

## **President's Report April-June 2017**

**Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train (RANBT) 05 April:** Several years ago, while walking through the Shrine of Remembrance Gardens, I noticed that the RANBT Plaque had the Army Rising Sun Badge emblazoned on it where the RAN Badge should have been. Having made previous attempts to have this changed, I can now report that the Shrine Commemoration Committee has recommended to the Shrine Trustees that a new Plaque be installed.

**Submission to DCN Rear Admiral Michael Noonan 08 April:** With reference to the RANBT above, and acting on the advice of Mr John Perryman, Historical Director, RAN Sea Power Centre in Canberra, I have approached the Deputy Chief of Navy (DCN), Rear Admiral Michael Noonan, to elicit his support for this venture. In this regard Admiral Noonan has written that: *I am appreciative of the research you have conducted, and your efforts to bring this matter to the attention of the Shrine of Remembrance Ceremonial Committee. --- I am advised that the appropriate emblem to be used on any additional Plaque is the official badge of the Royal Australian Navy approved in 1949. This pattern badge bears the Tudor or 'King's' crown which is appropriate for the era of the 1<sup>st</sup> RANBT's World War I service.* Mr Perryman has since written, *I can confirm that the letter to you signed by DCN is the authority for the use of the 1949 pattern badge.*

**ANZAC Day Commentary Team:** In the ABC commentary box on days of inclement weather has its advantages. As comment, the HMAS Sydney & VLSV Association, ably led by Lee Andrews, was well presented and one of the larger groups in the Navy contingent. It is not widely known that the march in its entirety, may be viewed on ABC I View for at least four weeks after the event, should members or their families wish to view the footage from the comfort of their own homes.

**Shipp Division Graduation 28 April:** One of the smaller graduating classes of 57 members of Shipp Division 'passed out' this day, with the following being noted for their personal achievements.

**Recruit of the Intake:** Rct. EW-SM Guy De Vos

**WO(N) Excellence Award:** Rct. ML-S Nicola Franklin

**Academic of the Intake:** Rct. EW-SM Guy De Vos

**Leadership Potential:** Rct. MT Yerzyk Saviski

**Top Shot:** Rct. ML-S Halina Marshall

As we have come to expect over the years of our involvement, Shipp Division was well turned out, and is a credit to their instructors and themselves. BZ Shipp Division.



**Alex Lloyd - Thistle Productions - Podcasts of former RAN members 11 May:** Your Association has been approached by Alex Lloyd, who, in conjunction with the Australian War Memorial (AWM), is in the process of seeking persons of interest from the RAN ex-service community to interview for posterity. These interviews will be carried out mid-September at the Navy Club. Several of our notable luminaries have been asked to participate in this worthwhile project.

**Kennell and Ferguson - Memorial Service 28 May:** Unfortunately, due to health constraints, I was unable to attend this function. Our Hon. Secretary, David Dwyer reports that it was a sell-out crowd with over 100 attending. A good time was had by all following the Memorial Service.

**Recruit School Shipp Division - Unit Readiness Evaluation – Presentation: 31 May:** At week four of their training, it has been noted by the instructors of Shipp Division, that most, if not all, of the new recruits are feeling the strain of

their new careers in the RAN. As a distraction, members of this Association and members of the VVAA Education Team have been asked to give a presentation of what life was like in our time, and how after 50 years or more, the training and many of the ideals experienced then, remain with us - even to this day.

**Meeting - David Roberts Senior Adviser to Minister for Veterans Affairs**

**09 June:** Following a telecon with Wendy Summers, DVA adviser to Minister Tehan, an appointment was made to meet with Minister Tehan's senior adviser at the Commonwealth Offices, Treasury Place Melbourne. Both David Dwyer and I attended. As comment, personally I was not overly impressed, as the Minister's original letter to me stated that: *My office will be in touch with you in the near future about your request to meet with me.*

The inference that can be drawn from this is that we would be meeting with the Minister himself, not a well-meaning senior adviser, and another adviser, who arrived 20 minutes late. For the information of members, in the recent past I have met, in person, various Ministers of Veterans Affairs, Con Sciacca (recently deceased), Bruce Scott, Bruce Billson, and Michael Ronaldson. At no time have I ever been referred to an adviser. I will be taking the advice of the senior adviser and writing to Tehan direct in any future correspondence I may have with him and his department.

**Note from Wendy Summers DVA 13 June:** The only information of substance to come out of the above meeting, was the implied need for me to refer our concerns - regarding potable water - to the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC). For this to happen, each of my recent submissions to the Repatriation Medical Authority would have to be updated and done again, then go through the process of being refused once more before appealing this decision to the SMRC. There must be a better way!

One other matter discussed with both advisers, was the undue emphasis put on the term 'Soldiers' by the Minister when he was discussing anything to do with service men and women. It was impressed on both advisers, that sailors, and members of the RAAF do exist, and have also served Australia in every conflict politicians have gotten us involved in.

**Email from Principal Medical Adviser DVA Dr Ian M Gardner 15 June:**

As an aside to the above, I was contacted at home by phone and then by email by Dr Ian R Gardner, Principal Medical Adviser to DVA who informed me that: *The Minister's office has asked me to contact you regarding your concerns about past potable water exposures by Naval personnel to the Dioxins in Agent*

*Orange during the Vietnam conflict. I am happy to talk to you, and can provide some additional advice/input.*

Dr Gardner goes further when he also wrote: *I am aware of the ENTOX research work conducted by the late Professor Michael Moore, and also very familiar with the work of Dr Eileen Wilson and Dr Keith Horsley, previously with DVA. I also have a good working knowledge of the RMA processes, as well as how the SMRC works, as I was a member of a couple of SMRC Specialist Panels in a previous job.*

**Articles of interest on website:** There are two articles of interest on the HMAS Sydney & VLSV Assoc. website under what is colloquially known as the *Captain's Cabin*. The first of these is titled *In Their Own Words* which has many contributions by our members - and several others - regarding their service in HMAS Sydney and escorts, during the Vietnam War. The second is an extended extract from a *Report of Proceedings by Lt Cdr M Cumming* regarding his month in Vietnam December 1962-January 1963. Both are well worth a read, if only to remind ourselves of the service we so willingly performed during the mid -1960's early 1970's

Kind regards to all.

Dr John Carroll

Friday 23 June 2017