

BEARCAT GRUNTS

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND VIETNAM VETERAN COMMUNITY
P O BOX 669 ROCKHAMPTON QUEENSLAND 4700

Volume 6, Issue 3

JUNE 2002

Circulation 198+

FROM THE FIRE TO THE FREEZER

Dave Morgan Ex 104 Sig Sqn 69/70 Vietnam has never said “no” to himself. From a tour of duty in Vietnam as a Radio Operator, Dave joined the Weather Bureau and worked his way up the chain of command. Employed with the Bureau of Meteorology as an Observer for 30 years he felt he was well qualified for an opportunity to be part of a very special team. Just like the Army, Dave trained hard. But harder than you or I could imagine, because at 54, Dave was training to become one of the “Weather men” on an Antarctic Expedition. An adventure of a lifetime, an experience outweighing the fire of Vietnam, an experience of tranquility in a freezing continent. After Dave spent the summer at Macquarie Island and Giles Met Office from February to September 1998 he applied to go back for a winter, knowing full well that both are very isolated environments. Isolated is not really the word that describes the cold, rugged frozen land with incredible scenery, wildlife and plants.



We asked Dave a few questions and he said he was based at Macquarie Island, one of four Australian Antarctic Research Bases. My job was to sound the upper atmosphere for climate data. I also checked out the ozone hole, pumped clean air into cylinders for different universities around the world and checked the carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere. An interesting job it was and I was quite surprised when filtering air for pollution to see the amount of impurities. Life at Macquarie had me well trained in domestic science too. I spent some time in the kitchen, on hygiene duties, and mowing the lawn.

I was involved in other scientific programs too, like the fur seal program, expeditions to other islands and boating duties.

Macquarie Island is a geologist's playground with unusual rocks and rock formations. It is an exposed crest from an undersea ridge caused by the Pacific Plate that meets the Indo Australian Plate. It is not uncommon to experience earthquakes during your stay on Macquarie. One while I was there measured 5.4 on the Richter Scale. **Continued on Page 3**

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND VETERANS SUPPORT CENTER

Pensions & Advocacy Service

<http://talk.to/veteransupport>

Open from Monday to Friday between 0900 and 1300 at the Lone Pine Office
6 Archer Street, Rockhampton

For appointments phone 07 4922 3616

E-mail cqvsc@cqnet.com.au

THE VETERAN DROP IN CENTER

The Rockhampton Drop in Center 310 Quay Street (Naval Cadets Unit Building) is operating every Thursday from 1030 to 1330.
All Veterans and their families are most welcome.
Phone on Thursdays between 1030 & 1330 **07 4922 3891** vietvets@cqnet.com.au

WIVES / PARTNERS LADIES NIGHT OUT

In Rockhampton, Ladies Night Out is coordinated by Robin Bauer 4928 1152 and held on the evening the first Wednesday of each month

BEARCAT GRUNTS NEWSLETTER DISCLAIMER

The material in BEARCAT GRUNTS is in the nature of general comment only and neither purports nor is intended to be advice on any particular subject. BEARCAT GRUNTS editorial disclaim all and any liability in respect to anything done or omitted, whether whole or in part. No person should take or use any information contained in BEARCAT GRUNTS, without first considering the facts and possibly checking professionally that the advice is appropriate for their particular circumstances.

Secretary

Phil Aplin

Phone 4928 6711

philpauline@rocknet.net.au

Address all correspondence to
Secretary CQVVAA

P O Box 669 Rockhampton Qld 4700

Hon Treasurer

Pauline Aplin

Phone 4928 6711

philpauline@rocknet.net.au

Medals, miniatures, badges and stickers

Jim Drever

Phone 4926 1142

angryant@cqnet.com.au

Bearcat Grunts Editor

Nick Quigley CQVVAA President

Phone 4928 2554

nickq@cqnet.com.au

Vietnam Veterans Federation (VVF)

Tony Dawes

Phone 4922 7555

Mobile 0407693317

tonydtas@cqnet.com.au

Hospital Visitor

Chauncey Jones

Phone 4927 9994

chauncey@cqnet.com.au

VVCS 24 Hour Help Line 1800 011 046

COCKSCOMB VETERANS are proud to say the least. Now that our monthly BBQs are set in place and successful too and we look forward to visiting Veterans and their families coming down to enjoy a restful day.

FAMILY BRUNCH / BARBEQUE

The next is on the **30th June 2002** at

COCKSCOMB at 11am with entertainment provided by Kerry Whelow and his guitar.

We'll provide everything except spirits and wine. The cost to you will be steak burgers \$5, GOFFAS (Good Old Free From Alcohol) \$1 and Heavies \$2

Please contact Allan 4934 4941 if you are attending for catering purposes.

NEW COMPUTERS & INTERNET SERVICES COMPUSOUND

Shop 38 & 39 KMART PLAZA

North Rockhampton

Phone 4922 5988

CQNET Internet Service Provider

Phone 4927 9287

www.cqnet.com.au

cqnet@cqnet.com.au

Vietnam Veterans Day (Long Tan Day)

Will be held at Cockscomb at 11am. It is hoped that this day will in the future continue to be held at Cockscomb. Veterans and their families are invited to make arrangements to stay the night and enjoy an extended 40th anniversary. However, those intending to stay are advised to book early by phoning Allan Evans on 4934 4941. For more information go to our web site at <http://veteranretreat.tripod.com> If YOU don't have a PC at home, then find a Net Café in your town and start to learn how great the World Wide Web is. I'm sure the owners will be able to show you how to start. And how the web addresses work. It is great fun, educating and rewarding, you'll be pleased you took the first step.

In **Rockhampton on Friday 16th AUGUST** at the Kershaw Gardens Vietnam Memorial at approx 10:30am a short service and tree planting will take place. All Veterans, their families and the public are invited to attend.

Dave's Frozen Wilderness Continued from the front page

A photographers dream and Dave has some incredible photographs of the Island, sunsets, clouds, weather, the wildlife and the human social life in an incredibly cold and rugged and remote part of our world.

Dave said that the highlight was working along side Mother Nature at its wildest best. To experience 60-70 knot (108-126kph) winds in blizzard conditions, you have to experience it to believe it.



Macquarie Island The written information below on page 3 has been supplied by the Australian Antarctic Division © 2002 Kingston Tasmania 7050
<http://www.aad.gov.au/stations/macca/>
Photos supplied by Dave Morgan

Macquarie Island is a sub-antarctic island located in the Southern Ocean at a latitude of 54° 30' south, 158° 57' east. With temperatures between max 14C and min -9C Part of the state of Tasmania, it is 1500 kilometres south east of the island of Tasmania and 1300 kilometres north of the Antarctic continent.

Macquarie Island, or "Macca" as it is generally referred to, is 34 kilometres long and 5 kilometres wide at its widest point. It has a total surface area of 128 square kilometres. It is a Tasmanian State Reserve managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

Wildlife on Macquarie Elephant and Fur seals breed on the island as do Royal, King, Gentoo and Rockhopper penguins. The Royal Penguin is only found on Macquarie Island. A penguin rookery at Hurd Point at the southern end of

the island is home to over a million birds during the breeding season.

Other fauna of the island includes Skuas, Petrels and a number of different types of Albatross. There are no trees on the island although the island is covered by tussock grass and many other plants.



Top: Tussock grass and vegetation

Middle: Hurd Royal Penguins in their millions

and

bottom: Baby seal



Dave's Frozen Wilderness Continued

After writing the front page from memory and a few notes from Dave I thought I'd better visit him at the Bureau of Meteorology at Rockhampton Airport. I had a few more questions for Dave and we filled in 3 hours talking old times and looking at the weather.

While Dave was on Macquarie Island there were only 28 people. Made up of 16 males and 12 females and all professional Scientists, Doctors or Technicians.

Night-life on the remote island was what you made yourself. With no TV, no radio and no papers and only 1-2 hours of darkness in mid summer your lifestyle changes slightly. After the work was done we watched videos and organized special social nights. Saturday nights were company nights. Everyone dressed up and partied with free wine, beer and spirits and a big dinner.

On arrival and for approx 4 weeks we ate fresh vegetables. But once they were gone it was frozen meat and tinned food. Although at one stage one of the scientists had a vegetable garden going.

Duties on the island varied and some had some interesting extra tasks. One was to look after the Home Brew. Keep the beer up to scratch and ready for Saturday nights.

Dave said that his extra tasks were working with the fur seal tagging team. Zoologist Becky caught the seals and Dave held them down while Becky took a blood sample, biopsy, shaved a bit of fur and painted on a serial number. Then the seal was weighed and set free again.

Other members were specially trained to assist the on site Doctor. Dr Cath was part of the team and available 24 hours a day and ready for any emergency. From crushed shoulders, broken bones, pulled muscles and the normal run of medical problems. Dr Cath from Melbourne, had a very well equipped surgery including X-ray equipment.

Remembering just how far south Macquarie Island is, it takes 45 days for a ship to get there and 4-5 days to return to Australia. The team of 28 lived happily with no crime, no infighting and all working in together. To be part of the ANARE (Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition) you first need to pass a fitness test and an Army Psychology test. Dave was on the 54th ANARE Expedition. Over the years 9 members have died while on an expedition. Some from accidents and some from natural causes. It is not all plain sailing. Dave said that they were caught in a dangerous situation with Zodiac boats and 4-5 meter seas while delivering food supplies to remote sections of the island.

Dave told me a bit about the BOM work he performed at Macquarie.



The weather balloon is made of special quality latex rubber and comes in varying sizes. It depends on the payload, to which size balloon you use. The balloon on the left carried a 350gram tracker to 80,000 feet before bursting. Information is collected by satellite and

sent back to the BOM workshop on the island. Balloons are filled with home made hydrogen and information gathered includes the temperature, humidity, pressure, wind direction and speed. For interest sake today in Rockhampton 9th June 02 the temperature at ground level was 24C and at 51,000feet it was -77.3C.



Dave Morgan at the BOM Rockhampton



One of Dave's tasks was to take samples of air. The air was filtered for a week then pumped into sampling flasks at 96psi. The flasks and the filter pads were then shipped off to the CSIRO.

The hut on the left is a remote station, both inside and outside just to give you an idea of living quarters

It was great taking to Dave and I wish him all the best in his next venture. All going well we'll have a very special story to tell

See you at the Cockscomb BBQ 30th June 02 11am