dennis RETTIG of 1ATF LAD Nui Dat (70-71) looking for his boss Capt John PRONK. If anyone knows of him, please let me know.

And from John POWER:

I am trying to contact Peter JACKSON, former OC of 1 Fd Sqn Wksp Nui Dat. A friend of his has lost contact and would like to re-establish. Are you able to help please?

From Alan Pratt

Last weeks search is still going on. The last information we have of Hank SAYERS is that he is living somewhere in Tasmania and makes regular trips to Sydney. Further information would be appreciated.

Vale

It is with regret that I must advise of the passing of Melvyn Myers 242865, served Vietnam April 66 - April 67.

Unfortunately I have no further information, this information came via Neville Barrett from the RAE newsletter.

Lest We Forget

Alan Pratt - Webmaster

The 6th Reunion Committee hope that you are well and we look forward to meeting with you in Darwin, June 2007



Darwin Skyline

Veteran's Welfare – Especially PTSD – John Fenton

Background

17 Construction Squadron Workshop Association was formed basically to provide a point of “*social contact*” for our members. This is borne out by the various re-union programmes to-date. Welfare support has been on an informal basis between mates who served with the Workshop at the same time.

Many of you will recall that initially you were shunned not only by the community generally but by some within organisations such as the RSL. This changed from the time of the Welcome Home Parade. The Federal Government was forced to act when organisations such as the Vietnam Veterans Association (VVA) & the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans Association (BMVVA) were formed & attracted membership, which became vocal in addressing veteran's issues & Government obligations. The Government created the Vietnam Veterans Counseling Service (VVCS).

VVCS

The Government has extended the role of the VVCS to encompass veterans of more recent conflicts (Somalia, East Timor, Iraq, Peacekeeping roles) but it was decided to retain the name VVCS. This is a fine service providing counseling to veterans & families, it can be expected however that the emphasis of the VVCS (despite the VV in its title) will start to lean towards veterans of more recent conflicts, mainly due to media coverage.

PTSD

Studies are now suggesting that whilst some veterans display the symptoms of PTSD at the time or immediately after conflict, in many cases it has been noted that the symptoms become evident 30-35 years later. This is significant to Vietnam Veterans.

Many of our Association's members, even the younger National Service & Regulars, are now in their 50s & either out of the workforce or approaching retirement, this is a big lifestyle change.

The DVA & VVCS have a definition of PTSD, it is not necessary to amplify it here, enough to say that our initial military training “conditioned” us to think & act in a certain way relative to discipline & our automatic actions/reactions relative to the team/our mates in a given warlike situation & in many cases this “conditioning” is now starting to dissipate after 30-35 years & the protective barrier that would not allow veterans to admit/accept that problems existed is now manifesting itself as PTSD. The timeline to seek help is now.

An Australian statistical study shows that an infantry soldier of WW2 endured on average up to a total of 60 days under combat conditions, an infantry soldier in Vietnam endured approximately 300 days of combat conditions. So whilst some WW2 RSL members made unkind comments about Vietnam Veterans not being involved in a “real” war, this is exposed as a myth. Another factor is whilst WW2 veterans were away from home for years, Vietnam Veterans were in a civilian community & then on Operational Service (via QANTAS) within 24 hours & upon return thrust back into an unsympathetic community, also within 24 hours.

Service Organisations

Referring to the opening statement that our Unit Association is a point of “*social contact*” with, it is believed, no trained counselors to guide members, it is significant that there are only sixteen organisations recognised by the VVCS as providing services in NSW, of these only seven directly represent the returned veteran, they include:

- Returned & Services League (RSL)
- Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA)
- Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans & Associated Forces Inc (BMVV&AF Inc)

All of the above organisations provide welfare & pension guidance to veterans by fellow veterans who have been trained by DVA.

Of the above organisations, the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans Association sees its role as providing welfare, rather than social, support to veterans. In view of the words written about PTSD, it is essential that Workshop Association members do not become complacent relating to their well-being & entitlements & should consider joining the BMVVs because it was established for Vietnam Veterans by Vietnam Veterans & can provide welfare guidance (don’t be put off by the words “Blue Mountains” in the title, that is where the organisation started but it currently has 620 members Australia wide). Contact details are below.

In case you think pushing only BMVVs membership is the aim, the RSL & VVAA are also two organisations which are cognizant of veteran’s problems, they also work closely with DVA & VVCS, although RSL sub-branch membership is falling & some smaller RSLs do not even have a trained pensions/ welfare officer.

Contact Details BMVV&AF Inc

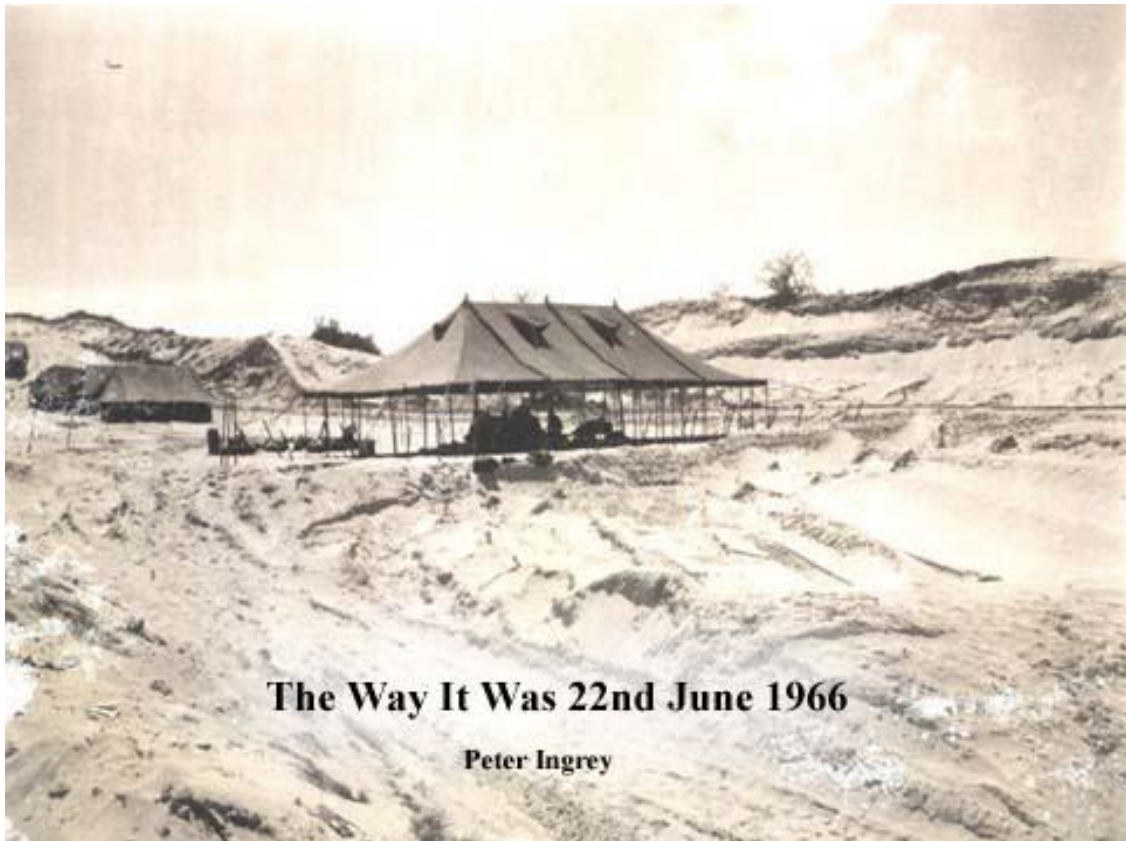
Web Site: www.bmvets.com.au
Email: secretary@bmvets.com.au
Ph: (02) 4751 8528
Fax: (02) 4751 8538
Mail: PO Box 55, Springwood NSW 2777

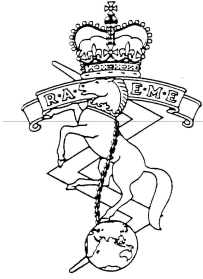
I repeat do not become complacent, think of your well-being & that of your family, act now.

Note

Since our 2004 re-union I have joined the BMVV&AF Inc & I am undertaking the first two courses as a Pensions Officer Level1 & Case Officer Level 2 (commonly called TIP 1 & 2). I am also an active member of my RSL sub-branch so whilst highlighting the role of the BMVV&AF Inc to Vietnam Veterans I do not debase the role of the other organisations.

Regards
John Fenton





Questionnaire/ Registration – August 2005
17CONSTRUCTION
SQUADRONWORKSHOPS
VIETNAM ASSOCIATION
DARWIN REUNION
Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th June 2007

Hi Members,

To assist us in planning the DARWIN REUNION in June 2007, please fill out the questionnaire below and return it by the end of November 2005 along with your Registration Deposit of \$60.00 per person to:

Note by returning this form along with your deposit/s before the 30th Nov 2005 you will go into 6 draws to have the balance of your registration paid FREE (\$50.00)

The Treasurer

Ryan Critchlow, PO Box 2486, Orange, NSW 2800,
Ph. (02) 6362 2241 Email: - critchlow@nsw.chariot.net.au

Surname Name: _____
First Name: _____
Wife / Partners Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Town: _____
Post Code: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email _____

Are you planning to attend the next reunion in DARWIN on the 14th, 15th, & 16th June 2007? (Please Circle One)

YES (Put Number Attending in Box)

NO

MAYBE (Put Number Attending in Box)

Enclosed please find \$60 per person Deposit

Any other comments / Suggestions / Questions please fill in below:

Thanks for assisting us by completing and returning this questionnaire/ registration before the end of November 2005.