

***Below is a copy of an item which appeared in either the Brisbane Courier-Mail or the Brisbane Telegraph sometime in early 1966.***

Bob O'Doherty

## **Vietnam has an Aussie surf club**

VUNG TAU, Vietnam, Sunday (UPI) – Wherever there are Australians on the beaches of the world you're sure to find a surf life saving club. Despite the war, Vietnam is no exception.

The men of the Royal Australian Air Force transport flight, Vietnam, a squadron of Caribou transport planes flying supply and evacuation missions to remote outposts, have started a nucleus of the lifesaving club at their base on the coast 40 miles southeast of Saigon.

Vung Tau was known as Cape St. Jacques in the days when the French ruled Vietnam and it was the closest thing they could find to the French Riviera.

At the right time of the year fair surf gets up along the wide sandy beaches at Vung Tau, but at present the strong winds make surfing difficult.

Nevertheless at 11 AM every Sunday the Aussies are down on the beach practicing their belt and line

work, much to the amazement of the locals.

### **Patrols**

The guiding light of the embryo club is Flight-Lt Dick Jones of Manly, New South Wales.

Jones was a member of the Long Reef life-saving club for five years before he was sent to Vietnam two and a half months ago, so nothing was more natural than to start a club here.

The Vietnamese life-saving methods on the beach are primitive in the extreme.

Jones hopes to get his club affiliated with the Australian Surf Life-saving Association.

Members of the club have already rescued more than a dozen people, both American

and Vietnamese from the surf.

The most dramatic rescue was by Flying Officer Bill Pike, of Maroubra, and LAC Bob O'Doherty, of Brisbane.

They rescued an already unconscious American from certain death with 10 minutes of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

"We were sitting up at the 'club house' – a beach bar the Aussies use – when we saw this guy waving his hands about 50 yards out from the beach" Pike said.

"The seas were heavy and the two men out there couldn't get back in" Pike went on.

"We both dashed for the water and when we got to them we found one man had a rubber tube."

“He had seen his mate’s frantic signals and paddled out to rescue him although he could not swim.”

“When we got to them he had stopped breathing and was draped over the tube. The other guy was

panicking and kept saying ‘Oh my God, oh my God’ over and over again. I guess he thought his mate was dead.” Pike said.

“We pulled them back together with Pike giving them mouth-to-mouth, which was

quite a problem.” O’Doherty said.

“We dragged them up the beach and Pike gave them mouth-to-mouth again. Then I took over and worked on him for about 10 minutes before we saw signs of life.”