



The Traditional Owners of Elsey Station welcome Australian Veterans to a retreat each August



**A Retreat for
ALL ADF Veterans,
their partners
and guests.**

As much or as little
company from mates.

Abundant wildlife,
Pristine, tranquil country.
Lots of peace for
regeneration.
Camaraderie.

Camping is free, however
donations are expected,
to be used for the local
community.

Riverfront sites.

Basic bush camping.

Fresh river water.

Boat launch sites.

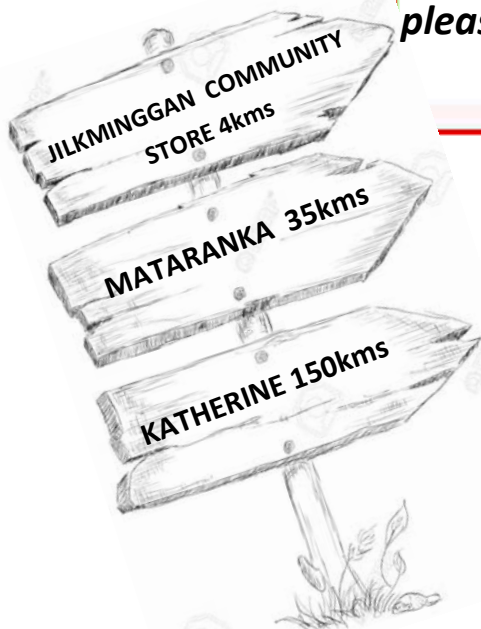
Caravan & campers OK.

Bitumen to station gate.

*Some restrictions apply
please refer Information Pack.*



**REGISTER
FEB—JUNE**



Join our fb page

ROPER RIVER VETERANS RETREAT
or email (roperretreat@gmail.com)
for camping guide & information pack.



RRVG wish to pay their respects
to Mangarrayi Elders past,
present and emerging leaders.



roperretreat@gmail.com

Facebook: Roper River Veterans Retreat

Purpose and Spirit: The Roper River Veterans Group conducts a retreat at Elsey Station each August, a place where Veterans and their partners can relax and have time away from daily pressures. The purpose is for any serving or retired ADF Veteran to regenerate in tranquil surroundings and perhaps find peace, if only temporary. The camp is suited to couples, individuals and groups of Vets who enjoy the retreat. Attendee's interaction is accepted, understood and respected by fellow campers.

History. Following the popularity and "success" of Pandanus Park War Veterans Retreat in Far North Queensland (where struggling Vietnam Veterans found peace in the bush and support from mates), Les Hiddens sort a similar location in NT. Elsey Station in 2009 was a community run Cattle Station and Les negotiated with the Managers and Elders for Vietnam Veterans to go to Elsey Station "Big Tree" paddock for the month of August. Unlike Pandanus Park, The Roper Retreat was for ALL ADF members, hence the Ribbon on the banner.

In 2010 "Old" Fred Greenway, Tony (Pop) Pearson, Gary Holmes and Ray Eacott set up the Roper River Veterans Retreat and along with Jan Binyon became the first moderators of the group. The allocated paddock fronts the Roper River and provides access to about 30kms of the Roper River with 10kms for camping.

Administration. Today there is an organising group of 5 – Tony (Pop) Pearson, Ray Eacott, Jan Binyon, Sue Fairbanks and Donna Halsted. The group is responsible for administration of the registration process, financial matters, promotions plus Aboriginal and Mataranka liaison. During camp time, the group collects donations, plans activities and appoints a "sheriff" to ensure harmony. Post camp a general and financial report is sent to attendees.

The Organising Group, Elders nor the Station take any responsibility for your safety. Duty of care remains with the individual and it is advised to have a medical clearance and copies of medication.

Eligibility. Any serving or former member of the ADF is welcome to attend with their immediate family and guests. (Max. 2 guests per member). The member must be in attendance with their family or guests. As this is a retreat, children under 16 are discouraged.

Location and Access. Travel 7kms south from Mataranka and turn onto the Roper Highway for another 28kms. The road is bitumen but care needs to be taken with road trains having right of way. Turn left onto Elsey Station road (approx. 4kms past the Jilkminggan turnoff) continue down the well-formed gravel road to a mine site on the left. Entry to the camp is opposite. 7kms on the station track is the start of our designated area. (See map).

In 2014 some fairly large caravans had no problems getting in, however this is dependent on the condition of the station track which changes after each wet. As a general rule vans up to 18-20ft and campers are OK. Contact administration or fb for current road status and accessibility.

IMPORTANT. Elsey Station is a closed Aboriginal community. Permits to enter are extremely hard to obtain. The Elders recognise the suffering of Veterans and offer the peace and tranquillity of their land to mend mental scars. **PERMITS MUST BE OBTAINED VIA RRVG** to enter the station during August. The permit is only valid from 1-31 August.

Register between February and 15 June each year. Contact admin for applications forms or download from our fb site. There is a limit on the numbers accepted.



roperretreat@gmail.com

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Communications. Telstra 4G (700 MHz range) is sporadic throughout the camp. A short climb up Coms Hill near the HQ sees good reception available. Various boosters (yagi and omni) are used by regular campers.

Activities: Fishing is the main activity. Many boaties and non boaties alike enjoy bush walking, bird watching, star gazing, uninterrupted peace under the shade of a tree watching the wildlife activity on the river and of course “hunting and gathering” with camp chores. Some camps arrange camp fire nights of story-telling and even Karaoke! Daytime morning tea visits to other camps to have a chat. Note to female partners: A male visit to a mate for morning tea can sometimes be hours!

It is a place of options, some like:

- to share military service experiences. (Others do not wish to speak of them)
- to support others,
- to interact with others (who have a military background) in organised or casual activities,
- to have space and time without intrusion,
- for partners to give and receive support,
- where support from mates is not far away,
- to relax, unwind and have no schedule,
- exchange information,
- to laugh or cry without fear,
- maybe catch a fish or two.

Even in the serenity of the bush it is a basic bush camp that requires daily effort and focus.

Comaraderie. Non-compulsory, informal happy hours at the “RAP”, where campers can interact and relax amongst mates, are regularly held. Some campers prefer space and less interaction which must be respected.

Jilkmिंगgan Community. Our camp has great ties with the local community. We have provided a BBQ for the kids at school, supported school excursions, bought flag poles for the school, contributed to the health centre and second hand shop. The community store is a great little shop with basic supplies, fresh veges, frozen kangaroo tails and ice-creams. We always feel welcome.

Mataranka: The closest town to Elsey Station, 35kms from the turn off on an all sealed road. The town has a small supermarket, Post Office, caravan parks, servos, Hotel (takeaways from 2pm), there is a vehicle mechanic and many tourist attractions.

Little Roper Stock Camp is a huge supporter of our retreat and an ideal base pre or past camp.

Katherine: This is the region’s major town includes Woolworths Supermarket, Coffee shops, Vehicle Spare Parts shops/repairs and Fishing/Camping gear shops as well as “Johnny’s” electronics.

Vietnam Veterans Day. Each 18 August a memorial service is held. Pack your medals if you are comfortable wearing them. Sometimes the school, Elders and Community attend. The locals just love talking about fishing and their country and exploring where our campers come from and Veteran experiences. On reflection a great day, especially for Veterans of all conflicts to come together.



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CAMPING GUIDE

Protocol is similar to Pandanus Park

Right To Remain. Permits are regularly checked by Rangers. Any person who endangers another camper, wilfully damages the property of another camper or is considered a threat to other campers, may be asked to leave. If a guest is asked to leave their host member may also be asked to leave.

Basic Bush Camping. There are no facilities at the camping area. It is pristine bush and river. Campers are required to provide their own facilities and take in all supplies. All rubbish is to be removed and the site left clean and tidy.

- Safety is each camper's individual responsibility.
- Camp sites may only be established in the Big Tree Paddock between the areas known as "West End" and "Barra Banks". (See camp map)
- An area around Big Tree is designated "RAP" meeting place with NO CAMPING.
- Generally camps should be a minimum of 50mtrs from another camp.
- Be respectful of those near you as some seek space and privacy.
- Entering another person's camp without permission or interfering with, damaging, tampering with or removing another camper's property will not be tolerated, (see Right to Remain).

Camping Fees: There are no camping fees, however, a donation is expected, which is used for the community.

Fires. There is plenty of fallen timber, do not cut or damage any standing timber. Ensure fireplaces are properly constructed with safe surrounding clearance. Note: August is usually the driest month in the NT and sometimes there are gusty days, fire safety is paramount.

Vehicles. All vehicles are to be operated in a safe manner so not to endanger any person, wildlife or animals on the Station.

Dogs. Dogs are permitted but must be kept under their owner's control at all times and not annoy other campers. NOTE: Crocodiles view dogs as prey therefore keep dogs away from river.

Rubbish and Structures: All rubbish is to be removed by you. All your facilities, make shift structures and any signage must be removed prior to your departure and camp site left tidy and clean.

Toilet Pits: Toilet and shower pits should be clear of all waterways, completely filled and stick marked, prior to departure.

Water: One of the best features of the Roper Retreat is the abundance of fresh water. Many camps use a battery pump to deliver water to their camp (Don't get a bilge pump, a pressure pump is recommended). The Roper River water is very clear, it is the individual's choice as to whether they drink it or not. If it is used as drinking water it should always be boiled first.



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FISHING AND RIVER GUIDE

Every year differs. The annual monsoon rains flush the river, resulting in a generally quite clear bottom, with plenty of snags for fishing along the sides. There are rocks just downstream of “Barra Banks” where care needs to be taken.

Mainly fresh water crocodiles frequent the area; a big salty has been sighted near the island.

Some big Barra have been landed as well as Cat fish, Saratoga and Black Bream. Trolling, lure flicking and live bait dropping all prove successful – when the fish want to bite. Elder Aunty Sheila advocates blue rattling lures.

Cherabin (fresh water prawns) caught in opera house nets are also a delight. Many of the regulars have their own secret for bait in the traps. At the RAP happy hour, daily show and tell events entertain all.

Jump onto the fb page for more info/pics.

NT fishing laws & limits prevail.

Boats to about 14 feet can be launched from the bank and tied up right at your camp. No need to launch and retrieve each day.

The river is home to a wide variety of bird life and native fauna. Noticeable are the nesting corellas, shellback ducks and whistling kites. Active Bowerbird nests are not uncommon. It is extremely picturesque and serene. A good camera is a necessity. Even though August is winter the sun is still fierce and dehydration can be experienced if plenty of fluids not taken.

Any questions please email RRVG administration at roperretreat@gmail.com or ask regular campers on our fb site, ROPER RIVER VETERANS RETREAT.

HOMESTEAD

**** Check Gate status ****
**** prior to departure. ****

White Entrance Gate

White Gate

X

Horse Gate

Metal Gate
133.211E
14.57S

Cattle Crush
Corner

By-Pass

Chained
Brown
Gate

Road Dip
133.215E
14.57S

Road Fork
133.219E
14.57S

Fence Lines

To
Community

Cattle
Yards

1. Wooden
Gate Frame
133.219E
14.57S

2. Metal Gate
133.22E
14.57S

3. Disease Control Gate
133.22E
14.564S

4. Island Turnoff (west)
133.22E
14.57S

5. Island Turnoff (East)
133.29E
14.56S

6. Wood Gate
133.23E
14.55S

“West End”
Camping Area
Small Area – Vans OK

“The Island”
Camping Area
Large Area – Vans OK

“Ghekko Flats”
Camping Area
Tents & Camper Trailers

BIG TREE
HQ & RAP

“Barra Banks”
Camping Area
Tents & Camper Trailers

To RUM JUNGLE
~ 5kms

NOTES & LEGEND

Map not to scale.

Camping permitted
from West End
onwards.

Green areas lower river
bank camping, balance is
higher & flatter areas.

Normally gates indicated
RED are chain closed.
Others open.

X NO ENTRY OR
WRONG WAY

← GATES

1. From Brown Gate 1.5 km

2. From Brown Gate 1.6 km

3. From Brown Gate 2.4 km

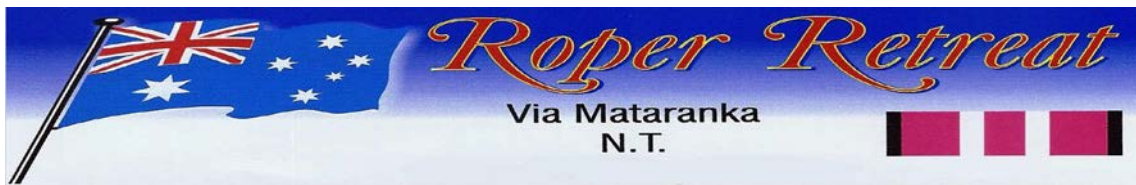
4. From Brown Gate 3.6 km

5. From Brown Gate 3.9 km

6. From Brown Gate 5.7 km

BIG TREE HQ 6.5 km
Designated No Camping

VETERANS CAMPING AREAS BETWEEN WEST END & BARRA BANKS



NLC PERMIT APPLICATION – 2019

Email Application to roperretreat@gmail.com

Names , including accompanying persons. Service Number of party leader	
Home Address	
Contact Address / Email	
Phones Private Mobile	
Vehicle Make Colour Registration	
Towed Vehicle (Optional) Trailer, Caravan, Boat trailer registrations if applicable	
Boat Registration / Description	
Intended Dates of Attendance, & any comments	

The above information is confidential and only used to obtain your permit to visit Roper Retreat and for identification purposes while you are there. Your permit when issued will be for the whole of the month of August, unless you have applied for an alternative or extended period.