



# THE 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL 2023 ANZAC FRIENDSHIP MATCHES



**RMIT SAIGON**

702 NGUYỄN VĂN LINH,  
TÂN HƯNG, QUẬN 7, HỒ CHÍ MINH

**APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup>**

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and FRIENDS  
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**LEGENDS VS ALL STARS GAME**

**9:30AM - RAAF VS 2AOD  
(2ND ADVANCE ORDNANCE DEPOT)**

**MEN'S INTERNATIONAL GAME**

**10:50AM - VIETNAM SWANS VS SINGAPORE WOMBATS**

**WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL GAME**

**12:50PM - VIETNAM SWANS VS SINGAPORE WOMBETTES**

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**Greetings and a warm welcome one and all to the 14th ANZAC friendship match here in Saigon at RMIT University.**

This is my first year stepping into the role as president of the Swannies, and as with previous years, the friendship day is a highlight for the members of our club. It pains us to not be in Vung Tau for this occasion but we still look forward to welcoming those who have made the trip from Vung Tau and using the occasion to support some of our favourite causes in the region. The day is a special one for so many and we're honored to spend it with returning Veterans, the local community and previous members of the Swannies family.

Today we remember and thank those that established the foothold of Australian Football in Vietnam back in the late 60's, to pay tribute to those men we will be using replicas of the 1966-71 traditional RAAF and 2AOD (2nd Advance Ordnance Depot) AFL jerseys in the AI Frescos All Star game, our first game of the day.

The 2023 season will be one of great excitement for the club, with a full slate of international games locked in early and the local SAFL & HAFL competitions there will be lots of footie played by Swannies this year. We began the year with a resounding men's team win against Asian powerhouse Hong Kong in Saigon and are looking forward to hosting Indonesia on May 20th in Hanoi. Post summer break we will be aiming to match last years attendance at the Asian Championships in Pattaya and for all three of our teams (Mens Div 1 / 3 and Womens) to go one step further than last year.

We continue to roll out our Vietkick programs in both Hanoi and Saigon, providing those between the ages of 5 and 15 the opportunity to get a taste of footie and the opportunity for them to learn and develop new skills, meet new friends and fall in love with the game (as so many of us have) from right here in Vietnam.

Today we welcome the Singapore Wombats for the high noon ball up, having previously faced off twice in 2022 the Swans know they will be in for a tough afternoon against a visiting side who pushed them every inch of the way at Asian Champs and who will be looking to make a statement. Not to be outdone, our final game of the afternoon will see the Vietnam Lady Swans take on the Singapore Wombettes which I'm sure will be as hotly contested an affair as their male counterparts! Thanks goes out to all the coaches and organizers on both sides who have assembled the squads for today's games.



It would be remiss of me not to mention those residents of Vung Tau who continue assisting us in making this event not only possible but as previously mentioned one of the centerpieces of our calendar, some of whom are here with us today. So on behalf of the Vietnam Swans I would like to thank Ron and Ailsa Vernon, Warren Williams and the VTVFCF (Vung Tau Veterans and Friends Children's fund) for their continued, hard work and dedication to the Vung Tau community and support of the Vietnam Swans. We truly hope 2024 sees us back on the rightful field where footy has helped people come together for around 60 years.

*Having said that, kick back, relax take in the stories from the stands and have a great day here in Saigon!*

**HONK HONK!**

**MATT BARTON**  
The Vietnam Swans





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The Vietnam Swans proudly support the Vung Tau Center for Children's Protection and several other worthy causes across this weekend and throughout the year. To find out how you could help us contribute contact the Swans.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Stan Middleton, Ailsa & Ron Vernon, Warren Williams, Eric Kerrison, Bill Crang, Tim Pickert, Matt Barton, Wayne McMahon, Adam Carroll, Fats, Dutton.

Design by Phong Giang



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# MACCA

## PRESIDENT - SINGAPORE WOMBATS AFL TEAM



As we head towards another ANZAC day experience, we would like to send our thanks to Vietnam for hosting the event once again. Unfortunate to have the game moved from Vung Tau but we come to Vietnam excited for the challenge and looking forward to getting season 2023 off and running, paying our respects to the ANZAC spirit. To our defence forces, past and present, wherever they may be, we pay our respects and thank them for their continuous efforts, uniting for our combined freedoms.

Training this year has started strong for both the Bats and Bette's, numbers looking great, with COVID behind us we look forward to getting back to our touring ways. The Bette's, under coach Harry, are looking to carry form throughout the year back to Champs in September to defend their title. The Bats are keen to get back to their winning ways, carrying form into the 2023 edition of Champs, looking for a solid start to their campaign this weekend coming against the quality outfit from Vietnam.

***Thank you to the organising committee from both Vietnam and Singapore in getting this tour up and running and good luck to all those involved in the day.***

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Since 2012 the McMillan Dinner has formed a key part of the ANZAC Friendship Weekend. Named after Kevin “Kev” McMillan who was a pioneer behind the great work the Vietnam Veterans and Friends Charity. You can read more about Kev’s lasting legacy in the FAQs section of this record. In 2023 we’re pleased to continue the McMillan Dinner for the first time in Saigon at our sponsor venue



**41 Nguyễn An Ninh, Phường Bến Thành, Quận 1, Hồ Chí Minh City**  
**6:30pm-10pm**

### The Middleton Address

The Middleton Address, named after the historian of the VFL and long time supporter of this weekend Stan Middleton is held yearly adding perspectives from many of the people who have been involved in the weekend over the years. In 2023 it will be delivered by Ailsa Vernon. It’s our great pleasure to have both Ron and Ailsa Vernon back in Vietnam for the ANZAC Friendship Weekend and to have her deliver the Middleton Address is very exciting.

Ailsa will touch on the beginning of the ANZAC Friendship Weekend and how her and Ron became involved and their involvement and support of the Vung Tau and Long Hai Centre’s for Social Protection of Children.

### Vietnam Swans Recognitions

Being the most prestigious weekend on the Vietnam Swans calendar the Vietnam Swans utilize the McMillan Dinner to recognise some of the clubs biggest contributors. This year we’re looking forward to honoring 3 very special members of our club.

### Celebration of the Friendship Matches

Of course the night serves to celebrate just how good footy in Asia is. With our friends from Singapore and beyond we will recount and embellish heroics on the field and celebrate the return of international footy to the ANZAC Friendship Weekend in Vietnam.

**2022 Middleton Address Delivered by Warren Williams from The Vung Tau Veterans & Friends Children’s Fund**



**2022 Life Membership Recipients Chia Sabbatucci and Naomi Reidy**



# The Republic

The Republic, in the heart of Tay Ho, Hanoi, situated lakeside, our sports bar and restaurant views provide the perfect backdrop for a delicious meal, whether you're in the mood for a juicy burger or fresh seafood.

With multiple screens showing all the live sports action, you won't miss a single moment of your favorite game. But the fun doesn't stop there - we also host live music events and other special occasions, making us the perfect destination for any celebration. With a lively and welcoming atmosphere, you're sure to have a great time no matter the occasion.

**Proud sponsors of  
The Vietnam Swans!**

# HONK!!!



# THE CENTRE FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

In 2010 the association between Vietnam Swans and Trung Tam Bao Tre Em (Centre for Protection of Children) Vung Tau/Long Hai was established. In this time the Swannies have visited the children and made significant gifts to the centres. We take so much pleasure from introducing people to the children and dedicated staff at these centres.

In 2019, a group of young children were taken in to the Vung Tau Centre and as a consequence it was decided to re-open the kindergarten which we helped to establish in 2008. All these children are now enjoying an introduction to their education and a nicely equipped and staffed school room.

Children at the Vung Tau Centre are homeless through many unfortunate circumstances. Some are orphaned and grandparents are no longer able to care for them; parents are sick or in jail; babies abandoned at hospitals; some have been found living on streets and others just left at parks and beaches when desperate family cannot cope. In most cases they are aware that these children will be well cared for by the centres. The number of severely disabled children is growing and their health and personal care needs are enormous.

The Long Hai school was established to provide education for children of extremely poor families. These children were working for the family all day. They now go the school for half a day and are free to work for the rest of the day. Each child is given a good, hot meal before leaving. The boys doing motorbike repairs, work

all day and it is so rewarding to know many have moved on to get jobs outside the school. The dressmaking class are also very productive and some have moved to employment. Each year they make uniforms for all the students and there is always a need for help to provide the materials for these uniforms. Cannot over stress the dedication of the staff most of whom have been with the school from Day 1.

This year, like previous years we are looking forward to starting the ANZAC Friendship Weekend with , a visit to the school with players and friends from the Vietnam Swans ahead of the annual ANZAC Friendship Match against Singapore Wombats. The Swans have long been proud supporters of the Centre and School. The school has indicated a number of crucial items which need to be replaced and we are hoping to be able to help them out.

If you would like to contribute to the centre's in any way please do reach out to Ron & Ailsa. There is always ongoing needs big and small that can make huge differences to the experiences of the needy kids in both centres.

## Words Ron & Ailsa Vernon





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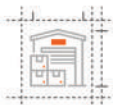
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**VUNG TAU VETERANS  
and FRIENDS  
CHILDREN'S FUND**

*Unfortunately with the late move of venue the VTVFCF were not able to join us on the gate or BBQ this year. We hope to be back co-operating at the 2024 ANZAC Friendship Weekend in Vung Tau*



Vung Tau Veterans and Friends Children's Fund (VTVFCF) is a volunteer fund operated by expats in Vung Tau and Australia, approximately 95% of all funds raised are delivered to target.

The funds mission is to provide suitable housing to the people of Vung Tau/Ba Ria Province that are raising children in less than desirable conditions. Health and education are our main priorities.

The fund raises money from donations, Nui Dat/Vung Tau Tours and various fund raising activities. To this date we have provided suitable housing for 33 worthy families and instituted numerous health and education initiatives.



Information can be obtained from our website  
[www.vtvfcf.org](http://www.vtvfcf.org) and/or contacting the following:

**President:** Warren Williams +84966125459

**Secretary:** Johannes Suiker +84933904313

**Email:** [info@vtvfcf.org](mailto:info@vtvfcf.org)



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# AFL ASIA UPDATE

It's been a tumultuous few years of stops and starts for football and our communities around the world. The last few months have seen our sport finally find its regular rhythm once again, with the emergence of many domestic leagues across the region providing regular playing opportunities. But it's the return of this special fixture, the ANZAC game in Vũng Tàu, which is a significant signal that we're well and truly back.

Not only back, but back bigger and better than ever. In 2023, for the very first time, the Vietnam Swans women's team is playing alongside the men. We are so proud of the Swans community for making the women's game a reality – in not only providing an opportunity for more people to play, but also acknowledging and celebrating the female veterans who served alongside the male veterans in Vietnam all those years ago.

The ANZAC fixture, in Vũng Tàu, is one of our most anticipated and celebrated games on the calendar. It provides an opportunity for us to remember the past, and those who have come before us, as well as ignite a passion for our current crop of players to do their clubs and countries proud. After all, this game is played on the same ground – the same patch of grass – that our Australian troops played on more than 50 years ago. What a special and unique reminder that few have had the privilege of being part of.

Just as important is all the great community work surrounding the match that is being done for the present to leave a legacy for the future. This is being played out in real time thanks to the Swans and their partnership with the Vũng Tàu Veterans & Friends Children's Fund. From delivering school programs, to the provision of goods (including Sherrins!), the Swans are making sure they leave a positive mark on a community that has done so much for them.

The historical ties between Australia and Asia are significant. Not only due to our geographic proximity, but due to our shared values, goals, and love of

community. Australian football is central to these values, and we hope that our sport continues to be a vehicle in Asia to drive positive change, but also bring more people to our great game. The ANZAC game in Vũng Tàu couldn't be a better representation of this.

Good luck to all four teams from Vietnam and Singapore. From the dawn service, through to the final siren, have fun, play safe, and, most importantly, play in the courageous spirit that those before us displayed.

## SIMON HIGHFIELD

International Development Manager





*The Legends vs All Stars game is a long running tradition of the ANZAC Friendship Match. It was born out of the number of Swans players, family and friends who have been so caught up in the event's pull that they continually want to be a part of the event. Returning, current and first time players in Vietnam are all welcome, with the game being based in Saigon this year we're hoping to see a few (in)famous faces pulling on the boots and turning the legs over!*

## RAAF vs 2AOD

One thing is for sure, the game is 100% for fun before and after but during those 4 quarters there'll be plenty of desire to win and silky skills on display. This year the magic of the Legends vs All Stars game continues but on the occasion of our 13th Friendship match we've paid tribute to two of the original footy teams ever to play the great game in Vietnam in the RAAF and the 2AOD (2nd ordnance and disposal) playing between '66 & '71 in the spiritual home of football in Vietnam in Vung Tau. The 2AOD team will take on the mantle of the All Stars and captained by club legend and former pres Eric Kerrison while the RAAF will represent the Legends and be captained by another club legend in Adam "Stacka" Carrol.







to the winning ways of 2017 with spiritual leaders Rowan and Cameron Luke flying in especially. Several Legends regulars from the catchment areas in Western Melbourne and Adelaide's grittiest suburbs are also flying in especially ready to grind out another last quarter bolover!

The AFG All Stars have seen no end of inspirational players over the years but perhaps the 2018 victory piloted by coach Rocket Gillet and Captain Eric Kerrison is their proudest moment. Expect them to scour the Swans playing ranks and recruit any available talent and athleticism.

The game will likely see plenty of silky skills from veteran Swans with a bit of added run and gun from some of the current more sprightly members of the club. No matter what it will be a sight to behold and one with plenty of banter pre, during and after the game, well into the evening!

Though the teams are a mix of old and young, new and veteran that doesn't mean the games aren't without feeling. Over the years the Legends have become renowned for fiery late match sideline rants and some stunning comebacks. They promise more of the same after several St Kilda like internal reviews into recent losses in the face of opposition salary cap breaches and scandals. The All Stars attempts to avoid recent games with excuses like some mysterious flu originating in China are over - there will be no more hiding. The Legends are promising a return





# OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE VFL

(VIETNAM FOOTBALL LEAGUE) 1966 TO 1971 BY STAN MIDDLETON



**HONOURING THE PAST:** Aussie Rules Grand Final Oct 1968 at Vung Tau.

Photo: John Kalnins 2AOD

The Aussie Rules footy competition (Vietnam Football League) was formed within 12 months of the Australian Base (1st Australian Logistic Support Group) being established in the sand hills on the Back Beach of Vung Tau in early 1966 (it wasn't the beautiful place it is now!) The base was closed down six years later in March 1972 when the last of the Australian soldiers returned home. Football was last played in 1971.

Footy first commenced in Vung Tau when one digger (Private John Heaney, a "Nasho" from 1 Transport Platoon RAASC) was in trouble with his Commanding Officer. The CO gave him an option (actually, two options): organize a game of Aussie Rules Footy or face detention or other penalties! John (who now lives in Geelong) thought about it

for a second and chose the first option! Thus the first game of Aussie Rules footy was played in Vung Tau during the latter part of 1966.

## 1967

A full scale competition was then organized between the various Australian units based in Vung Tau. It commenced in 1967 and ended in 1971. There were two premiership seasons played most years. The competition was known as the VFL (Vietnam Football League)!

In the early days of the VFL, most games were played at what is now known as "San Van Dong Lam Son" Stadium (now with a Greyhound Racing Track). Unbelievably, this is same venue that the annual ANZAC Friendship Match is now played.



In the early days, the ground was fondly known as The Lord Mayor's Oval by the Australian diggers! As it was a soccer ground, games were played with 14 a side when playing there. No forward or back flanks! Other games were played at the Military Academy (also a soccer field) and later on at a much larger ground near the Vung Tau Airbase.

In 1967, the first of the two premierships was won by the RAAF. Ron Vernon who with his wife Ailsa spends considerable time each year in Vung Tau helping with Orphanages run by My Huong at Vung Tau and Long Hai was a member of that team. A very strong 2 Composite Ordnance Depot team was decimated before the finals when most of their star players went on strike and did not play in the finals! I have no idea what the dispute was about!

The second season in 1967 was won by 5 Company RAASC (Service Corp). Terry Holden (who I knew his family in Stawell, Victoria) and a close friend of Swannies' President Phil was a member of that premiership team.

## 1968

In 1968, both Premierships were won by a brilliant Ordnance team 2AOD (2nd Advanced Ordnance Depot). On each occasion they defeated 17 Construction Squadron. Led by their outstanding captain Bob McKenna, the late Tommy Perks, Micky Miller, Dick Johnston, Kevin Judge (cousin of Ken, former Hawthorn player and coach of Hawthorn and West Coast), Steve Costelow, George Soumilas, John Meehan (brother of Simon, ex St Kilda) and





### 2AOD VFL Premiers June 1968 Vung Tau

**Back row from left:** Ken Mountford, John Watkins, Andrew Cranston, John Bell & Geoff Walls

**Middle row from left:** Kevin Back, Colin Ryles, Mick O'Connor, Ron Lator, John Cooper & Mick Miller

**Front row from left:** Dick Parr, Tom Perks, Ian Waddell, Bob McKenna, Terry Fogarty, Dick Johnstone & Terry Bennett

**Photo by John Barker**

many other excellent footballers. The coach was Merv Rudd. The footballers from those teams have been the focal point of reunions held every two years since 1998. Laurie Chick (brother of former Carlton Vice Captain, John Chick) also played in some of these games.

## 1969

The first of the 1969 premierships was won by 17 Construction Squadron (Engineers). 2AOD's run came to an end in the preliminary final or, more so the night before that final, when all their star players in the team ignored Captain, John Meehan's instructions to keep off the grog before the big game! A number of 2AODs diggers had their send off party (before returning to Australia) on that night. Everyone got "blind" except John! John Meehan is now the Senior Pension Officer at Noble Park RSL. Those who know John would have been very impressed with his self discipline on that occasion (or more so shocked)!

In the second season of 1969, 2AOD returned to the winner's list but not without a brutal struggle against 17 Construction Squadron. 2AOD's Captain

was Wayne Closter (former Geelong star). In the other team was a brilliant but tough Aboriginal footballer, Glenn James. Glenn later became a very popular VFL Umpire and officiated in two VFL Grand Finals. As there was no trial by video in those days, Glenn was given the job of taking out Wayne Closter at the opening bounce! He did this to perfection and Wayne was useless for the first 3 quarters! At  $\frac{3}{4}$  time the scores were level! Wayne finally came good and kicked 5 goals in the last quarter and 2AOD got home. Wayne and Glenn laugh about it now whenever they see each other but Wayne was not impressed at the time!

## 1970

In 1970, the 2nd Premiership was won by 2AOD. They beat 5 Company RAASC in the Grand Final. We are not sure who won the other or if there was one! This team was captained by John Huggins (whose son is now married to the daughter of Steve Costelow a premiership player in the 2nd 1968 2AOD premiership team). This team included Bill Thompson who played with Essendon (VFL), Williamstown & Dandenong (VFA) and was a Liston Trophy winner in the VFA. Some other stars were



Peter Maloney, Frank Reynders and many others. Greg Perry who played with Essendon played with the 110 Signals team that year. Interestingly Greg and I played cricket together at Stawell (Victoria) in the summer of 1965-66 before I was called up for National Service in July 1966. Greg was a tear away opening bowler and I was the wicketkeeper and opening batsman!

- RAAF
- 5 Company RAASC
- 102 Field Workshops (Engineers)
- 110 Signals

There may have been other units for some seasons as well.

The standard of football in the Vietnam Football League was very high. This was mostly due to the high quality of the “Nashos” drafted into the army! The competition was fierce! Rivalry between units was intense!

As for the author, I was a “Nasho” who served in Vietnam. I played in the 2 Composite Ordnance team in 2nd half of 1967 and in the 2AOD team in the first half of 1968. I returned to Australia on the eve of the first final and thus missed playing in the first premiership of 1968!

I have a strong connection with Vietnam as my wife (I met Sinh in 2002 and married her 2005) is Vietnamese. She worked in the Orderly Room at the Peter Badcoe Club for the Australian Army on the Back Beach of Vung Tau from 1968 to 1972.

Stan Middleton  
Melbourne, Australia

## 1971

We believe there was only one premiership played for in 1971 in which 2AOD, captain/coached by Bill Thompson, beat 110 Signals in the Grand Final. 110 Sigs was captain/coached by Greg Perry. Greg however won the competition Best and Fairest with Bill runner up! That we understand was the last VFL Grand Final played in Vietnam! Bill and Greg are both great mates now and always attend Essendon Past Players functions together.

Units that competed in the competition over those years were:

- 2 Composite Ordnance Depot (1967 - changed name to 2AOD in 1968)
- 2AOD (2nd Advanced Ordnance Depot)
- 17 Construction Squadron (Engineers)
- 1 Field Hospital/8 Field Ambulance (Australian Army Hospital)

**LORD MAYORS OVAL:**  
Now the Vung Tau Greyhound Track and home to the ANZAC Friendship match.  
Photo: Laurie Hawkins, 1967





# COACHES CORNER

## VIETNAM SWANS MEN'S

**Personally, there isn't an event on our calendar from year-to-year that gets me up and about more than ANZAC friendship weekend.**

**A decade ago I was asked to write an article for the Vietnam Swans, about my experiences as a traveling player representing the Lagler's Legends in the Legends v All-Stars curtain raiser at the 2013 ANZAC Friendship Weekend in Vung Tau.**

Today, 10 years later I'm writing an article as the Vietnam Swans Men's senior coach. The playing group, our football club and even the venue this year have changed so much from 10 years back, but a couple of components remain exactly the same. We're still a big family that look out for each other, and we are all proud and thankful to have the opportunity to pay tribute to those that came before us on ANZAC Friendship Weekend.

We've come off a really positive 2022, a season that was thrown together with limited options post-covid and a period where our organization grew in both numbers and experience. We burst out of the blocks in Cambodia going undefeated in the tri-series, had back-to-back home wins against great competition and

had a proper crack at Asian Champs in Div 1 and Div 3, albeit we came up short in both. I'd also like to take this opportunity specifically to thank AFL Asia, and the Eagles, Tigers and Wombats for both hosting/traveling last year and allowing us to play the sport we all love. These last couple of years have been challenging for everyone, and the fact we were able to come out of lockdown/restrictions and compete in the events that we did was a massive positive during difficult times.

As a club we march into 2023 with a strong sense of self-belief. We know where we belong in this league - We have strong squads, new faces on the committee and have acquired some brilliant new sponsors, to add to the list of greatly appreciated support that this club has received and continues to receive as we grow. In return, we promise to return that support to you all in 2023 and beyond.

On April 22 we welcome the Singapore Wombats/Wombettes to Vietnam, to go into battle. Our clubs are building quite the rivalry and we greatly respect Singapore for what they've achieved in the league since their inception. I have no doubt they're out for revenge after a couple of close losses to us recently, and mark my words I'll have our boys ready for whatever the Wombats have to throw at us. In true ANZAC spirit, I'm looking forward to a hard, tough game of footy, and equally as much to breaking bread with our foes post-game over a few beers when we get together to celebrate an epic weekend at the post-game event.

**We are incredibly grateful!**

*"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them"*

**Lest we forget.**

## **TIM PICKERT**

**Vietnam Swans Senior Coach**







## Alan Power

Alan 'Austin' Power will be looking to continue his recent SAFL form and make an impact against Singapore. Coming into his 2nd year of footy, the man from Munster has shown plenty of versatility and strength in the air.

## Kevin Cremin

This crafty Gaelic star usually finds himself in the front half of the ground with the round ball, however 'D7 Kev' has proven to be an ever-reliable defender for the Swans playing Aussie Rules Footy.

## James Teague

Teaguey despite being an Irishmen brings plenty of footy experience to the squad having played with the Swans on many occasions over the past decade. An absolute nugget that knows how to find the footy and use it well.

## Ryan Tishler

An absolute midfield beast that can break tackles and break others in a tackle too. Tish will lead our engine room on Saturday and no doubt lead them well, his willingness to sacrifice himself for his teammates will be on stage for all to see. Runner-up BOG against Hong Kong, he'll be the bookies favourite to take out best-afield honors against Singapore in his current form.

## Cameron King

Delving from the depths of Gawler in South Australia, Cam 'Mini Tim' King brings goals to the side but more importantly comes with the biggest social media following of anyone at the club. #goswans

## Nathan Milner

The epitome of the type of player you love to have on your team but absolutely hate to play against. Nath is as hard as nails, has elite intercepting ability and can run all day. He'll continue to do what he's done for the Swannies for many years... dominate.

## Pete McElhone

Pete is another crafty Irishmen who can find the goals. His commitment to developing his footy skills and seeking advice has been 2nd to none ever since he joined the Swans and he has been rewarded with a place in our best 22.



## **Jono McKay**

Our balded brother earned All Asian Ruck accolades at last years champs and has not slowed down since. Excellent overhead mark with a dangerous left foot that can slot goals from a distance. Jono will be looking to give our mids first use once again.

## **Bill Crang**

He had us all fooled! All of the “Goo-Goo Ga-Ga’s” we’ve heard from drunk Billy over the last decade were just preparation for fatherhood. As one of the club’s long-standing leaders, these occasions are his bread and butter and once again he’ll be standing tall for Vietnam on the last line of defense against the Wombats.

## **Matt Barton**

‘The Prez’ stands alongside Billy as the other of the Twin-Towers down back and takes his job as seriously as anyone else in the first 22. A solid 1-on-1 defender with a passion for contest and contact, Matty’s improved field kicking over the last 12 months has made him a lock as one of our Big Backs and a menace for opposition forwards.

## **Sean Milner**

The calmer of the Milner brothers but don't take that to mean he doesn't throw his head over the ball. Sean uses the footy as good as anyone in the team by both hand and foot. Contested footy beast and a leader amongst the boys, he'll be a vital cog in our midfield once again.

## **Dinh Anh**

As one of our senior local contributors and with a wealth of ANZAC experience, Dino’s evasiveness and ability to think quickly under pressure makes him a danger in any international game let-alone one of such significance. He loves an explosive burst around goal, and is bound to get on the board when lurking around the toes of our big FWD’s.

## **Vinh Le**

A little pocket rocket that has both the tank and good looks of Vinh Diesel. A Vietnamese stalwart of the club that absolutely bleeds black, red and white. Vinh has proven himself to be a great lockdown backman on the opposing teams small forwards.

## **Will Sandman**

Although coming from the USA Will has a plethora of footy knowledge playing across Asia and being a fan of the game for a number of years. He has a strong body that can break tackles along with the brains to be a useful midfielder.



## Andy Glendenning

Age is no barrier for the legendary Andy 'Flappers' Glendenning, as he continues to shine for the Vietnam Swans in season 2023. Andy's goal sense, hand/foot skills and knowledge of the game are incredibly important in the make-up of our front 6, he's also still good for midfield minutes and guaranteed to make an impact on gameday.

## Malone Dunlavy

An American living in Hanoi, Malone brings a ferocious attitude on the footy field and loves mixing it up with the opposition talls. A very good tap ruckman and improving at ground level, he's a great addition to the 22 and adds that important physicality at the contest.

## Cameron Pirret

A running machine that's afraid of nothing on the footy field, except the sun. A tall, strong midfielder that can also run off a back or forward flank he's been a welcome addition to our squad since 2022.

## Jakob Medlin

Jakob's commitment to training and games has earned him a well-deserved spot in our squad to face Singapore. He was a solid contributor in our recent game against Hong Kong and when he switched jumpers at half-time he showed excellent run and carry from the backline.

## Jeremey Lamberton

Quick and agile, Jezza flourishes as a high half forward or wingman. Cannot be missed on the field with his neon hair! Excited for what he can bring to the Swans in his ANZAC Debut, there has been a bit of hype around him in the North for some time now!

## Jake Norris

Swannies Co-Captain and in-and-under terrier Jake "Burra" Norris makes the trip South and plugs into the midfield as seamlessly as a Hanoi hair implant clinic operates (Hopefully). Burra is the glue that binds the North, one of AFL Asia's premium midfielders over a long period of time and one of the best blokes you'll meet around the region.

## Paul Villanova

Villa takes his spot again out of the goalsquare for Vietnam, coming off a solid game against the Dragons in our season opener and ready to display some 2020 ANZAC form, albeit with an opponent this time no doubt (No offense, Matty Bahen!). With great dukes and a straight kick, Villa may be approaching 40 but you wouldn't know it as he still makes life hell for even the most capable defenders in the league.



## Trent Davies

Trenna comes back to the Swans after a several-year hiatus and after a blistering month on the track he finds himself in the Swan's 22 yet again. Trent is a reliable and unassuming backman, he rarely loses in the air and keeps his feet well at the contest, we're looking forward to him winding back the clock and showing the RMIT crowd that rebound from defense that made him a regular selection during his golden years.

## Emergencies:

### Tom Meyer

Everyone's favourite dog breed, Tom 'Poodle' Meyer comes from a rugby background and it shows with his tackling pressure and attack on the ball. He's learning every game and will only continue to improve.

### Steve Gange

With a touch of silver in his locks and a foot short on pace, one look at Steve and you'll know this guy has kicked a few footies around the AFL Asia circuit. Steve always seems like he has time when the footy is in his hands, he's a solid contributor with a great left foot and a worthy recipient of being named in the 25.

### Wayne McMahon

We all wait with bated breath as one of our starting 16 tries to make his way back from a horribly unfortunate hammy strain in the last SAFL hitout. Wayno is one of the beating hearts of this footy club, a half-forward genius that can create something out of nothing and often does. An absolute necessity in our forward six, the reigning SAFL Goalkicking medallist and arguably funniest bloke in Asia is racing the clock to be ready for the April 22nd.





# THE SINGAPORE WOMBATS

As life and footy returned to some normalcy in 2022, the Bats finally had the chance to get some larger numbers to training sessions and even a couple of tours.



Despite huge turnover in personnel and the return of work travel hampering participation, Narrow losses on the road in HCMC and KL plus a big home win vs Malaysia left the Bats feeling anything was possible heading into Champs.

Plenty of moments of glory off the field were unfortunately unmatched on the field. An opening round loss to the Swans had the Bats on the back foot, as did a tough battle with Indonesia. Things finally started to click with a win over PNG but it was too little, too late to make the final.

A new season offers new hope, and as a central SEA hub there's always new faces arriving. How good the squad is remains to be seen, but Anzac Day is a great opportunity to set the tone, create some memories and have some fun.



### **B Adams**

chases like a sheepdog but covered in more padding than the Michelin man. Loves a goal (then re-telling the tale 1,000 times throughout the night)

### **Michael "Bairdy" Baird**

a new recruit from China who's bionic ankle supports and refusal to play midfield have raised some eyebrows. Expect some flashes of brilliance in front of goal and even more on the dance floor Saturday night.

### **Dr Kim "Bushy" Wimbush**

this man invented a new type of touch screen plastic but can't seem to operate a hairbrush. As a recent Vietnam resident he's got the inside track on the secrets to success (off the field at least)





## **Chris Colman**

Loves a lurk behind the play, and with his booming kick could be lethal off half back. A Smokey for BOG if he can keep a lid on things Friday.

## **Matthew "Colesy" Cole**

is it Colesy or Colesa? Parmi or Parma? The leader of the Singapore Port Nuffies is about and about, ready to bust packs with his slick hands and bullocking frame for 2 mins then "rest forward"

## **Shane "Rhoey" Rho**

a new arrival in Singapore, this country lad is really hoping to not earn a shit nickname from Woody this weekend. Potential surprise packet Saturday night.

## **Thomas Donnelly**

did someone say basketball background? The big man in the middle is odds-on to get loads of touches, and maybe a few kicks and handballs too.

## **Mark "Macca" Macdonald**

with a voice like Buckley and complexion of Roughy, he's the ultimate old school footballer. Rarely beaten - especially at presidential elections - he's a rock down back. Look for

Him in a dark corner Saturday night for an interesting time.

## **James "Symo" Symons**

brings the thickness and plenty of savvy around the goals. Maybe needed for some grunt, and has a lot to prove his div 3 all Asian was no fluke.

## **Mark "bondy" Sinclair**

picking up a whistle for the day, Bondy's umpiring at home has been criticized for being "too fair". How will he do on the road?

## **Stefan "arrrrggghhh" Wood**

flies private jets. Screams incoherently. Runs in straight lines only. He'll be easy to spot.

## **Scotty the mad dog**

Absolutely loves a tour, taking to them like a duck to water. Whoever his opponent is will feel like they're being held captive.

## **Mitch "B&F" Hyde**

No stranger to Vietnam, when he's not begging for free hotel stays he's kicking goals. Will need a bag for the Bats to win.

## **Skinny "Anthony Randell"**

His wife and family live in another country. This man should be well rested! fresh off an all Asian showing at champs ready to tear it to shreds

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## THE LADY SWANS

Since the team's inception in 2018 the Lady Swans have gone from strength to strength. What initially began as an aspiration to have weekly training sessions has grown into a fully fledged national team that tours and competes with the best women's teams in Asia, represented by both foreigners and a strong contingent of Vietnamese women as well. Under the longtime stewardship of Coach and Player Chia Sabatucchi the Lady Swans managed to make an impact at Asian Championships in 2022 with a place in the semi-finals.

Since then with a change in life circumstances Chia has returned to Australia as she and her partner welcome the newest member of their family, to Chia we say a big thank you and wish her all the best for the future and what that may bring!

This left a void in the coaching position to be filled which has been bravely taken on by Wayne McMahon. Wayne's footy pedigree comes from his time as both president and leadership group experience at his home club in Melbourne. His strong links with the gaelic football community is already paying dividends with record numbers of women training on Wednesdays in the South. In the North, Wayne is ably assisted by Ashley Abrahams who is rallying the troops and getting them ready for this year's Anzac Day Friendship Match.



# THE LADY SWANS WILL FACE OFF AGAINST THE INDOMITABLE WOMBETTES



who will provide a stiff challenge for the group having taken the chocolates in the women's competition at Asian championships in 2022. Almost 50% of the squad will be playing their first full match of competitive football but look to see plenty of pace, dare and strength from these women that have a strong desire to win.

The team will be led by Co-Captains Clare O'Gorman (2022 BnF winner) and Ashley Abrahams. Their experience, along with club stalwarts Katie Walsh and Lucy Nguyen will be pivotal in guiding the new yet talented newcomers on game day.





## Alana Devenny

Canadian born and raised but has taken the Saigon sporting world by storm by competing across 3 footballing codes and running marathons. Expect to see Alana cover plenty of blades of grass and spend a lot of time in the midfield.

## Aoife Brody

One of many Irish recruits 'Brody' will showcase the run and carry that is so pivotal to both Gaelic Football and AFL. Quick to pick up the skills at training, she'll make a great impact against Singapore.

## Aoife Kelly

Another of the Irish contingent, Aoife has a deadly eye for goal in her home country's sport, expect to see the same in the AFL against Singapore.

## Ashley Abrahams (C)

Ashley brings a wealth of playing experience to the team and was the star women's player at the ANZAC weekend last year. A strong midfielder with elite skills.

## Carol Berkery

Carol packs plenty of aggression and a lot of pace in what will make her a great player off the half-back line. She's picked up the game quickly and has the brains to be an excellent player.

## Clare O'Gorman (C)

We all know what we're going to get from Clare; elite speed, ferocious attack on the ball and an incredibly positive energy. She will be the key to our midfield running over the top of the opposition.

## Courtney McCrea

Another Canadian that is new to the game. Courtney too has plenty of sporting experience herself, most notably in the game of lacrosse. She's picked up the kicking and marking skills quickly and has already participated in the mixed SAFL games.

## Eva Dunlavy

A Hanoian that will again be bringing plenty of footy experience down to the South. Touted as the 'better

Dunlavy', Eva is versatile in where she can play which will be of immense importance to this inexperienced squad.

## Evrena Everard

A recent Irish recruit and new to Saigon, Evrena has thrown herself into the sporting circles here and I expect her to do exactly the same on Saturday. Eager to learn with plenty of speed and coordination, she shows a lot of promise as a future midfielder.

## Jennifer Murphy

Joining us for her first session just two weeks ago, Jennifer possesses the same strong skillset as the other Gaelic stars and showed quick development with her foot skills.

## Katie Quinn

'KQ' joined us for Asian Champs last year for her first ever game and has only continued to build since then. Coming from a rugby background, expect some big tackles from this fierce competitor. She has an amazing game sense for someone that is new to the game and has a great eye for goal.

## Katie Walsh

One of only few players that has grown up watching or playing AFL, Katie Walsh knows the game better than anyone else that will be on the field. She has an excellent overhead mark and will look to use that to her advantage at either end of the ground.

## Krista Hope

Continuing with the experience coming down from the North, Krista has played across all competitions with the Swans. Another goal-kicker that will undoubtedly get her name on the scoresheet.

## Layla Ng

The Vietnamese born Layla has proven to be valuable in both the backline and forward line in recent games, including the 2022 Asian Champs. And she's certainly not afraid to put her body on the line.

## Lucy Nguyen

Our Viet pocket-rocket Lucy is another of the club stalwarts. A booming kick, strong tackler and an absolute brick wall down in defense. She'll lead our defensive line.

## Lucy O'Rourke

1 of 2 Irish Lucy's with red hair that has joined the Swannies - Lucy O'Rourke (nickname pending) will look to use her height and strong ball use to her advantage in what is a relatively short team.

## Lucy Purcell

The 2nd of 2 Irish Lucy's with red hair, but if you get them confused don't stress, this Lucy is the one that will have a bottle of soju in her hand. One of the strongest competitors in the team, she was excellent at full-back when she filled-in for a friendly game last year.

## Mary Eviston

Mary has been an absolute dynamite on the track since she joined the Swannies. Pace, unrelenting attack and a desire to get the ball in her hands as much as possible. She'll be damaging in the midfield and push forward too.

## Meabh Shine

Yet another Irish recruit that is a gun on the Gaelic field and will be bringing this same intensity to the footy field. Great voice combined with run and carry will make Meabh a major ball-winner all over the ground.

## Molly Coleman

Amazingly just 1 of 2 Australians in our squad, Molly has grown up watching the game of footy and is now pulling on the boots! If her surname is anything to go by, expect some goals on Saturday.

## Ngoc Anh Nguyen

One of only a few Swannies to have been involved with the club in both the North and the South, now residing in Saigon Anh has demonstrated a strong desire to learn the game which has seen her skills improve in leaps and bounds.

## Nguyen Ngoc Huyen Tram

Playing with us for about a year now, Tram is one of the most aggressive tacklers I've seen and we absolutely love it. She has a contagious passion for the game and she'll show exactly why she received multiple awards for her efforts last year.

## Niamh Keating

Recently crossing over from Gaelic, Niamh brings some much needed height to our team. A strong runner with a good set of hands, she'll be useful at both ends of the ground and is going to be hard to stop with more experience under her belt.

## Nicole Sandman

Nicole has been around the club for a number of years, mostly in a social capacity, but has now joined as a player! She has been a footy fan for a while now which has made her transition to playing the game a breeze. Another of our players that will be dangerous up forward.

## Phuong Nguyen

Wrapping up our list is our final Vietnamese player and 1 of 5 Hanoians making the journey down from the North for the women's game. Phuong is not new to the game and has shown a clever ability to crumb and kick goals in our forward line.







# THE SINGAPORE WOMBETTES

Coming off the back of a very successful 2022, the Bettes exceeded all expectations in their 3rd year of existence. An Asian Championship was a great reward for some great footy, but getting 35 players in the extended squad with 12+ nationalities is great for the game.

2023 poses endless possibilities. As expat footy works, the ins and outs make us a completely new team with a new dynamic. Again, we have a swarm of new players lining up for their first footy season ever and a few imports from the homeland. After we get a few games under our belt, the Bettes will prove they are still the team to beat come Asia Champs 2023.

It is a great privilege to be part of the Anzac Day event in Vietnam in 2023. It gives a chance to recognise and honour the sacrifices of those who served and to remember the importance of mateship, courage, and sacrifice. While we can never compare sport to war, we hope to pay our respects by building on mateship with our teammates and opponents.





## **Helena**

Czech yourself before you wreck yourself. Champion CHB returning for season 2, and early doors says, not much she hasn't been to training yet.

## **Mac**

Please take notes. When she busts through a pack just start walking back to the middle. Asia Champ, All Asia, Bettes BnF. If we had a clubhouse, there would be a cheese section.

## **Koko**

Asia Champ Returning with a killer right foot and tactful thinking. Watch out, she freely chose to support North Melbourne, do what you will with that information.

## **Anita**

New recruit, who has just completed the ancient Irish pilgrimage to St Kilda and played some real footy in some real weather. Been to 3 trainings in a row, think that's club record.

## **Kim**

The silent Assassin in the 2022 Champs team. Has the most pin point aim there is, so don't let her get it.

## **Kart**

Another new recruit that plays every bloody sport you can think of. She's ready to go.

## **Rej**

the German Fireball, has a tank that goes forever and ever. First on the ball before you know it's even there. Another Asia Champ pushing for back to back.

## **Dash**

another Asia Champ, named for her quick speed and nimble sidesteps. Most Improved Award last year doesn't do the growth rate justice.

## **Sabrina**

Missed champs last year and is hungry to get her first as we go back to back. Killer left boot and fast as the wind.

## **Rosa**

Triple Crown Last year: All Asia, Asia Afl and Gaelic Champ. Gives a speech like Al Pacino in Any Given Sunday.

## **Violent Violette**

First year at the Bettes and first year of footy. Watch out for this one, has some demons.

## **Milzy**

Marquee Signing from the mainland looking to fill out the roster in the middle. Actually has a nickname that she uses.

## **Gabi**

Another max contract this year with plenty of experience. Potential to be best on and off the ground in the same day.

## **Laura**

Likely to stuff the stat sheet with hardball gets, marks and telling off the coach. Spiritual guide of the team.








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# 14 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

Words Bill Crang

The ANZAC Friendship match has grown into something that any Swans player or family member looks forward to and will always look back fondly on. So many elements have combined to make this one of the most unique games of AFL on the planet. Playing on the same turf the diggers played on during down time from the horrors of war. Being in the midst of Vets who have done such wonderful things in the community around here since returning to discover a Vietnam at peace. Welcoming teams from all over Asia. The tradition of the McMillan Dinner and Middleton Address which have drawn names like Embley, Seymour and Jesaulenko (you beauty!!!). It all comes together as the weekend that means more than the Swans than any other.

*Since 2010 we've played Asia's best and funnily enough only ever lost to teams from Indonesia (Jakarta twice). This weekend enables us to remember the sacrifices that were made on both sides in the war that ravaged the lands the Swans now call home whilst celebrating the great friendships that our people now enjoy and continue to develop. Footy can play a great part in these friendships and it's been a personal honour of mine to be part of all the Swan's Anzac Games to date. They will forever be some of the greatest memories of my life. Here's my sometimes cloudy memory across all those years:*

## 2009 - Vietnam Swans v Thailand Tigers in Kanchanaburi



Wow! This was my first ever tour and what a baptism of literal fire. Mid forty degrees and a red hot opponent opened my eyes but by the end being well over 100 points down and I think having not scored a major all day most of us were covering with our eyes closed in the fetal position. The tour remains one of the best I've ever been on though with the amazing stories of some of the heroic diggers who endured so much on the Burma Death Railway, the morning ceremony (ANZAC was a Saturday that year) and a post game cruise down the River Kwai. Great touring squad that absolutely tore Kanchanaburi a new one capped off a great weekend and in hindsight I'm not surprised left me wholeheartedly addicted to playing footy throughout Asia.

## 2010 - Hanoi Hawks(63) v Saigon Swans(62) Heritage Match in Vung Tau



Phil Johns, the visionary behind almost every piece of the Swans platform as a club was inspired by the power of ANZAC Day in Kanchanaburi the year before. As expats loving life in Vietnam what was amazing was how little we knew beyond Forest Gump of the war that shook the world here for over a decade. None the less, somewhat luckily we moved to play a friendship game in Vung Tau. Unbeknown to us this was the hallowed turf the diggers played on during their down time some 40 years earlier. Not only that but some of them were in the crowd - which shocked us in its size - and very quickly we were able to learn some of the history of the Australian involvement but also some of the Vietnamese side of a war that really had no winner. The two black arm-bands respect concept was born out of respect for soldier enduring the horror of war on either side of the battle. As always the North cheated thoroughly and claimed the game by a point. One great hit by Greg Stanton on the wing was a highlight. A friendship match in name but it was obvious playing here on this epic ground games were never going to be soft! As we took stock of all we learnt the gravity of what the ANZAC Friendship Match at the Lord Mayor's Oval in Vung Tau was going to become mega. We were still to see how mega.

**2011 - Vietnam Swans (89) d Hong Kong Dragons (47) in Vung Tau**



Part of the reason I think the Friendship Match has become such a great event was attracting one of the premier AFL Asia teams to the first ever International Match. The Dragons go deep if not win every single Asian Championships and have one of the best touring cultures in Asia. This was my first glimpse into it and it helped us to grow as a footy club immensely. The Dragons were not short of talent on this tour either but as our first international game with the crowd pouring in after hearing about the game after the previous year we played out of our skins. BOG was Angry Dave Hadley and the greatly missed Nick Shiells was up in the best. Richard Osbourne (still in very handy nick) played for both teams but definitely gave a bit more for the Swans). Despite a comfortable win on the scoreboard the game stayed in the balance all day! Coach Josh 'Pudding' Little's now famous words to "go out and (awkward pause) pull off the greatest win this Vietnam Swans has ever done(sic)" definitely rang true! Google 9 News 2011 Vung Tau Friendship Match!

**2013 - Vietnam Swans (59) defeated by Jakarta Bintangs (69)**



The bubble burst! The Bintangs bought a tight, experienced touring squad and shocked us for our first loss at the Dog Track. We had plenty of great players in Vietnam at that time but the Bintangs were simply more focused and cohesive and it showed us that the way players come in and out of Asian Footy clubs the most important is to have an ongoing simple structure that blokes of all level can walk into , comprehend and function within. Very much what Rod and Jakey have been focused on in 2018.

**2014 - Vietnam Swans (100) d Malaysian Warriors (11)**



From the outset this was a belting led by Tra-vy 'the Butcher' Fallon. The first 2 clearances came forward with Trav taking the ball from contested scuffles and snapping amazing goals. It was going to be one of those days! Trav didn't let up going on to kick about 6 and neither did any Swannie, pounding the Warriors into the Lord Mayors Oval dust. After the heartbreak in 2013 no-one could have seen this coming but it was a welcome drubbing of one of the least liked teams in Asia. The Middleton Address that night was given by none other than AFL legend Alex Jesaulenko. Jezza praising how much Asian footy was like he remembered from his days unlike the modern polished, heartless game played on the biggest stage in Australia each winter.

**2012 - Vietnam Swans (79) d China Reds (56)**



The Reds were a mystery coming into this game, we hadn't seen much of them but knew that with Shanghai and Beijing combining some serious talent would be headed our way. The game was memorable for me as it was the first time my parents watched me play a game of football in Vietnam. After embarrassing myself up forward I was shifted into defense for the second quarter onto a bloke who seemed very handy. After a tough tussle that quarter dad was quick to point out that that 'handy' player was 155 game North Melbourne veteran Shannon Watt, that I should be very careful on him and good luck - just what I needed to know. Despite entering the second half shaking like a leaf the boys were too good all over the field especially in the middle with a freshly arrived Dave Oshea and skipper Dukesy all over the Chinese.



## 2015 Vietnam Swans (90) d Singapore Wombats (49)



2015 saw the 25th of April coincide with the Saturday game. What an honour to place a wreath at the Long Tan Cross, discuss the Battle of Long Tan and the entire war with survivors and then play some footy with your best mates! Once again the Swans were on a roll, the playing group getting out of their favorite bars and into the gym in the run into the 2015 Friendship Match against another team that everyone loves to beat, the then Asian Champ Singapore Wombats. Again we came out firing, Hanoi bringing their kicking boots down with Tommy Doer, Joe Vile, Grant Keys and Northern co-captain David Skowronski all kicking multiple majors.

## 2016 Vietnam Swans defeated by Jakarta Bintangs



Not again! The Bintangs were invited back given they'd been the only team amongst Asia's biggest opponents to knock us off. Surely they wouldn't upset us on our biggest day of the season for a second time?! This time Dave Oshea was on the other side with a limited touring squad the Bintangs went to work drafting the best players out of the Legends game getting themselves some rotations to play with. The game continually saw-sawed but eventually the Bintangs prevailed after the Swans were too slow to adjust our strategy going forward looking for Keysey being picked off by the Bintangs CHB. Heart break again!

## 2017 Vietnam Swans (66) d Cambodian Eagles (42)



The Eagles had an amazing end to 2016 taking out an Indochina Cup we believe we should have won after upsetting us in the pool game and knocking us out of the finals. They were heading to Vung Tau planning on inflicting another embarrassing upset and are always a danger and even had our 4 x best and fairest player Dukesy on the tour! The game was hot and hard as always but slowly and surely we gained the ascendancy and maintained our composure in the last quarter when the Eagles snagged a few goals to close the margin. Jimmy Bairstow was given Best On Ground for his tireless work through the middle and around the ground.

## 2018 Vietnam Swans (66 & 48) d Thailand Tigers (47 & 21) (twice)



In 2018 we returned to our ANZAC roots, taking on the Thailand Tigers who gave us the concept 10 years earlier. With ANZAC Day falling midweek it was decided to play a 2 leg series, first in Kanchanaburi and the second in Vung Tau. Anyone who knows Asian footy knows how hard it is to go and win on the road, add the insane temperatures of Kanchanaburi to this equation and the touring Swans for game 1 were up against it. No-one told our midfield or who created drive from the centre and Darcy Wilkosz was able to control the air up forward. After half time our defense shut down the Tigers ability to score and Thai born but Viet based Reed Cuthbert was everywhere. Dinh Anh took control of his wing and the Swans were able to pull away to an invaluable win.

The first match took its toll and the Tigers returned to Vung Tau decimated by injury, lacking numbers several high profile Swans and reinforcements rung in from the Khmer Cobras were added to the Tigers squad causing a hard fought battle that was only clinched late in the 4th quarter. Eventually the Swans were able to gain ascendancy across the field started by our Hanoian on field leader Jake Norris who was in everything while Oscar Silk provided a marking target all day eventually scoring 3 goals which could have been far higher. To win home and away around the ANZAC weekend was a new and amazing experience on top of what has become a great tradition of our club.

## 2019 Vietnam Swans tied with Indonesian Volcanoes



As the 2018 Asian Champs Indonesia came together (the Swans have previously played Jakarta on ANZAC Day) to take on the Swans on our home deck. For us, this was a massive thrill and give we'd set ourselves to win Division 2 in the Asian Champs in 2019 before stepping up to Division 1 this exposure to top flight Asian footy was exactly what the Swans were after. The game didn't disappoint, we got off to a good start before Indonesia settled, playing a skillful and tough brand of football. We stayed in the game but our bench turned into an ER ward as several injuries to key players were suffered. Regardless heading into the last quarter the game was anyone's to win. We took the lead and had chances to close it out before a last gasp forward foray by the Volcanoes ended with an after the siren shot for goal. The accurate set shot tied the scores! Our first ever tie in the 10th year vs the standing Asian Champs, wow!!! Tal (aka Libba), Oscar Silk and Tom Niit were huge offensive weapons all day enabling us to stay in a cracking game. The back line were huge in limiting the quality Indonesian attack especially Nath Milner rebounding all day.

Unfortunately in 2020 we didn't get the chance to build on the legend of the ANZAC Friendship Match due to the Covid Pandemic but this will only increase the energy focused on 2021!

## 2021 saw us return to Vung Tau with a domestic focus



8 teams, 4 in Hanoi, 4 in Saigon were launched and played round robin games followed by 2 epic games between the Halida Reds and the Republic Blacks. The standard was incredible and went to show that strong domestic leagues will be a key driver of our international efforts into the future.

## 2022 again saw domestic footy take stage



with both Men's and Women's full scale games staged alongside Gaelic and Hurling. These games proved the perfect stepping stone for our successful return to international games in the second half of the season.

**Here we are back for 2023 with one of our favourite Asian Footy rivals re-igniting the magic of ANZAC Day footy in Vietnam. Best of luck to all the players in the 3 games and thanks to all our sponsors, organizers, supporters for making this day what it is and carrying the Friendship Match traditions into the future.**



**LEST WE FORGET, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!**

# The 2023 ANZAC Friendship Match FAQs



## 1. What is "ANZAC Day"?

ANZAC Day is a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand that broadly commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders "who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations" and "the contribution and suffering of all those who have served".

## 2. Why is ANZAC Day commemorated on 25 April each year?

25 April is the anniversary of when members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed on the beaches of Gallipoli (Ottoman Empire (Turkey)) in 1915. The ANZACs were met with fierce resistance from the Ottoman Army and suffered heavy casualties.

## 3. What is the history of the ANZAC Friendship Match?

In 2009, the Vietnam Swans were invited to play in the Thailand Tigers' 2009 Commemorative ANZAC Match in Kanchanaburi which is near World War II's infamous Thai Burma Railway.

The following year, 2010, the Vietnam Swans played the inaugural ANZAC Friendship Match. Players were divided into two teams that were named after previous playing clubs, the Hanoi Hawks and Saigon Saints.

The ANZAC Friendship Match was designed to:

- Thank our hosts, the Vietnamese Government and Vietnamese people for warmly and generously welcoming us into their country

- Encourage emotionally wounded people from abroad to return and experience the New World of Vietnam

- Learn from those who have been here 40 years before us

- Show those from abroad, through our eyes, what an amazing country Vietnam is to live and work in today

- Focus attention on the number of children drowning in this country (more children die from drowning than road accidents)

- Raise money for local causes supporting the future, the kids, via Swim Vietnam and the Vung Tau Orphanage.

## 4. Why do players wear two Black Armbands?

This is the ANZAC Friendship Match. It is about bringing people together. It's about recognizing that in times of war, people on all sides suffer.





We who live here in Vietnam are very grateful for this privilege.

Typically, only one armband is worn to commemorate the loss of life. By having all players, from all teams, in all matches wearing two black armbands, it becomes very clear that we are explicitly recognizing the losses suffered by all.

In every photo taken on the day, every player will be wearing two black armbands. This is the ANZAC Friendship Match.

**5. What is the Vietnam Football League (VFL)?**

In 1966, Private John Heaney was given the call: organize a game of Aussie Rules Football – or face detention for a minor disciplinary issue. He chose the latter!

The following year, 1967, a full scale competition was organized between the various Australian units based in Vung Tau.

The competition, known as the VFL (Vietnam Football League) ran until 1971. There were two premiership seasons played most years.

**6. What is the Lord Mayor's Oval?**

Most of the Vietnam Football League's games were played at Lam Son Stadium which is now the Vung Tau Greyhound Racing Track – and home of the ANZAC Friendship Match.

This is the same oval that the diggers used to play on but they fondly referred to Lam Son as the Lord Mayor's Oval.

**7. Who is Stan Middleton?**

In 2010, the Vietnam Swans were very aware that footy had been played by Australian diggers during the War – but we had been unsuccessful in tracking down any of the players or any detail of its history.

So we went ahead and played our Inaugural ANZAC Friendship Match on 24 April 2010. Then, just two weeks later, on 10 May 2014, a guy named Stan Middleton left a comment on the Swans' website:

*"I served in Vung Tau in 1967-68. A full scale Aussies Rules Competition between Australian units was conducted (twice a year). The Competition commenced in either 1966 or 1967 and I believe went through to 1971."*

It turned out that Stan had albums of photos,

historical documents, contacts – and we were away. The Vietnam Swans had played our Inaugural ANZAC Friendship Match just two weeks earlier – but, suddenly, we had more than 40 years' of incredibly rich history!

**8. What is the McMillan Dinner?**

In 2010 and 2011, we enjoyed cracking post match functions. But they were the same type of events as every other post match event we have during a standard year.

But this was a post ANZAC Friendship Match function. It needed to be different. And it needed a name.

The Vietnam Swans in 2012 named the function the McMillan Dinner. It was named in honour of Kevin "Kev" McMillan.

Kev did two tours of Vietnam: one from 1969-1970 with the 6th Battalion Royal Australian Army Regiment and the second from 1970-1971 with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

Some years later, Kev returned to Vietnam in Vung Tau where he married Le. They now have two children. Together with long time friend, Peter Taylor, they played a key role in forming the Vietnam Veterans and Friends Charity. They renovated the Da Bak School and raised \$40,000 to put in new toilets and classrooms for the new school at the end of the Luscombe airfield strip at Nui Dat.

Glenn Nolan at the time said that Kev is "a man that gave Australia two years of his life and has come back and helped to rebuild a country he fought in. But it's in a true ANZAC tradition. They may have been foe but are now friends and this, Kev, has proven."

Kev was a passionate rugby man who loved to mock the southerners' "aerial ping pong". But while he didn't care about the footy per se, this rugby man was passionate about what the ANZAC Friendship Match represented.

It's always hardest to start something and Kev was there at the very beginning of the ANZAC Friendship Match in 2010.

Unfortunately, Kev was not able to be at the Inaugural McMillan Dinner on 21 April 2012. He was in Australia being treated for cancer. Stephen



Drummond filmed the night for him, however. The footage was uploaded onto YouTube and Kev was able to watch it from his hospital bed which he loved greatly.

Ten days later, Kev passed away, “chuffed” that the McMillan Dinner had been named in his honour.

**9. What is the Middleton Address?**

If the ANZAC Friendship Match is about bringing people together, then, that’s what the McMillan Dinner needed to do.

For that to happen, the McMillan Dinner needed a signature event. Given the footy happens on the weekend adjacent to ANZAC Day, it is reasonable to expect that there will potentially be some amazing speakers over the coming years. And so we needed to build a spot for a keynote speaker. And that spot was to become known as the Middleton Address in honour of Stan Middleton. We didn’t name it after Stan because of what he did or didn’t do in Vietnam – on or off the footy field. The ANZAC Friendship Match is about bringing people together – and that is exactly what Stan has done.

Within two weeks of our first footy match, Stan had found us and reached out; offering to help and to share his library of photos, contacts etc. He has continued to work tirelessly to help spread the word and has also been heavily involved with Water Safety Vietnam which also aims to teach children to swim.

The inaugural speaker of the Middleton Address

in 2012 was Peter Taylor, Kev McMillan’s best mate.

Stan himself has also delivered the Middleton Address.

**10. What is the Peter Badcoe Club?**

The Peter Badcoe Club was a rest and recreation club for diggers during the war. The Imperial Hotel, where the McMillan Dinner will be held, stands on the site of the Peter Badcoe Club.

Major Peter Badcoe VC served in the Vietnam War and is the last South Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross – the military’s highest honour for bravery.

Since 2004, AFL Club, Port Adelaide has presented the Peter Badcoe VC Medal to the best player on the ground as part of ANZAC Round.

**11. Where do proceeds from the ANZAC Friendship Match go?**

The ANZAC Friendship Match’s tagline is “Honouring lost lives; saving young lives”. We remember and acknowledge the past and then, while we have everyone’s attention, we offer them a way forward to make a positive difference.

Children are the future of Vietnam and with more children dying from drowning than road accidents, money raised will be donated to Swim Vietnam and Water Safety Vietnam. In addition, we also support the Vung Tau Orphanage. All proceeds from gate takings at the ground and raffles, less direct expenses, will be donated.





**The Vietnam Swans Theme Song**  
**Sing it Loud!**

*Cheer, cheer the red, black and white,  
Asian kings of footy by day and by night,  
Proud to play for Vietnam,  
The strongest of teams all over the lands.  
Whether we're from the south or the north  
We will strike hard as we're going forth  
Listen to those horns a' honking  
C'mon you good Swannies!  
Honk! Honk!*



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