



**State Minister's Message
Issue 60 (9 April, 2010)**

A regular update from the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon. Jack Snelling M.P.

KEITH PAYNE VC OAM ('Talking Heads' with Peter Thompson ABC1 – Monday April 12th @1830) (Text supplied by the ABC)

Keith Payne VC OAM, the last and 96th Australian to receive the Imperial Award of the Victoria Cross is a special guest on the national ABC TV program 'Talking Heads' hosted by Peter Thompson, on **Monday April 12th 2010 at 1830 hours on ABC1**. Keith Payne's Victoria Cross Investiture was conducted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on board the Royal Yacht Britannia whilst The Queen was visiting Queensland during the Royal Tour of Australia on April 13th 1970.

On May 24th 1969 Payne was commanding 212 Company, 1st Mobile Strike Force Battalion when they came under heavy attack from a numerically superior NVA battalion. Over the next ten hours, despite being wounded twice, Payne organized a successful withdrawal and personally rescued and led forty injured comrades to safety. His actions led to his award of the Victoria Cross.

During the 'Talking Heads' interview, Keith talks candidly about the events of that night, his struggle to live up to the public expectation of being a recipient of the Victoria Cross, his later battles with what was eventually diagnosed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the effect this has had on him personally, his wife and five sons.

He speaks passionately and honestly about his charity work and the work he undertakes on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association, to ensure the best possible deal for those he still affectionately refers to as '*my soldiers*'.

He speaks with affection on his reaction to the awarding of the first Victoria Cross for Australia to SAS Trooper Mark Donaldson, whom he describes as '*...a fine young man, Australia will love him*'. There is no one more delighted than Keith Payne to have another living recipient of the highest military award for Valour who is young enough to one day '*take over the reins*'!

Bullwinkel Medal

Sunday, 11 April at 2pm will see the inaugural Vivian Bullwinkel ANZAC Day Medal awarded to the player whose conduct and play best exemplify the ANZAC Spirit of skill, courage in adversity, self sacrifice, teamwork and fair play in the match between the Adelaide Thunderbirds and Southern Steel at ETSA Park.

The ANZAC Day Sporting Medals Pilot Programme is a Veterans SA initiative, developed in partnership with the RSL, Netball SA and the South Australian Community Football League (S.A.C.F.L.).

The programme is an extension of the Peter Badcoe VC Medal awarded on the ANZAC Day weekend AFL match at AAMI Stadium.

This scheme will recognise prominent veterans from across South Australia. It is pleasing that Netball SA has been willing to join the programme, thus allowing female veterans to be recognised in this way for the first time.

The 2010 Pilot Programme will see 10 Football and 10 Netball ANZAC Day Sporting Medals presented at venues selected by the S.A.C.F.L. & Netball SA. The medals will be named after a prominent serviceman and woman from the respective regions (selected by local R.S.L. Sub-branches).

Vietnam Veterans Federation Changes the Guard

Minister Snelling is pleased to offer his congratulations to the newly elected President of the Vietnam Veterans Federation (VVF), Mr John "Gilly" Gillman.

Gilly, a veteran of 3 RAR, was elected at VVF elections declared on 14 Mar 10. Gilly and his team are well known for their popular radio programme "Vets on Air" heard on Coast FM each week.

The new Executive Committee of Management of the VVF is as follows:

President:	John "Gilly" Gillman
Vice President:	Eric Ciracovitch O.A.M.
Secretary:	John Cadd
Treasurer:	Robin Carbins

Minister Snelling looks forward to working with the new committee and congratulates outgoing President Bob Ellis on a job well done. Bob will continue to serve on the Veterans' Advisory Council.

Upgraded Awards for Vietnam War Heroes

Minister Snelling is pleased to note that an upgraded Vietnam heroism decoration is to be awarded to a deceased former RAAF helicopter pilot.

Governor-General Quentin Bryce has approved the awarding of a Distinguished Service Medal to Flight Lieutenant Cliff Dohle. Flight Lieutenant Dohle ignored orders by flying urgently needed ammunition to besieged comrades in the Battle of Long Tan.

Flight Lieutenant Dohle's citation reads: "For distinguished leadership in action as a captain of an Iroquois helicopter of No 9 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, during the battle of Long Tan in Vietnam on 18 August, 1966."

For more information about any of the items mentioned, please contact Veterans SA on 8226 8552.