

Apologies to the “By the Left” Facebook Group

Over the weekend I have had the opportunity to communicate with one of the female warriors of the “By the Left” Facebook Group, which was both informative and disturbing. Informative in what the group is trying to achieve and most importantly what has precipitated this groups actions and disturbing that events, incidents and lack of recognition of female warriors and young veterans overall and their service medals and appropriate service in whatever calling is being questioned by a small segment of veterans.

I apologize sincerely if my comments on the By the Left website have offended which was based on ignorance not fact and now that I have the facts of the By the Left website and the warriors supporting it they have my total support and that of the Royal Australian Regiment Association.

I personally and some of my diggers many years ago went through a similar situation at an unnamed RSL Club after attending a funeral of one of our comrades where our Vietnam Medals were questioned by some individuals inside the premises and comments like “that’s not a real war” were being bandied about to which I and my diggers took exception. The risks of rearranging the furniture of the Club and its patrons was very real so we all retired to a public bar of a local watering hole where we were warmly greeted and don’t remember buying a beer.

That incident has stayed with me for life and anyone who has served their nation in any capacity is not only entitled to wear their service medals but must be encouraged to do so and march with pride either with the unit in which they served or as a standalone group or in my town and if feeling a bit lost come and see me and your place in the march is assured.

In conclusion I would encourage the By the Left Group to view themselves as “warriors” not “victims” and once again I apologize for any ill-informed comments that were made. You have my total support and would be very keen to be kept updated as to the groups’ progress and most importantly if any of these negative comments are attributed from within the ranks of our Association. I would be very surprised because we have all been there post-Vietnam and consider ourselves inclusive no matter what or where individuals have served in particular in this case our female warriors.

Duty First

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Peeg". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "A" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.