

War veteran's lasting legacy

By Laura Luvara



Generous spirit: Geoff Levey was awarded a posthumous Medal of the Order of Australia.

SUNBURY resident Geoff Levey was a mentor, an organiser and a "true blue" friend to hundreds of war veterans and their families across Victoria.

When the well-respected Vietnam veteran died in July last year after a long battle with cancer, more than 500 people filled the Emu Bottom Homestead to pay their respects.

His legacy with the veteran community will live on, not only through the veteran welfare program he established in Melton and Sunbury, but also through the dozens of other initiatives he helped bring to fruition in places including Sunbury, Melton and Sunshine.

And on Saturday, the hard work and community spirit of this humble man were recognised when he was awarded a posthumous Medal of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours.

The day brought mixed feelings for Mr Levey's devoted widow Patricia, who said she knew "he would be there in spirit".

"When I received the notification [of the award] I was absolutely overwhelmed, but sad at the same time, because he wasn't here to obtain the award himself," Mrs Levey said.

"He was a great man; he is still a great man. A lot of people were so overwhelmed by the fact that he passed away.

"I always imagined he would have got involved more in the community had he not passed away. He just loved being able to get people involved and to think outside the square to get things done."

Mr Levey moved to Sunbury



Young gun: Geoff Levey in Vietnam during his younger days.

'I always imagined he would have got involved more in the community had he not passed away. He just loved being able to get people involved and to think outside the square to get things done.'

Patricia Levey

in 1984 when he married Patricia, and although he'd been born and raised near Swan Hill, his love for his close-knit community took on epic proportions.

"People would say to him 'What do you think of this?' and he'd say 'That's a great idea, why don't you do it?' and they'd always say 'I thought you could do it,'" Mrs Levey said.

"He'd then say 'Why don't

we do it together?' He was very much a mentor. If someone thought they didn't have the capabilities to do something he'd nurture them to do it."

Mr Levey was nominated for the OAM by close friend and fellow Sunbury Sub-Branch Returned and Services League of Australia member Phil Morgan, and Melton and District Vietnam Veterans Association member Graeme Sertori.

The pair decided to nominate Mr Levey for recognition of his work with the Sunbury RSL as president between 1991 and 2003 and acting pensions officer and fund-raiser; his work with the Melton and District Sub-Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia; and his other fund-raising activities, including as committee member for the Sunbury Fair.

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