

Report to Members May-June 2015

For those members who are not aware, I am also involved with the VVAA Education Team. I find this to be a way of continuing good relationships with the other two services, albeit in a rather relaxed yet structured way. All of the members of the Ed Team have to have a 'working with children' check, and a police check done before they are allowed to participate in classroom activities.

In May we have attended Albert Park Secondary College with 40-50 year 10 students, Upper Yarra RSL, where we had over 400 primary school students to cater for, and Catholic Ladies College Eltham with 200 very attentive year 10 students for an early morning presentation.

June was very quiet on the Ed Team front. However, I always have queries from *Sydney* members - and many others - regarding entitlements, SOPs and advice sought by advocates and the like. I can also report several favourable comments regarding the usefulness of the book *Out of Sight* which makes the effort it took to get it out there all that much more rewarding.

Due to illness, and an impairment caused by hand surgery, I knew that I would not be able to make it to the 50th anniversary get together recently held. For this I apologise to all concerned, however, before I had the operation on my hand I put together two dovetailed timber boxes, patterned on the NS1 tool box which all naval shipwrights of my era made as part of their training. One for the Association to raffle at the gathering, and one for my pending second grandchild. I hope Harry Kime enjoys his prize. David was a bit worried about the costs of shipping if someone from interstate had won the raffle.

As part of my contribution to the VVAA Ed Team, I recently wrote a small article on the Vietnam War and highlighted (unmercifully) the role the RAN played in getting the troops to and from Vietnam and what the Ed Team had to offer from an historical perspective, for students and others. This was then published in the Professional Historians Association Journal *Historia* Number 12, June 2015. A photograph of *Sydney* with the last of the troops returning, accompanied the article. My Army colleagues on the Ed Team were suitably impressed.

On 29 May my Toshiba all-in-one computer of nine months had a fatal hernia and died. Nothing could be saved. This was the second one of this type I'd had, the first one croaked after three weeks. Moral to the story, don't purchase Toshiba all-in-one computers, and always have a good warranty plan. JB Hi Fi could not have been nicer as they handed me a brand new HP all-in-one at no cost. Fingers crossed.

On 3 June attended a meeting of the VVAA Ed Team at Frankston RSL. Leading up to this I had been asked by my team leader whether or not I could make up some 'story boards' relating to the Battle of Long Tan.

Firstly an explanation on 'story boards'. These are a TV or movie producer's visual way of giving his team directions as to how a scene or scenes best go together during a TV or film shoot. They are also an excellent way of teaching - we've all heard the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words - and add visual cues and structure to a presentation. Again, my Army colleagues appeared to be suitably impressed. I have since made up another set for one of the members to take with him when he next visits the relatives of one of the persons represented on one of the boards.

On 12 June, attended Shipp Division graduation with three Army members of the VVAA Ed Team as invited guests of Recruit School. The presence of these men was specifically noted by Commander Clelland CO of Recruit School when he wrote, 'The support of the HMAS *Sydney* and Vietnam Logistic Support Veterans Association demonstrates to the graduating recruits that they are joining a distinguished (Senior) Service with a proud history. The attendance of members of the Vietnam Veterans Education Team; Mr Rob Lowe, Mr Rob Edgell and Mr Jim Dewar, was a special and welcome addition to our distinguished audience and I sincerely hope they enjoyed their first Naval Graduation Parade.'

The award presented by the Association is for Leadership Potential. This time it went to Recruit Maritime Logistics SC Tahleah Louise Wood O No: F8612000, 28, hailing from South Yarra, Victoria. Photographs of the presentations upon graduation were taken on the day and should accompany this report.

As predicted in previous reports, I have compiled existing information on the demise of Lt Cdr Ferguson and Lt Kennell with the view of revisiting this issue with the assistance and support of like-minded Veterans organisations. To the detriment of this course of action, there are already one or two of our members out there going off half-cocked and getting their facts wrong, and frankly boring people with issues they are not particularly interested in. It's not what you say, it's how you say it that makes the difference.

The National President of the Naval Association Russell Pettis, a classmate of mine from years past, has approached the Minister for Veterans Affairs via the Deputy Commissioner DVA Victoria, with regards to funding a study on water contamination, similar to that done recently regarding the CFA 'Fiskville' study

into contaminated water and cancerous conditions arising from exposure to very similar variables. Alas, to no avail. Thanks must go Russell for at least trying.

For those amongst the membership with an eye for detail, they will have noted that in my most recent reports regarding Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL) that the SOP for this disease has been changed. SOP 28 of 2014 was put in place on 14 March 2014 and had amongst its seven factors 'being on board a vessel and consuming potable water supplied on that vessel for a cumulative period of at least 30 days when the water supply has been produced by evaporative distillation of water that has been contaminated by **2,3,7,8 tetrachlorodibenzo-para-dioxin** (TCDD), at least five years before the clinical onset of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia': or,

This was then revoked and replaced by SOP 84 of 2014 on 22 August 2014. The factors have been reduced to two with an emphasis in factor (a) 'being exposed to benzene':

When one takes the time to examine the words contained in the title of the DVA sponsored study titled, *Examination of the Potential Exposure of RAN personnel to Polychlorinated Dibenzodioxins and Polychlorinated Dibenzofurans via Drinking Water* - and the factor referred to above - by breaking certain words down by syllable, one can readily define the combining word 'benzo' which, according to my copy of Macquarie Australian National Dictionary, it states: '**benzo** – a combining form meaning 'relating to or derived from benzene' or designating the presence of benzoic acid.' (p.108).

To my way of thinking, and I could always be wrong, if the above is correct, then exposure to TCDD contaminated water would still come under this SOP because it would appear that TCDD is 'related to or derived from benzene.' Could I have comments from those better qualified than I on this line of argument please.

Hoping for a good turn up at the AGM. The Hon Secretary tells me we have more apologies than those who are attending. At least those who tendered their apologies took the time to do so. It's the ones who don't even do that that never cease to amaze. Not even tempted by a free 'scan', what's the world coming to.

Regards to all

Dr John R Carroll



Dr John Carroll presenting 'Potential Leadership' award to Rct Tahleah Wood