

CONTACT !



*Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans
and Associated Forces Inc.
Newsletter*

December 2009

CONTACT !

Patron: Major General CMI (Sandy) Pearson AO DSO OBE MC (Rtd)
Office address: Allied Services Centre, 108 Macquarie Road , Springwood NSW 2748 Australia
(next to Springwood Civic Centre)

© JOURNAL OF BLUE MOUNTAINS VIETNAM VETERANS & ASSOCIATED FORCES INC.
 incorporating

RAAF VIETNAM ASSOCIATION and the QANTAS "SKIPPY SQUADRON" ASSOCIATION

ABN 74 645 329 198

CFN 17276

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THOSE WHO SERVED IN ALL POST WORLD WAR II CONFLICTS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I'll just try and bring everyone up to date (from memory) with a brief background and the current situation on our Association's attempt to acquire the old Integral Energy building for us to use as a Veterans Activity Support centre.

This would take the form of a shop front drop-in centre as well as meeting rooms, administration and welfare centre. This building would meet most of our requirements of being readily accessible to Springwood town centre and also close to public transport.

We are looking at sharing it with 3 to 4 smaller ESO groups such as Springwood RSL Sub-Branch. Because of the years of neglect and vandalism the building is in pretty poor condition and so would require a far amount of dollars to bring it up to scratch. This would stretch our resources but we hope to get some financial assistance. The committee is very mindful that we don't fall into a black financial hole over the acquisition.

As most members are aware the negotiations have been going on for years with the local Council for the use of the building. The hold up appears to have been that the Council hadn't actually gained possession of the building, contrary to what we were constantly being told by them. The Council now has obtained possession of the building and publicly called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for occupying the building.

We have engaged a Planning and Development Consultant to assist us through a rather involved process and through him we replied to the EOI and have since received a reply from Council. We replied to their letter stating what we believed we could afford and the conditions we could accept. We should receive a reply to this some time in the New Year. We will keep you posted.

On behalf of the Committee I would like to wish all members, families and friends a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year. Also wishing all our service personnel serving overseas and in the war zones a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Jack Lake
President



WELFARE WAFFLES

First I would thank John Staal for his endeavours with welfare matters over a very long period. John has requested a break from these duties because of his many other commitments, have a good break John.

There has been an increase in the number of disability claims submitted in recent weeks. We do encourage members to address their concerns regarding service related disabilities with our welfare officers as soon as practicable. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has stated that families of deceased veterans will be presented with an Australian flag as a mark of the veteran's service to Australia, a small quantity of flags have been provided by our local Federal Member, Bob Debus MP. These flags are for presentation in the mountains area, for those Welfare Officers further afield requiring a flag to present to a member's family, please approach your local Federal Member.

Ray Westwell
Welfare Coordinator:

Brian Day continues his series on Australian and other VC recipients.

Staff Sergeant Jared C. Monti MOH

20 September 1975 - 21 June 2006

Citation

Staff Sergeant Jared C. Monti distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a team leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, in connection with combat operations against an armed enemy in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, on June 21, 2006. While Staff Sergeant Monti was leading a mission aimed at gathering intelligence and directing fire against the enemy, his 16-man patrol was attacked by as many as 50 enemy fighters. On the verge of being overrun, Staff Sergeant Monti quickly directed his men to set up a defensive position behind a rock formation. He then called for indirect fire support, accurately targeting the rounds upon the enemy who had closed to within 50 meters of his position. While still directing fire, Staff Sergeant Monti personally engaged the enemy with his rifle and a grenade, successfully disrupting an attempt to flank his patrol. Staff Sergeant Monti then realized that one of his Soldiers was lying wounded in the open ground between the advancing enemy and the patrols position. With complete disregard for his own safety, Staff Sergeant Monti twice attempted to move from behind the cover of the rocks into the face of relentless enemy fire to rescue his fallen comrade. Determined not to leave his Soldier, Staff Sergeant Monti made a third attempt to cross open terrain through intense enemy fire. On this final attempt, he was mortally wounded, sacrificing his own life in an effort to save his fellow Soldier. Staff Sergeant Monti's selfless acts of heroism inspired his patrol to fight off the larger enemy force. Staff Sergeant Monti's immeasurable courage and uncommon valour are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and the United States Army.

Note:

We hope you have enjoyed this year's series of valour and courage above and beyond the call of duty. I would like to thank Brian Day for his voluntary team work in researching the various incidents involving individual soldiers from many Allied countries, who, over many conflicts, have been decorated with the highest awards of their Country for their unbelievable heroism in action.

The 2010 series will start with a humdinger of a story of a British Army Private's courage, compassion and possibly a missed opportunity for many...the story is almost as good as Corey's exploits, unfortunately the new bloke is a Pom, never-the-less; this story will leave you thinking ...if only ?? ... what if ?? . Hang On !! can't tell you any more, looking forward to processing the next two issues, forgot to tell you the story of the Pommy Private is over two issues.



The Editor



Vale

Ronald Burkitt
 VX97091 Private
 Australian Infantry Battalion
 3 Feb 1927— 23 Nov 2009
 Age 82

Lest We Forget

EDITOR'S DESK

From the

Janet and I were out cruising down the NSW south coast heading to the rellies' home for a few days and primarily for some serious fishing, maybe, just maybe I will catch something this year other than a cold. We had wandered around the quaint village of Berry for a while and then headed toward Nowra, not that far out of Berry we stopped again at a lovely B&B and Boutique Vineyard known as the SILOS ESTATE; the vineyard is owned and managed by friends of our daughter. We called in to say hello to Sophie, Raj and their lovely little baby Zoe. Raj and Sophie wanted a sea change from their corporate world and took on the Vineyard. Wow they sure have made a success of the change and their efforts have been rewarded despite the fickle weather. The picturesque vineyard has a Gallery for local painters, international painters and amid the tasting areas; there is also a large restaurant that caters for fine dining, functions, weddings and opens for your lunch or dinner Thursday through Sunday. I would like to recommend SILOS to all our members. If you are touring in that neck of the woods, or live in the area, call in, set a spell, I am sure you will be pleased and impressed with what you see and taste, say hello to Raj, Sophie and Zoe. Check out their website www.thesilos.com — give these young Australians a go. Now here is the Christmas rub:- especially for members, if you are the first guest to arrive at Silos brandishing a copy of this issue of **CONTACT!** You will receive a **FREE bottle of the local brew from the hosts, come on fellas you can't beat that** *have a fabulous Christmas break, look after yourselves and let's all keep a sharp weather eye on our mates.*



ATTENTION ALL EX No. 2 SQUADRON AIRCREW

Lance Halvorson of RAAF Association has been in dialogue with the US Air Attaché who was noted that US Air Medals had been presented to some of the aircrew of 9 SQN, 35 SQN and the FACs; however, only 2 SQN had been awarded a US Presidential Citation for services in RVN. This observation has initiated a quest to identify all the 2 SQN aircrew who served in RVN with the objective of seeking the same recognition. If any BMVV members are ex 2SQN Aircrew or know of any within their general community please advise them to contact either Lance Halvorson through the RAAF Association or Peter Ekins at the address below. The Air Attaché requires the following from all 2 SQN aircrew: certified copies of their log book for the months they served with 2 SQN in Phan Rang, their "Aircrew Record of Operational Tour" form P/P138, the P/P 138 is the authoritative documentation that the Air Attaché has identified as necessary, Date and Place of Birth, Dates of Enlistment and Discharge for our submission to the US Air Attaché. The log book details should help identify all aircrew (navs or pilots) with whom each flew so we can contact as many of the guys as possible. The objective is to have all this data collected and to the Air Attaché in **January 2010, ie ASAP**. Please try and contact all your ex 2 SQN aircrew colleagues, gather the necessary documents and send to **Pete Ekins, 8 Lawson Place, CASTLE HILL NSW 2154**

PADRE'S CORNER

Who do you believe?

Some economists and commentators say that despite the recent economic crisis, people are spending as much or more than last year on Christmas shopping. Then there are the nay-sayers who claim that their indications are that in general shoppers are 'tightening their belts' and spending less.

For all that, whichever way you are inclined, Christmas is traditionally the time we spend more in all sorts of directions. For us in Australia it is Summer and holiday time; it is party season so let's let the hair down and have a good time with family and friends.

Then there are the presents. Next to partying and food the giving and receiving of presents seems to be an equal or even greater focus. Where did all this start? Well your guess is as good as mine! It seems that the idea of giving gifts, tangible or intangible, is as old as history and that one of the considerations has usually been a hope or an expectation of something, or some favour or some service in return (so what's new? you ask cynically).

In our society and culture gift-giving reaches its peak at Christmas time and in the majority of cases we give out of love or care or appreciation and not so much "what's in it for me?".

At Christmas time we do like to give the best we can afford to those whom we love and care for. We give to express that love and caring.

Obviously Christmas is basically a celebration which has its origins in the Christian spiritual dimensions of our lives. I was going to say 'Christmas is religious', but it is more than the religious practices of a church or denomination. Christmas is a spiritual celebration of our relationship with The Almighty, our Creator.

We like to give the best at Christmas, God gave us the best of the best – He gave us His Son, Jesus. Not with any expectation of a return – it was a free gift to make possible our way back into full fellowship with Him.

Through this gift and a positive response from us, we can be sure of the eternal presence – that is, Heaven. At Christmas as we give the best, remember God gave the best of the best - His Son. That is the true meaning of Christmas.

Have a happy and a safe Christmas.

Bill & Margaret Wheeler
02 4754 4575



CHIEF OF ARMY IN DEADLY PERSONAL BATTLE

(Article from: The Australian August 31, 2009)

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie has prostate cancer, the 57-year-old army chief was diagnosed in February and had his prostate removed in May. "I decided I didn't want a potential time bomb ticking away inside my body," he told the Seven Network yesterday. While Lieutenant General Gillespie's doctors say he is winning his battle with the disease, he has joined a campaign to raise awareness about men's cancer.

"If you're one of those out there who thinks it's not going to happen to me, well I'm here to tell you it does," he said. He will be involved with the Cancer Council awareness campaign Blue September, which encourages men to discuss the issue and get tested.

I am sure that our collective thoughts go out to Lt Gen Gillespie and we wish him well in this Battle. This report is timely and we remind all Veterans to make sure we have regular tests to help beat this insidious disease.

KEEP ABREAST OF YOUR HEALTH — GET REGULAR CHECKS

TPI - AMBULANCE COVER - DID YOU KNOW

An issue that concerns me is the number of TPI's I meet that are not aware of the limitation of the gold care in relation to the ambulance service. Time and time again veterans tell me that as a TPI member he or she has no worries about joining an ambulance service because the gold card will cover all requirements. Well unfortunately, I have bad news for them if they ever decide to leave their home State.

Please Note:

The ambulance service provided for gold cardholders **only covers the State in which you live or if interstate it will only cover transport to the nearest hospital.**

If ever there is a need for a gold cardholder to be moved from a local interstate hospital to a specialist hospital or to be transported back to their home state from interstate, then it will be at the gold card holders' expense.

My advice to all TPI's when travelling is to either have travel insurance and / or maintain membership of the ambulance service.

Thanks to the Victorian T.P.I. News Letter - Chin Up Autumn Edition 2009.

Bushranger Story- '...and so, a Gunship was born'

WGCDR Brian Dirou DFC (Ret'd) was tasked by 200 plus former unit members and partners who attended a reunion at Tamworth, NSW in February 2001 to establish No. 9 Squadron Association and a related website www.no9squadronassociation.org. This task took about 6 years of dedicated effort by Brian and his wife Diane, also embracing a National Curator role. They are no longer involved with 9SQN Association although they own a comprehensive historical reference library for 101 Flight / 9 Squadron dating back to unit formation in 1925 and assist with research.

The Bushranger Story - '...and so, a Gunship was born' was generated by Brian who was the RAAF Iroquois gunship project officer and is published privately by Brian and Diane. The story is not only applicable to the rotary winged ones among us (not wishing to take sides BUT if your wings can't turn, you cannot be taken seriously), it is an insight to the most effective battlefield intimate close air support machine available in Vietnam. Attached is a flyer complete with an order form is found on page 8. The same flyer and order form is available electronically through the link ***The Bushranger Story - '...and so, a Gunship was born'*** on our website home page www.bmvets.com.au

For the budding reviewing specialists among us, if you purchase a copy of ***The Bushranger Story - '...and so, a Gunship was born'*** please let us know criticism on the CD production to purchase and especially Brian would be appreciative.



The Bushranger Story

This story describes the development and introduction to operational service of the Royal Australian Air Force 'Bushranger' Iroquois helicopter gunship during the Vietnam War, a derivative of the Bell UH-1H that was unique in the world.

The first-hand account of this project by Wing Commander Brian Dirou, DFC (Ret'd) provides an accurate record of a highly successful and enterprising endeavour accomplished within No. 9 Squadron to provide a very effective intimate close air support weapons capability that reflected typical Australian ingenuity.

The story graphically depicts several action events to demonstrate the need for the gunship capability and the effectiveness of the Bushranger concept, also the operational discipline and intimate teamwork necessary in very close quarters engagements with the enemy. Australian and New Zealand Air Force, Navy and Army personnel involved in these actions are also mentioned.

Humourous and sad anecdotes balance the story and some moving poetic tributes are also included. The tale reflects appreciable credit upon the Air Force.



An e-book on CD, readable in Adobe Acrobat Reader format on a computer, with 188 images (no audio).

Printed by Brian and Diane Dirou, 97-99 Eastslope Way, North Arm Cove, NSW, 2324.
Telephone: (02) 4997 3242 / 0402 217 773; Email: bddirou@inet.net.au

Unit cost of CD is AUD25.00 including post/packaging
(20% donated to Blue Mountains Veterans Association by B & D Dirou)

You may pay by: **PayPal**, Electronic Funds Transfer, Cheque, Money Order (Please circle)
Email address for **PayPal**: dirouville@inet.net.au

Bank Account: Mr. B & Mrs. D Dirou
Account Number: 6883070
Qantas Staff Credit Union Limited
420 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW, 2220, Australia
BSB 704-865

Please supply ... copies of CD

Name:
Postal Address:
Email Address:
Telephones:

Despatch this form to: Brian & Diane Dirou
Email: bddirou@inet.net.au
Post: 97-99 Eastslope Way, North Arm Cove, NSW, 2324
Tele: 61 2 4997 3242 / 0402 217 773

BRICK BATS AND BOUQUETS

This Issue's Bouquet must go to the VIETNAM VETERANS MOTORCYCLE CLUB (VVMC)

The VMCC recently hosted a Musicfest on the 19th September and raised \$1500 for Care Flight, great work fellas, well done. The Bouquet fits fairly with the VVMC. For your interest the following is a brief on the VVMC.

It is a matter of history that the United States and its allies conducted a war in Vietnam during the sixth and seventh decades of the twentieth century. Australia, one of the United States principal allies, was involved in this conflict from 1962 until 1972. The aftermath of this war and the social upheavals it caused left a large number of veterans deeply traumatised and adrift in the society that they returned to. All of these veterans experienced to a larger or lesser degree the bitterness and sometimes the hatred of their peers, who did not share their experiences in Vietnam.

Many were shunned and in turn shunned society and turned to the only people whom they could trust – their Brothers in Arms, other Vietnam Veterans.

So, in late 1989, an advertisement was placed in a Melbourne newspaper seeking those Vietnam Veterans who were also Motorcyclists who would be interested in starting a Motorcycle Club. There was a very strong response and so, in the Broadford Hotel, the Victorian Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club was born. During the same time other like-minded Vietnam Veterans across Australia were coming together and forming chapters.

Most had seen the film 'Stone' and found they could easily identify with the underlying theme of the film, Vietnam Veterans turning their backs on the society that had let them down. Finding a special freedom and joy of life in their own world, with their own rules and values. The Gravediggers showed the way and the Vietnam Veterans made it real.

Since its beginning the Club has expanded in leaps and bounds so much so, that now we have some sixteen Chapters throughout Australia. In 2000 the Members living in and around the Sydney area decided to form a local Chapter to better serve their needs, and so the Sydney Chapter of the VVMC was formed. We meet socially every Friday night at our Clubhouse at the corner of Old Illawarra Road and Menai Road, Menai. Any veteran is welcome to drop in anytime for a drink and a yarn.

We are based in Menai although our Members range from the central coast to the south coast, as far west as Orange and as far south as Goulburn. Our Members are mainly army veterans with a smattering of Navy and RAAF people. There are, of course, the gentlemen of the artillery represented and those of us who were naval gunners lend an air of distinction to the whole show!

The Sydney Chapter, VVMC, is also closely allied with and strongly encourages the DIGGERS Military Motorcycle Club whose Members are ex- or serving ADF Members. The DIGGERS MMC accommodates Veterans of post Vietnam conflicts.

Our Club as a whole enjoys the camaraderie of our mutual service and experience. We are well respected by the community at large and we return that respect. We are also well regarded by the people wherever we go. We have carved our own niche in the world and, at last, we are becoming a little more comfortable in it.

THE ROAD GOES ON FOREVER AND THE PARTY NEVER ENDS!



VETERAN SOUL (A group of Vietnam Veterans & Community singers)



A few quick words on Veteran Soul's progress. The journey has been a great experience, a bumpy but exciting road, many pot holes but so much joy and fun. Recent performances to date have been a fund raising at the Casula Powerhouse in aid of Father Chris Reilly's 'Kids Off the Street Programme'. This gig was in front of the Honourable Alan Griffin MP, Minister for Veteran Affairs along with a host of various dignitaries and a great audience. Some members of Veteran Soul were singled out by strangers as they were leaving and complimented the sound. That was a buzz, another buzz was the knowledge that Lorrae Desmond and Little Pattie, our Patrons, and Normy Rowe were happy to support the fund raiser. Following a duet by Little Pattie and Francis Edwards, Veteran Soul's creator, Lorrae Desmond introduced Veteran Soul and Normy heralded them onto the stage, all in all a great night. Veteran Soul was certainly baptised under fire during the August - September period, apart from the above gigs Veteran Soul appeared at The St. Marys VV Association / RSL Commemorative Service, St. John of God North Richmond, Concord Hospital Rehabilitation, Westmead Hospital Rehabilitation Unit, opening of the DVA Veterans' Health Week, the Annual dinner for the Partners of Vietnam Veterans including DVA guests and General Peter Cosgrove AC MC (Rtd). Veteran Soul was also honoured by the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces Inc. as entertainment for the members and guests following the August 16 Springwood Commemorative Service. Veteran Soul is looking forward to a 20 December gig, possibly the last for 2009. The gig is to entertain the under privileged, elderly and basically those that are down on their luck. The gig is to be held at a Motel located at the Crossroads Casula. The Motel owner provides the site plus all the trimmings and the Christmas dinner, all power to him. I am sure that the gig will be a great experienced and another chance for the choir to shine. I also note that Veteran Soul will also appear at Bunnings Nth Penrith on Thursday 10th December along with other entertainers, go along enjoy.

Veteran Soul will be featured on a soon to be released CD which is hoped to be available for Christmas through ABC Shops, ESOs and RSL Clubs. The compilation, recording and production of a CD is a huge task, so be patient, as Francis once said "Veteran Soul members must be committed" unfortunately some of us cannot commit the time and miss the gigs. I do earnestly recommend you all purchase a few discs as soon as they become available. Veteran Soul is also planning their first Veteran Soul specific CD. Watch out for it, a worthy cause by these all volunteer group of singers. Remember any profits made are donated to charity. All Vietnam Veterans and their family members are welcome to join the choir and interested vets can contact Francis at franced@bigpond.net.au or phone on 9660 2595, or mobile 0458 993 268.

SPECIAL REQUEST TO ALL MEMBERS

We are finding that cash (notes and coins) for: raffles, membership renewal (coming up soon) or for Association goods/memorabilia sent through the post is becoming too unreliable. In almost all cases the envelopes have been '*accidentally*' torn and the cash lost; your Office team seek your help to get around this problem. Please send any monies to the Association by cheque, money order or by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) directly to the Association account. Please make all Cheques payable to: Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces Inc. (in full please fellas, the bank throws a wobbly with abbreviations).

Your bank will need to know the information about the Association Account to use EFT; that is:

- BSB: 032 - 837
- Account No: 138817
- Acct Name: Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans & Associated Forces Inc
- EFT Reference: This is "**your name**" this is required so that we know who paid the money into the Association account by this method.

EYES OF THE TIGER - DIARY OF A DIRTY WAR

Recently I received the following information regarding a DVD which may be of interest to our Military Buffs and more specifically those who served in 5RAR. **Please note that the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans & Associated Forces Inc. has nothing to do with the DVD and its production and can not verify its content. The information is presented for your interest.** If you do purchase a copy let us know what your thoughts are on the content, delivery and ease of purchase.

“Dear Sir,

We are the production company of unique and compelling Australian Military Documentaries. In view of the fact Vietnam Veteran's Day is fast approaching, we would like to highlight one of our films that may be of interest to your association and its members.

As seen on the Nine Network, Eyes of the Tiger - Diary of a Dirty War is an explicit account of the real Vietnam War told through vivid stories of some of the members of the first Australian Reconnaissance Platoon. This elite platoon of soldiers was made up of national servicemen and regular army volunteers from 5RAR. Trained by the SAS, while fighting in Vietnam during 1966/67 they became the eyes and the ears of the 5RAR Tiger Battalion. This is a film full of untold heroic and adventurous tails of survival, of great, humorous and difficult ambushes and military gunfights, interwoven with the cold harsh realities of war and intimate accounts of the Vietnam Veterans struggle to move past the lingering memories.

While the film is told through the eyes of the 5RAR platoon, their experiences speak to the vast majority of Vietnam Veterans, and their loved ones.

The double disc DVD is only \$28.00 + postage, 10% of every sale goes to the 5RAR Vietnam Veterans' Association. To order a copy, or for more information please visit our website: <http://letsplayproductions.com/eot.html>

You are also welcome to contact us at this email address, or on the numbers below.
Many thanks,

Francine O'Brien

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Events & Happenings



- Ray Westwell, Welfare Coordinator, represented our Association at the VITA AGM in Canberra during October. VITA indemnifies Ex Service Organisations relative to Welfare activities. VITA is now to be funded 50/50 between the Organisation & The Commonwealth, a change from the previous 60/40 split, not a good sign regarding The Commonwealth's contribution into the future.
- Ray was involved with the Guard of Honour at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, on the occasion of the visit by Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex.
- Ray, Greg Meek & John Ronan represented our Association at the 37 Squadron RAAF Family Day where they promoted the Welfare Support our Association provides to the Service & Ex-Service Community, hopefully new memberships will result.
- Committee members & volunteers presented books to various schools as part of the Memorial Day commemoration during August.
- John Fenton, Secretary, attended the Review of DVA funded ESO Advocacy & Welfare Services established by Minister Griffin chaired by Bill Rolfe, Commissioner in Sydney. It is apparent the Government is attempting a cost cutting regime in many Departments/areas to overcome the Stimulus package expenditure. For 2009/10 \$4M was allocated by The Commonwealth but ESO submissions amounted to \$9M, an over subscription of \$5M. It is apparent that BEST & V&C Grants will remain at their current levels for several years, again this is not a good sign from the Welfare viewpoint & we & other ESOs must continue to lobby for adequate funding for Welfare Activities.
- Our volunteers & members remain active in selling raffle tickets to support our Association
- Our president, Jack Lake, will mention in his report the progress relating to the submission to BMCC to occupy the vacated Integral Energy Building in Springwood rent-free, which, if it comes to fruition, will provide a larger facility to administer our Association.
- President Jack & John Woolley travelled to Lawson to attend the rededication of the restored gravesite of Henry Hunter, an original ANZAC. After reading Henry's life story, the Chaplain said it all "you don't have to be a drunken footballer to be a hero."
- Committee members & volunteers attended various Remembrance Day Services throughout the greater Sydney area on 11 November.
- The HMAS Melbourne Association is organising a reunion in Nowra to be held in October 2010. If interested email sicambre@optusnet.com.au phone Dean Gedling 0411015551 or mail HMAS Melbourne Association PO box 4011 Bradbury NSW 2560.

Members are encouraged to provide relevant articles for this column that are of interest to our members Australia wide rather than localised. Send your articles for attention Darrell Carter.

DEFENCE FORCE RETIREMENT BENEFIT (DFRDB) FUND COMMUTATION.
BASED ON INAPPROPRIATE LIFE EXPECTANCY TABLES

Dear DF&RDB members

LtCol John Graham (Rtd.) produced a submission highlighting an apparent anomaly in the DFRDB pension expected life criteria titled '**The Inadequacies of use of a 45 Year Old Life expectancy Table for Defence Force Retirement Benefit (DFRDB) Fund Commutation.** John has spent an enormous amount of time on the submission and approached the Editor, and I might add quite some time ago, to advise the members of the BMVV&AF Inc. of the content of the submission.

Our initial intention was to re-produce the document in toto for all DF&RDB recipients to read and act accordingly to their own conscience dictates as to how members will be affected by the age anomaly; however, the submission has proved to be difficult to place in **CONTACT!** due to its length, and would lose its impact if placed over two issues. To further delay the printing would be an unfair impost and given that Government has now walked away from all the recommendations of the latest round of Service retirement Pensions and the Prime Minister's recent statement of intent relating to the treatment of Defence personnel: *"...the first responsibility of government is the security of the nation. And it follows therefore that government has a particular responsibility towards those who have worn the Nation's uniform. Because there is in my view no higher calling than to wear the uniform of Australia :- Kevin Rudd 8th Sep 2008*

The Editor has decided to approach the interesting, if not very important, issues / statistics by encouraging those who are DF&RDB recipients to contact John, get involved read and discuss updated DFRDB information and issues on the following website and act as directed by your specific circumstance and conscience. Should you wish to get a copy of John's submission, get involved, read, discuss updated DFRDB information and other issues on John's website.

www.militarysuperannuation.for-our.info

Your Association is proud of the fact that we are one of the few apolitical associations, as such the BMVV&AF Inc. do not endorse or dismiss the John Graham submission. The Committee does however, consider it pertinent to those who have retired on a DF&RDB pension. In this regard LtCol Graham's website is published for any member that may wish to pursue their own personal interest / opinion with their Federal Member.

The Editor

WINNERS OF THE CHRISTMAS 2009 RAFFLE

The President and Committee members wish to say a big thanks to all who not only purchased tickets in the Christmas Raffle, but were instrumental in the administration, sale and above all the donation of their time to go to all parts of the Blue Mountains area to sell tickets to our wonderful Locals. Jane Daly also receives a big thank you; you have to think, who takes out all the staples and folds the butts. Jane does that's who. Thanks Jane. We will have to make a few changes next year in sale points because we may be spreading our wings to additional district shopping and we hope this will keep the dollars rolling to our members and especially to our Welfare blokes when needed. 2009 Winning members are:

1st Prize: Ticket N^o. 40005, Jennifer Wearn, Springwood NSW.

2nd Prize: Ticket N^o. 32777, John Connell, Glenbrook NSW.

3rd Prize: Ticket N^o. 33499, Tracey Gallagher, Sth. Penrith NSW.

Merry Christmas to you all

BLUE MOUNTAINS VIETNAM VETERANS & ASSOCIATED FORCES INC.
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Please renew my membership / associate membership of the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans & Associated Forces Inc. for.....year/s,

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Donation: \$

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