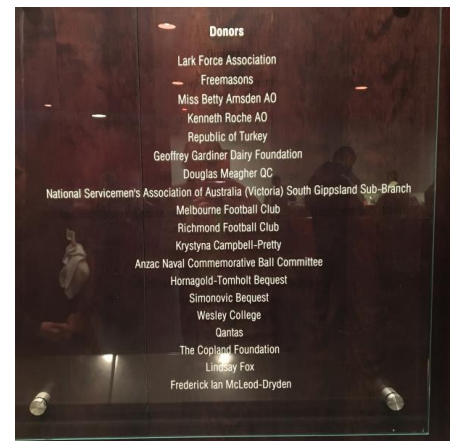


President's Report – 2/ 2018

HMA Ships *Sydney 3* and *4* Commemorative Plaques to be placed at the Shrine of Remembrance. On 11 March, I wrote to Mr Dale Capron, Convenor of the Shrine's Commemoration Committee, requesting advice and guidance regarding the placement of Plaques to commemorate the service of HMAS *Sydney 3* and HMAS *Sydney 4*. In doing so, I suggested that both ships be commemorated by the placement of separate Plaques at either the HMAS *Sydney 1* tree, or the HMAS *Sydney 2* tree.

On 14 March, in response to the above, Mr Capron has provided me with the relevant application pro-forma to which I have responded. In doing so I have given the Shrine authorities one or two options which I would like the Ceremonial Committee to consider before adoption. These are still under consideration by both the Shrine authorities, and the Committee of this Association.

Frederick Ian Mcleod-Dryden: On 28 March, Mr Dean Lee's Secretary, Ms Voula Marinis, advised me that Fred's name now appears on the Shrine of Remembrance Donor Board. On Anzac Day, my daughter was able to obtain several photographs of this recognition, which may also appear with this report.



*Presenting the award for Academic Excellence to Rct. (Gap Year)
Nancy Lee-Norris at Shipp Division graduation 29 March 2018.*

Shipp Division Graduation: On 29 March, I, along with several others, attended Shipp Division's graduation from Recruit School, HMAS *Cerberus*. As expected, Shipp Division was well turned out, and is a credit to the Divisional staff and themselves. BZ Shipp Division. The following members of the Division were also recognised for their outstanding achievements.

Top Shot: Rct. MT **Sharnee Hoe**.

Leadership Potential: Rct. MT **Jandre Van Derwalt**.

Academic Excellence: Rct. Gap Year **Nancy Lee-Norris**.

Sportsperson of Intake: Rct. Gap Year **Sharon Atkinson-Nicholson**.

WO Navy Award: Rct. MT **Katie Welch**.

Recruit of Intake: Rct. MT **Gerhardus Pretorius**.

MT = Marine Technician. Gap Year is self-explanatory.

HMAS Sydney 5: The launching of the new *Hobart* class DDG, HMAS *Sydney* 5, will take place in South Australia on Saturday 19 May 2018. Ten invitations were received to attend this auspicious occasion. These have been distributed to interested parties in not only our Association, but to other state-based HMAS *Sydney* & VLSV Associations as well.

Reports of Proceedings (ROPs) and NAVFORV Files: ROPs and US Naval Force Vietnam (NAVFORV) documentation appertaining to service in Vietnam, 1965-1972, are available on the Internet. Members are hereby informed that, due to a lack of space in my home office, I have disposed of any hard copies in my possession. This simply means that if members have a query about their service, they can either look it up themselves, or ask me to do it for them. Either way, I am still happy to continue to provide this service.

National Academy of Sciences - Institute of Medicine: This Institution is now known as the Health and Medicine Division (HMD) of the National Academy of Sciences. Veterans Affairs in the United States has extended contracts with the above Academy - which is an independent, non-governmental organisation - to review evidence regarding the long-term effects of Agent Orange, and other herbicides, on the health and welfare of Vietnam Veterans. HMD determines whether the available evidence suggests a relationship between the diseases studied and herbicide exposure. In late 2017, HMD began its eleventh review, titled 'Veterans and Agent Orange Update 2017.'

As part of this updated review of all potentially associated effects, based upon the most recent additions to the medical and scientific literature, the biennial update will also specifically highlight possible birth defects and other inter-generational health effects. These studies, and updates to other

aspects of Agent Orange exposure, will continue over the period 2018-2019. The release of their findings will follow soon after. To the best of my knowledge and belief, nothing of the same magnitude is carried out here in Australia by the DVA, or the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA).

Anzac Day 2018: I was again asked to be the Navy commentator on ABC TV for the Anzac Day parade, Melbourne. Foremost amongst those participating was my predecessor, WO Martin (Marty) Grogan, OAM, RANR, and his son, Captain Darren Grogan, CSM, RAN, who, between them, have clocked up over 80 years of service - both RAN and RANR - to this Nation of ours. These two gentlemen were privileged to be invited by the RSL to lead the parade. To view the telecast of this occasion, members can view this on ABC I view, but only up until 25 May. A DVD of the occasion may also be purchased through the ABC.

Shipp Division: A presentation by members of this Association, and members of the VVAA Education Team, was carried out with the new intake of Shipp Division at 1800, on Wednesday, 02 May. Shipp Division will then graduate on Friday 22 June. This is a daytime graduation, which will get underway at 1000. Members wishing to attend will need to notify the undersigned accordingly, so that they can be recorded for security purposes. As this will be Lt Thornton's last graduation, to those who have assisted with presentations and attended previous graduations, please make the effort to attend and wish him well for the future.

Five SOPs Outstanding: Despite my best efforts - which were assisted in no small measure by the then National President of the Naval Association of Australia, Mr Russell Pettis, and Dr Rod Bain, OAM, the then medical adviser to the national RSL - the five SOPs concerning Hypothyroidism, Diabetes, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia, Ischemic Heart Disease, and Parkinson's Disease, have not been actioned by the RMA to include service in Vietnam and exposure to Agent Orange.

To attempt to resubmit without further concise evidence would be fruitless. The RMA have also made it a stipulation that once an SOP has been reviewed, it cannot be reviewed again for at least 12 months, if then. Submitting these same submissions for review by the Specialist Medical

Review Council (SMRC) on appeal, is another hurdle which is rarely, if ever, successful.

Since submitting the above for the RMA's consideration, we have had five Ministers for Veterans' Affairs, to which an Association such as ours, could appeal, claiming that the RMA, and the SMRC are being overly judicious in their rulings. These are: Senator Michael Ronaldson, Stuart Robert MP, Dan Tehan MP, Michael McCormack MP, and Darren Chester MP. This Portfolio obviously does not rate all that highly on the government's list of priorities.

A good example of double talk is contained in a letter from the then Shadow Minister, Senator Michael Ronaldson, dated 19 December 2011, and I quote: *In my discussions with the Chair of the Authority (RMA) Professor Ken Donald AO, Professor Donald indicated that there are only two conditions dealing with dioxin which differ between the United States of America and Australia. He indicated that in all other conditions where the United States of America accepted the role of dioxin causing a condition, Australia's RMA agrees.*

However, logic indicates that if you take the 13 conditions, supposedly accepted in Australia, from the 15 conditions accepted in the USA, this does not equal seven! Seven is the number of accepted conditions that affect Vietnam Veterans, which include the following factor(s): (i) on land in Vietnam, or (ii) at sea in Vietnamese waters, or (iii) on board a vessel and consuming potable water supplied on that vessel when the water supply had been produced by evaporative distillation of estuarine waters; for a cumulative period of at least 30 days, at least five years before the clinical onset of (specific disease).

Kind regards to all.

Dr John Carroll.

10 May, 2018