

Our Veterans

On Sunday 21 August a small group came together in the RSL Sub branch club rooms to respectfully acknowledge the service of our Vietnam Veterans. Mayor, Councillor Vernon Philbey unveiled the recently updated Honour Board, and has kindly allowed his speech to be shared with the community.

'We acknowledge the service of Peter Banfield, Greg Krushka and Stanley Misson, whose names have been recently added to the 32. When I see the 35 names, I remember many of them.

'Peter Banfield's parents, John and Dawn, ran the Grassy Post Office and Roger is his older brother. Greg Krushka's parents were soldier settlers and initially farmed on Grahams Road before moving to a farm on Crowes Road – now Grassy Road. Greg was a talented sportsman and played for Mount Stanley. With Stanley Misson, I remember the families – there were two of them – and he was Barry Misson's cousin. You will see Barry's name on the Board, as are cousins John Lynch and Alan Wilson.

'Like previous conflicts King Islanders made a significant contribution to this war. Our veterans were in the three services and ten of them were National Servicemen. Although none died, many are still suffering.

'I congratulate the Sub branch on the recent work to identify our Korean and Vietnam Veterans. I know there is more to do in recognising Islanders who served in more recent conflicts. The Sub branch will take the lead, however, our community can assist.

'In closing, I strongly encourage our veterans to consider joining the Sub branch. It is you who will ensure we never forget'.

The Mayor's speech was followed by a presentation that listed every Vietnam Veteran including their family and service details, and a photograph where possible. There was much chatter as the names came up dating back to 1920 with 'I remember that family' being heard many times. The presentation also included an overview of repairs required on the Island's Cenotaph, which the Sub branch is now responsible for, as custodian.

The Sub branch willingly shares information on veterans with the community and does not act in isolation. However, we need your help. At the moment it is very difficult to identify islanders who have served in other conflicts, including the Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation. So far we know of one veteran, Ian Lynch born in Currie in 1943, who served in the Confrontation.

There are many more including Iraq, East Timor, Solomons, Somali and Afghanistan, to name a few. We are well aware that some veterans may not want their name on a Board and all our work is done with care, dignity and respect. If you know of someone please give Irene Robbins a call on 0437 626 831.

The Sub branch's final call goes out to younger veterans – we need you to join, as you are the future to care for those still serving. King Island RSL Sub branch