

# THE COMET

Journal of the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League, Qld. Inc.

This  
Christmas  
end a quarrel.  
Seek out a forgotten  
friend. Dismiss suspicion,  
and replace it with trust.  
Write a love letter. Share some  
treasure. Give a soft answer. Keep  
a promise. Find the time. Forgo a grudge.  
Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologize if you  
were wrong. Try to understand. Examine your  
demands on others. Think first of someone else.  
Be kind; be gentle. Appreciate. Laugh a little. Laugh a  
little more. Express your gratitude. Gladden the heart of a  
child. Welcome a stranger. Take pleasure in the beauty and the  
wonder of Earth.  
Speak your love.  
Speak it again.  
Speak it yet  
Once again.

**APSL WISHES YOU A VERY, MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A HEALTHY, SAFE 2021!**

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**The Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League Qld, Inc. (APSL) provides advocacy and support services to pensioners and superannuants in Queensland.**

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Australian Hearing	131 797
Aust. Securities & Investment Commission	07 3867 4700
Aust. Taxation Office	132 861
Centrelink (Older Australians line)	132 300
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Commonwealth Respite and Life Flight Centre	1800 052 222
CRS (Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services) - Human Services	1800 277 227
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Home & Community Care (65+ years)	1800 200 422
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Qld Competition Authority	07 3222 0555
Qld Ombudsman's Office	1800 068 908
Residential Tenancies Authority	1300 366 311
Safe Food Queensland	1800 300 815
Senior's Advocacy Information & Legal Services (SAILS)	07 3214 6333
Senior's Card	13 74 68
Senior's Enquiry	1300 135 500
Senior's Legal & Support Service	
Brisbane	07 3214 6333
Cairns	07 4031 7179
Hervey Bay	07 4124 6863
Toowoomba	07 4616 9700
Townsville	07 4721 5511
State Emergency Service Office	13 74 68
Youth & Family Support Service	07 3274 9917

### **Community Support Services Service Directory** **Domestic Violence Crisis Line 1800 811 811**

Immigrant Women's Support Service	07 3846 3490
	07 3255 1420
Qld Aged & Disability Advocacy	1800 818 338
Seniors & Go Card	13 74 68
Senior Shopper	1300 360 265
Sexual Assault Help Line	1800 811 811
South Brisbane Immigration & Community Legal Service	07 3846 3189
The Incapacitated Servicemen & Women's Assoc. of Aust	07 3356 9022
Women's legal Service	07 3392 0670
National Welfare Rights Network	1800 358 511

### **Department of Health Service Directory**

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Health Services Info Line	07 3837 5986
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My Aged Care	1800 200 422



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Contact APSL State Office to enquire about membership and a branch near you. You can still contact Head Office on the usual number and Anneliese will answer.

### **APSL — MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

### **A MEMBER OF THE EVERY- AGE COUNTS COALITION OF ORGANISATIONS**





## EDITORIAL

By

**Cherith Weis**



Dear Friends,

In this edition I have included the contents of a speech delivered by a Vietnam Veteran friend, Brad Bauer. Brad was the guest of the Young Veterans Group in Gladstone some weeks ago. Please spend some time over the Christmas/New Year break reading Brad's article.

Brad is concerned for returned Ex-servicemen and women and the horrific trend of returned soldiers taking their lives. As many as eight returned soldiers have taken their lives in a little over two weeks.

The horrific cartoons posted by the Chinese this week are a slur on our country. It would appear that no apology is forthcoming anytime soon. I say to our Armed Forces, we know that you are better than what has been portrayed in an insult to our country.

*Stay strong. You have our support and we thank you for your service to our country.*

APSL conducted the 75th Annual General Meeting on Monday, November 30 on the Video Conferencing site, Zoom. The 2019 / 2020 Management Committee was re-elected with two changes including one addition.

Nola Harvey has moved from Committee member to Assistant Secretary and we welcome back to the fold Graham Lynch from Babinda. Graham moves back to the one-time position he held; Area 1 Organiser. Welcome back, Graham!

We still have vacancies on the Management Committee and if any branch members would like to submit their interest in joining the committee, we would love to hear from you. Please call our Office Manager, Anneliese on 07 3844 5878 if you would like to join us in our fight for a better deal for pensioners and superannuants.

Also Monday, November 30, 2020, we learned that Terri Butler MP and Shadow Minister for the Environment and Water; and Federal Member for Griffith

presented our Pension Petition to the House of Representatives. On December 2nd, Terri's office supplied to us a video of the presentation and also an excerpt from Hansard. Should anyone require a copy, I am able to forward it to you. Copies have been posted on our APSL website and also our Facebook page.

Thanks go to all involved in the presentation of the pension petition and its ultimate arrival in the chambers of the Federal Parliament; APSL members; our staff and in particular, Terri Butler and her staff.

The publishing of the monthly Comet for a number of branches relies a number of State Parliamentarians to print off copies for our members.

Our grateful thanks go to Gympie's elected representative, Tony Perrett who looks after the local branch; Gladstone's Glen Butcher's office and Jill Hopson; Barry O'Rourke's Rockhampton Office and staff, Karen and Debra; Cameron Dick and Jim Chalmers for the printing their offices do for our Vice President, Barry Ramsay and Whitsunday Council's Mardi Mathieson who looks after the Bowen Branch - thank for your support of our local branches.

We all know that this year has been one like no other. However, even though it has restricted us for some time meeting face to face, we can only hope and pray that there's a sign that there's changing coming for the better.

That doesn't mean that we should forget about social distancing. We should continue to adhere to what we have been practicing over the last months and it's up to us to stay safe and look after each other.

This is an additional edition of The Comet. Please take time to read it, especially the feature article.

Wishing everyone a Happy, Holy Christmas and a Safe, Healthy New Year from all at APSL. Stay Well, Folks!



Dear Members and friends....

As I sit at my kitchen table my innermost thoughts and best wishes are extended to one and all, our Comet Readers for the upcoming festive season and this Christmas Song; the chorus is bubbling up in my spirit to share with you.

"A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Let's hope it's a good one,

Without any fear:

The meaningful verse says.....

So this is Christmas and what have you done, Another year over, And a new one just begun;

And so this is Christmas,

I hope you have fun,

The near and the dear one,

The old and the young.

As we look back on Year 2020, we are all reminded of the trials, the losses, the heart break, hardships so many suffered in our Australia.

Memories remind us that nothing lasts forever, time is precious, enjoy life, and remember don't count the days — Make the days count!

Once again, Ponder the reason for the Season

God's Greatest Gift To Mankind....JESUS..HIS son with love!

Joy To The World....and so this is Christmas I hope you have fun, the near and the dear one, the Old and the Young.

God's blessings be on you and your families...

...Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

*Joyce Macdonald*

State President.

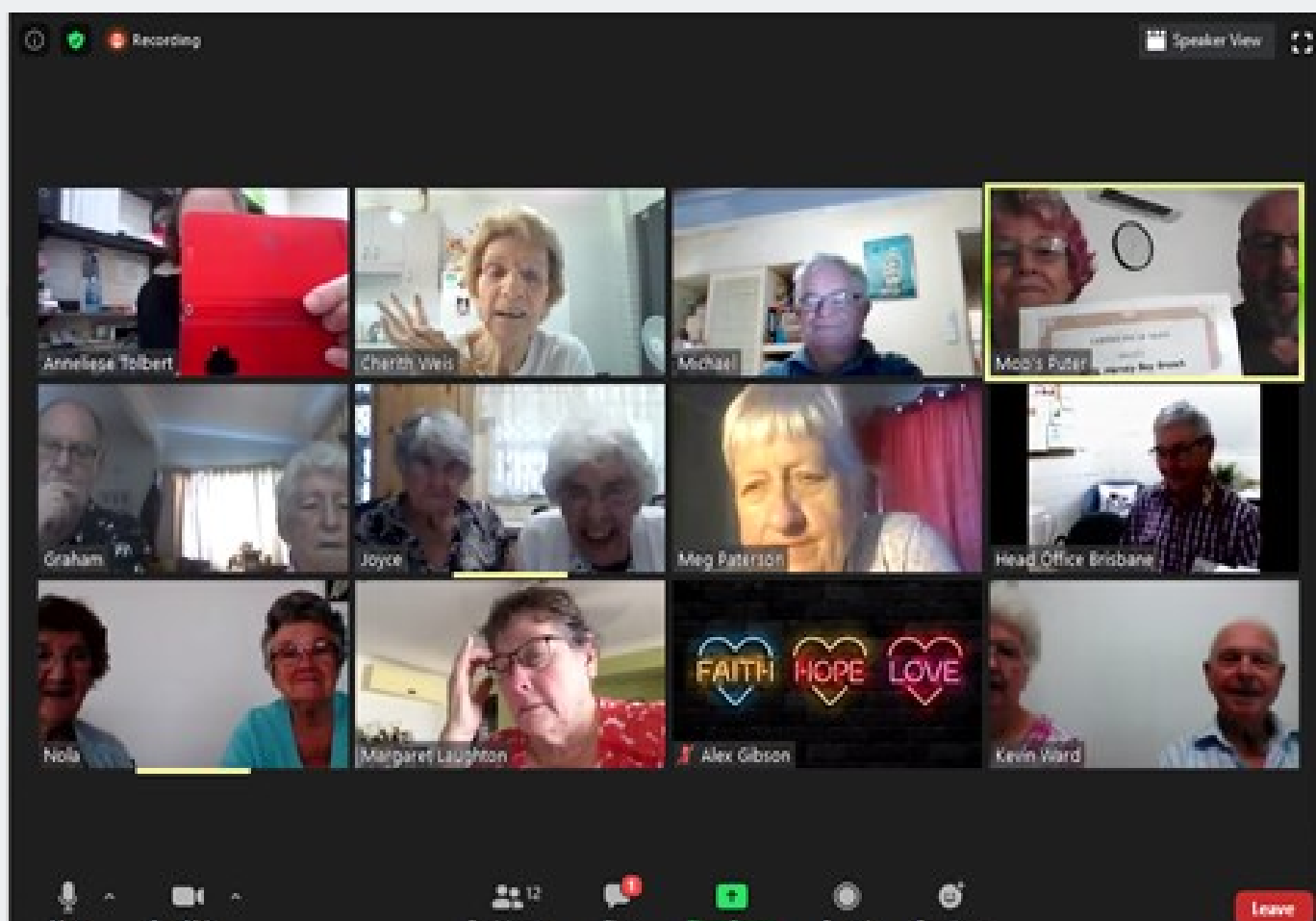




Hervey Bay delegates Muriel Thurgar and Dale Stanley show off the Certificate of Merit for 2019/2020 having once again taken out the accolade for the branch with the most new members.

APSL held it's 75th Annual General Meeting on November 30. Branches represented were North Rockhampton; Warwick; Hervey Bay; Babinda; Bowen; Gladstone; Kurilpa; Gracemere; Logan; and Gympie.

At least two branches were late apologies.





A floral tribute to Mardi Mathieson at Whitsunday Regional Council from Bowen's Dot Matthews and Bowen President Joyce Macdonald. Thanks and appreciation for printing the "Comets" for Bowen Branch APSL.

Oo0oo

On Thursday November 26, we held our monthly meeting. We were very please that the Mayor of The Southern Downs Regional Council , Councilor Vic Penisi was able to attend this meeting. The members enjoyed listening to some of the things happening in our region and as many of them rate payers, they were able to have many of their questions answered. A lovely morning was had by all finishing off the morning with our table day raffles and a nice cuppa .





## Season's Greetings one and all.

For his monthly articles on Road Safety —

**Leyland Barnett — Thank you!**

For continuing support in monthly editions — **Alex Gow Funerals — Thank you!**

For concerning reports on Animal Welfare — **RSPCA'S Michael Beatty - Thank you!**

To **APSL Branches** who regularly send in copy and photos for publication or help in any way — **Thank you!**

To all who print off copies of **The Comet** for our branches — **Thank you!**

We look forward to increasing interest in the **APSL** with your help in **2021!**



My husband  
and I decided we don't  
want to have children.  
We're going to tell them  
tonight at dinner.

Then I bought a jigsaw puzzle.  
On the box it says 4-8 years. I  
got ripped off, I had it finished  
in a day.



## Airing the dirty laundry

A young couple were eating their breakfast when the woman noticed their neighbour hanging out washing on the line.

"That laundry is not very clean," she said, "She obviously doesn't know how to wash correctly. She needs to use better soap powder and maybe soak overnight to get a better result."

Her husband looked out the window, but said nothing.

The next weekend the same thing happened and the woman

again added her two cents' worth on the standard of her neighbour's washing skills.

But then, a couple of weeks later, the woman looked out and was surprised to see nice clean washing on the line next door.

"Look," she commented, "she's finally learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who told her what to do."

Then the husband replied, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."

## Dog dies after being left tethered to a clothesline

RSPCA Qld Inspector Ben Newman Ben was called out to a critical job on the Southside today. A dog was suffering from heat exhaustion, tethered to a clothesline in someone's backyard.

No one was home and no food, water or shelter was provided for the dog.

The dog had managed to tangle its lead around the clothesline, having minimal movement.

Inspector Newman seized the dog as his condition was critical under the 33 degree heat. He rushed him to RSPCA Qld's veterinary surgery at Wacol, but unfortunately it was too late, the dog was dead upon arrival.

Chief Inspector Daniel Young says, "It's only the second day of summer, please ensure that when animals are unattended they have access to food, water and shelter at all times."

**If you see an animal in distress, contact the RSPCA's 24/7 Animal Emergency Hotline 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625).**

[Read more from RSPCA Queensland on how to keep animals of all types cool this summer.](#)

### PETS AND SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.

#### RSPCA'S HOME ALONE SERVICE CAN HELP.

Every year hundreds of animals are reported as being abandoned during school holidays. While some of them actually had been abandoned others actually had someone assigned to care for them.

"The problem is that the animals' owners often neglect to notify neighbours and these neighbours report the matter to us," said RSPCA Qld spokesperson Michael Beatty. "I would urge anyone who leaves their pets in the care of family or friends to register with our **Home Alone** service."

The **Home Alone** service was set up to alleviate the burden on already overworked Inspectors who were continually being called to investigate possible cases of neglect and cruelty during holiday periods.

"Many people leave pets at home and rely on the goodwill of neighbours and friends to keep them fed, watered and exercised," said Mr Beatty. "The problem is that often these friends forget or the animal escapes and we have no one to contact in case of emergencies. With **Home Alone** people can register their pet on our website and leave the name and contact details of the people taking care of the animal. That way we know whom to contact in case of emergencies."

RSPCA Queensland investigates over 19,000 complaints of animal cruelty and neglect annually and reports of abandoned animals make up a large number of these complaints. During holiday seasons these types of calls escalate with families leaving pets behind in the care of friends and neighbours.

"The good intentions of neighbours looking out for the welfare of your pet can often lead to unneeded investigation," continued Mr Beatty. "Simply by completing your details on **Home Alone** when your family is going on holidays you can be reassured that RSPCA Inspectors will contact you or your animals' nominated caregiver if a complaint is lodged or the animal ends up at an RSPCA shelter."

However the sad fact remains that some animals have been abandoned.

"Your pet is your responsibility. A pet is for life, not just your convenience. Animal abandonment is an offence."

You can register your details by either calling the call centre on 3426 9999 or following the link

<http://www.rspcaqld.org.au/what-we-do/care-for-animals/home-alone-service>





## YOUNG VETERANS-RSL GLADSTONE

*I was invited to be the Guest Speaker at a Formal Dinner for the Young Veterans at the RSL Club in Gladstone on the 14/11/2020. There are three subjects they requested me on which to speak. These will be noted preceding each theme item.*

### INTRODUCTION

### A brief Summary of your role in the Vietnam War.

My name is Brad Bauer and I am a Vietnam Veteran. Thank you for inviting me to be your Guest Speaker here tonight. It is an Honour for me to address you this evening.

When I left school my Parents encouraged me to join the Bank which I did. I hated every second of it. When the draw came up for National Service I missed out, so I volunteered. I also volunteered to go to Vietnam.

I did my Basic Training at Singleton in N.S.W. and my Corps Training at the School of Military Engineering at Casula in Sydney N.S.W. After my training I had the Rank of Sapper and the title of Field Engineer. I also had some further training at the Jungle Training Centre in Canungra Qld. The Engineer's Motto is *Facimus et Frangimus* "We Make and We Break". That means we build things and we blow things up.

I went to Vietnam with 17 Construction Squadron. The first job I had was building a Fort at a place called Baria. I was then sent to 3 Troop, 1 Field Squadron, the home of the Field Engineers and Tunnel Rats, stationed at Nui Dat.

The Duties of a Field Engineer/Tunnel Rat included dealing with Tunnels, Mines, Booby Traps, Improvised Explosives Devices (IED's) and destroying Unexploded Ordnance. The Mines we were looking for were our own Mines. 50% of our Casualties were caused by these mines.

In 1967 Brigadier Stewart Graham ordered the construction of an 11 kilometre 'Barrier Fence and Minefield' in Southern Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam. There were 20,292 Mines planted in that Minefield.

While the Minefield was being constructed the Viet Cong came at night and removed some of the Mines. It was not very well guarded. That task was given to the members of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam ARVN (The Army of South Vietnam). It was obvious that Mines were being removed, so a strategy was developed to

stop it. The method used was to put an anti-lift device below the mine to deter the Viet Cong from acquiring these Mines.

The ant-Lift device consisted of a hand grenade with a pressure plate attached, so that when the Mine was lifted it activated the hand grenade, which exploded killing the person trying to remove it.

This worked for a while until the Viet Cong devised a method to remove the Mine and Hand Grenade safely. They then had a Mine and a Hand Grenade.

13 Sappers died due to the stress of planting those Mines in the Minefield. (There is much more information available on the Internet)

I was assigned to the Armoured Personnel Carriers as part of a two Man Team called a Mini- Team. Part of our equipment was a Mine Detector. In addition to the normal Field Engineer Duties we had the job of Forward Scouts and Trackers when anything we found needed to be checked out.

One of the things I learned about Tracking was that our Enemy had footwear called Ho Chi Minh Sandals. These comprised of a rubber based oval shape with crossed straps in the centre. The idea was that due to the shape it was difficult to determine which way the enemy was moving.

That certainly was the case in the Dry Season but in the Wet Season it was different. Just like when you walk with thongs in the wet, it flips up some material (water and mud) and leaves it behind. When this happened you could tell which way the Enemy was travelling and how fresh the tracks were.

As you could imagine it depended on how much water was on this mound because, after a fairly short time, it dried out.

Continued on page 10.

## BRAD'S STORY continued

I do not know what is used today in the Military to heat your food or make a brew but we had Hexamine Tablets. There was a problem with their use as they created a smell which could easily be detected in the Jungle. We used small pieces of C4 Explosives instead which burned very hot with minimal odour.

Some of the things that I encountered in the Jungle was Leeches which really gave me a hard time. The Ants in the Jungle made a nest in the leaves of a tree by gluing them together. We have the same in Australia which are Green in colour but they are Red in Vietnam. What would happen was that if you brushed against that nest they descended on you and bit the hell out of you. Could you imagine how I felt when I am on Patrol in Hostile Country and all of a sudden you have to deal with thousands of Ants biting you. The other things were 'Wait a While Vines'. These are vines with hook like thorns. If you got caught up with them you generally had to cut yourself out. One day as I was out doing my job as a Forward Scout I was walking along a small Creek. I was about to put my foot down when a 5 foot Crocodile shot out and scared the living daylight out of me.

Some of the Jungle had some very thick Canopy over it, which did not allow much sunlight through. Consequently there was not much undergrowth so it was fairly easy to walk around. I did hear the monkeys in the trees but couldn't see them.

If you are camped under that Canopy at night it is impossible to see your hand in front of your face. The only things you can see are the fireflies which plays with your head, particularly when you are on Guard Duty, because it looks for all the world like someone with luminous hands on their watch walking and swinging their arms.

The Canopy was so dense in parts of the Jungle it was very difficult to find the Enemy from the air. Consequently it was decided to use a Defoliant to remove that Canopy in order to be able to locate the Enemy. The products they used were called the Rainbow Herbicides. There were Agents Green, Pink, Purple, Blue, White, Orange 1, 11, 111, and Super Orange. Agent Orange was made using Commercial products 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T. When these Defoliants are produced there is a Con-

taminant called Dioxin which is normally removed before use. However it was not removed but left in the final product that was used in Vietnam. Dioxin is one of the most potent toxins known to Man. This entered into the Food Chain and the Americans, their Allies plus the Vietnamese People, all ingested this poison. As a direct result of this many Children of Vietnam Veterans are born with Genetic Diseases and Deformities. It is the same with the Vietnamese People. We were also given Malaria Medication called Paludrine. This was taken in the Dry Season and additionally, Dapsone in the Wet Season, which is a known Carcinogen. Many Veterans, who spent any time in that Jungle and ingested that medication, suffer from some form of Cancer.

Your Transition from Service Life to Civilian Life, as this is currently one of the big issues facing Younger Veterans leaving the Military. Once I returned to Australia I went back to the Bank for a short time but it wasn't long before I resigned. I was very disturbed by my experiences in Vietnam.

I worked in different jobs, mostly as a Laborer. At one time I was employed by the Gatton Shire Council as a Labourer when a Truck Driver came up to us and was very angry. He was spitting chips. I asked him what was the matter? He replied that they wanted him to blow up a stump but were not prepared to pay him any extra, so he said "I am not going to do it". Some time later the Overseer came over to us and asked "Does anyone here know anything about Explosives?" I said "I used some in the Army". He replied "You're now the Shotfirer". A week later I received a Shotfirers Licence in the Mail with 'Nil Restrictions'. Due to this I decided that I better learn more about Commercial Explosives and their use.

Consequently I read everything I could find on Explosives and worked for a Blasting Contractor for nothing until I became a competent technician.

After some time I became pretty good at blasting. I had my own blasting company for a while. Maybe some of you watched or heard about the Television Show the Myth Busters.

In one segment they tried to remove concrete from a Concrete Truck where the motor had failed allowing the Concrete to harden in the Bowl. Well they couldn't do it, but I did it twice.

I then attained a job in the Seismic Industry using Explosives. The technique involved was placing a charge in a hole drilled into the ground and initiate it. As the shockwave travelled through each layer of the geology some of the energy was reflected back and was recovered and stored in a computer from which a map of the underground geology was made. For Gas and Oil we were looking for large Structures where Gas and Oil may be trapped. We were also looking to find Faults within Coal Seams down to 3 metres. By identifying these anomalies it allowed the Miners to determine where to mine Coal economically. When exploring for Oil and Gas we placed a fairly large charge in the hole which allowed the shockwave to travel deep into earth. However, Coal Seams were much shallower so we needed smaller charges of explosives with a higher velocity of detonation, creating a higher frequency to delineate a higher quality of the geological smaller structures. A problem arose with this technique because the holes we drilled were 100 millimetres in diameter and the explosive was 25 millimetres in diameter. Even though we covered the charges with dirt called Stemming or Tamping, the shockwave was dulled which supplied poor quality data. To overcome this I suggested we fill the hole with water. Water cannot be compressed and is a great conductor of energy. This created the higher frequency required to be transmitted through the different density changes in the geology, allowing a dramatic improvement in the quality of the data, thus revolutionizing the exploration of Faults in Coal Seams overnight.

Throughout the Exploration process we drilled literally thousands of holes. Because much of this work was carried out in Cattle and Sheep Country the holes were a Hazard for these and other animals. We used a plastic device shaped like an inverted Witches Hat which was placed in the hole to prevent the animals legs slipping into it, causing damage to that limb but it was only good for a one time use as it became deformed and damaged. However I came up with this idea to rehabilitate the land. I suggested that they use a Post Hole Borer with an auger larger than the Drill Hole and bore down approximately half a metre, place the plastic cap in the hole which was supported by the lip of the larger hole and then fill it with dirt. This worked a treat and

saved these Companies millions of dollars in Rehabilitation costs. They did fly an Expert (?) out from Canada and he came up with the same solution as I did.

During this era of Exploration we used large quantities of Explosive. ICI Explosives, now Orica, designed a new explosive particularly for the Seismic Industry. Before they began producing it one of their Representatives came to our office for our opinion on this new product. It was obvious to me that there was a fault with the design in that the detonator well was facing away from the centre of the charge. This would not have detonated reliably and would have caused misfires. Orica did not go ahead with that design which would have caused them much embarrassment.

After working in the Seismic Industry there came an opportunity for me to apply for the Position of Inspector of Explosives in Central Queensland. Throughout my Blasting Career I found lots of issues that needed addressing in that Industry and I thought I could make a difference. I was successful in attaining that Position.

As an Inspector of Explosives my duty was to Administer the Explosives Act and Regulations. This involved all aspects of Explosives from the Cradle to the Grave including Manufacture, Transport, Storage, Licensing, Use, destruction of Old Explosives, Investigating Complaints, Incidents and Accidents. I also gave Presentations to Emergency Services (Police, Fire Brigade and SES) advising them on how to deal with Emergencies involving Explosives. I was able to upgrade and write the Shotfirers Course at Tafe as well. During my time as Inspector of Explosives I attended two Bombings in Rockhampton, the Shark Club and the Factory Night Club. In the Shark Club's Case I was able to advise the Fire Brigade that Explosives had been used as they believed they were dealing with a Gas Explosion. Later on that night they found some IED's that had not exploded. At the Factory Night Club I was able to defuse one of the devices that had misfired. In both cases I was able to assist the Police in explaining why they had malfunctioned. During my tenure as Inspector of Explosives and then Regional Inspector of Explosives I assisted in writing Legislation upgrading the Explosives Act and Regulations. On two occasions I received a Complaint, investigated the incident, recommended the Charges, I then became the Complainant and finally the Prosecutor.

I didn't like doing that as it appeared to be too personal.

I believe I was able to achieve all this due to my Military Training. The Army trained me in the basic use of Explosives and I expanded on this. They also taught me to solve problems and I was very successful in doing that at times.

When the Military are looking for Recruits not all Applicants are successful. They only accept the best of Australian Youth, the Cream of the Crop. You are trained to a very high standard and are Motivated and Intelligent. The Military spend a lot of money in training so that you can achieve such a high level in the particular skills required in your Corps. All you have to do is to convince your future Employer that you have skills that he needs and can contribute to his Business. That sound easier than it is. In my Introduction Ed told you that I have made a Compilation of Articles and Documentaries. He has 10 of them. If you find them useful I can supply you with as many as you wish, free of charge. In Interview 5 on that USB Stick Dave Sabben (Ex-Lieutenant Dave Sabben, Platoon Commander of 12 Platoon in the Battle of Long Tan) talks about how he used his Military Training in Civilian Life. Thirty years after leaving the Military he is a Project Manager with a Corporation and, as he says, using the skills he learnt in the Army. He is still a Platoon Commander but he doesn't carry around live rounds anymore. Benjamin Robert-Smith VC, MG, was Headhunted for the job of General Manager of Channel 7. When they approached him about the job he said "Why do you want me for this Position as I don't know anything about Television". They replied "We know all about Television but we need a Leader."

We want to have a focus on **Mental Health** and how to become more resilient and how to take control of your life.

Approximately 30 years after National Service I was diagnosed with PTSD. This is how PTSD was explained to me. "During your Military Career you may be traumatized by some event, especially in War, but not always. When you leave the Military you generally try to re-establish your Marriage or get married, re-establish your Career, or develop one. You may have Children and with that a Mortgage as well. These emotions or feelings from your Trauma are suppressed by your more immediate issues. However, after some time, usually around 25-40 years, you find that your Career is

established, the house is paid off, and the children have left home, so you can no longer suppress these issues. One day you just collapse and find yourself crying and unable to understand what is going on." This is PTSD. It is called "Falling off your Perch". On the USB Key there is a Presentation from one of the Life Style Courses run by the VVCS (now Open Arms). It describes how your Military Training can exacerbate your PTSD. In the Military you are made ANGRY. Why is that? It is because ANGRY MEN KILL. Civilians live at a low level and it take some time for them to become angry. This is not so with Trained Military Personnel. We live just below the Anger Level. The reason for this is because if you become involved in a Contact or Firefight you will EXPLODE INTO ACTION immediately. The Military Training is for Life. You cannot be untrained. However it does mellow over time and we try to Manage that Anger. If you are having problems, talk to your Mates. They looked after you in the field and they will look after you now. There are also Medical Professionals available to you, such as Psychiatrists and Psychologists. I still see a Psychologist on a regular basis. My Wife and I attended some Life Style Courses run by the VVCS. We attended several sessions on things that were worrying me and consequently affecting our Marriage. They also taught me a very calming Exercise called Tai Chi. I used that technique for years. Another technique recommended today is Mindfulness Meditation.

The Government has just announced that there will be a lot more Money in the Budget for Mental Health and additional Programs associated with the Department of Defence and some other Agencies. There are numerous Veteran Support Groups available to you. Use them. Get some Help. Let People know and you will be surprised at the amount of Assistance in the Community.

Exercise helps PTSD, Stress and Depression, so join a Gym or, if you have injuries, Exercise Physiologists are there for you as well. In Central Queensland a local Psychologist donated some land at Cawarral which the Veterans used to build a Retreat. This was and is good Therapy for our local Veterans. It is called Cockscorn Bush Retreat and is still being expanded. However it has all amenities you need and is available for everyone.

It is isolated and located in the Bush and, if you want to get away from it all and just Chill out, then this is the place for you. There are Veterans there most of the time and they will help you if you need it. You can find more information about it on the website.

I found that helping Veterans was very Therapeutic for me, so my Wife and I became Area Representatives for the VVCS. Due to the Veteran Grapevine we were able to find Veterans in trouble and were able to assist them by referring them and their Families to the VVCS Councillors. I am still a Welfare Officer today. One of the symptoms of PTSD, which I didn't recognize at the time, was that I was a Workaholic. As Inspector of Explosives I was expected to work 36.25 Hours per week. I worked something like 80 Hours per week. I justified this by telling myself that if I didn't do my job well then someone could get hurt or even die. There was some truth in that.

I returned to Vietnam for the first time in 2009. I participated in a Tour conducted by Ex-Lieutenant Dave Sabben which was called the Long Tan Trek. We traversed the same route that D Company used from Nui Dat, where we were based, to the Long Tan Rubber Plantation where Dave described the Battle in time, in place. We then ended up at the Long Tan Cross where 13 of our Men died in that Battle. On the Tour we had an Ex-Viet Cong by the name of Thanh and he, representing the Vietnamese and Dave, representing the Australians, laid a Wreath together at the Cross for the first time in History.

For some reason Thanh took a real liking to me and treated me very well. After some time it got the better of me so, through an Interpreter, I asked him why he was treating me so well. He replied "When you Australians were in Vietnam you fought with Honour and Distinction and you respected our Dead. The War is over now. You were an Honoured Enemy then, a Welcome Guest now and a Friend if you wish". This was very Therapeutic for me. This respect that I received from Thanh is also what I receive from other Vietnamese People. I am treated better in Vietnam than sometimes in Australia. They just Love Australians. I am treated like Royalty or a Celebrity whenever I visit Vietnam. They do like our money but it goes beyond that. Last year, 2019, I returned to Vietnam for a Tunnel Rats Re-Union. During that Tour we had a meeting with four of our former Enemy. One was a Man who was trained to the level of an American Seal, another was a Demolition Diver, and the other was a little old Grandmother who told us she used to retrieve our mines from our Minefield at night. She said she

was able to remove 120-150 per night. Finally there was the Tour Guide's Father who was a North Vietnamese Army Officer. Through an Interpreter we exchanged memories and discussed some of the issues we encountered while in Country. The air of Respect in that room for each other was tangible. It was one of the greatest experiences of my Life. I would like to repeat it but that may not happen.

When Harry Smith (Commander of D Company in the Battle of Long Tan) was awarded the Star of Gallantry, forty years after the event, in Maryborough, I met Benjamin Robert-Smith. I addressed him as Sir and told him how proud of him I was, and how he was a great Role Model for our Youth. He replied "When I was 16 you Vietnam Veterans were my Role Models. I hope I have lived up to that Standard". Well I broke down and cried. I replied "It has taken 40 years for someone to say that to me".

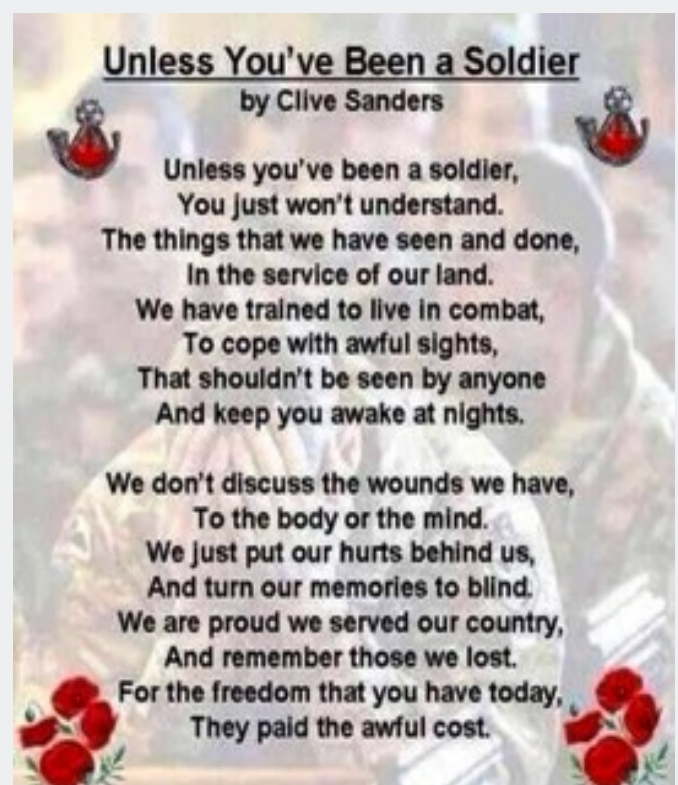
Going back to Vietnam is not for everyone. Some of our Veterans are just too traumatized.

In the words of John Schumann of Red Gum Fame. *"If you have been affected by War or you have PTSD, it doesn't mean you are soft, it means you are Human."*

Well Ladies and Gentlemen that is the end of my Presentation tonight. However, before I go I would personally like to say "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE".

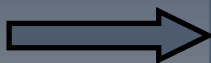
Brad Bauer

14/11/2020



**Message to Branches**

This space box is provided to insert your Branch contact details when you leave The Comet at Doctors' Surgeries /Libraries and so on



## **CODE of ETHICS and PERSONAL CONDUCT**

### **The Australian Pensioners' & Superannuants' League (Qld) Inc.**

**Be patient** and courteous in all dealings with fellow members.

**Be inclusive** - Members to welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities and discriminate against no one.

**Be considerate** - Each member should respect fellow pensioners and superannuants. Our decisions and comments will affect our fellow members, therefore we must always take this into consideration.

**Be respectful** - Each member may not agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for disrespectful behaviour. Each member may experience frustration from time to time, but we cannot allow this to become a personal attack. An environment where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not productive or creative and not in the best interest of The League.

**Choose your words carefully** - Always conduct yourself professionally. Harassment and exclusionary behaviour is not acceptable in The League. Differences of opinion and disagreement will occur, each member must resolve disagreements and differing views constructively and respectfully.

**Our differences can be our strengths** - Members can find strength in diversity. Different people have varying perspectives on issues, and that can be valuable for solving problems or generating new ideas for the betterment of The League.

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#### **APSL Mission Statement**

To lobby powerfully with governments at all levels and private sector agencies, and within community sector, to promote all aspects of the security, well being and dignity of pensioners of all ages, superannuants, other self-funded retirees, low income families and other disadvantaged people, including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) peoples.