



Like many of Geoff Grimish's horses, Stradbroke Handicap hopeful Counterattack has a military meaning. Picture: Mark Cranitch

War veteran Geoff Grimish always on the Counterattack to help out with charities in Vietnam

BEN DORRIES, Herald Sun
June 6, 2016 5:30pm

A BIG part of Geoff Grimish will rejoice if Counterattack wins the Stradbroke Handicap on Saturday.

But the Vietnam War veteran will also feel a sharp pang of guilt.

Grimish, who has owned and bred Group 1 winners including Red Tracer and Shellscape, makes regular trips back to Vietnam for charity work, including supporting an orphanage.



Many veterans who left Vietnam never wanted to see the place again but Grimish developed a deep affinity with the country.

And he sometimes struggles to reconcile the human heartbreak he sees in Vietnam with his glittering success as a racehorse owner.

“When I go over there and hug a little boy with AIDS and look into his eyes, it brings me to tears,” Grimish says.

“It makes me feel guilty that I have been successful with racehorses.

“But getting some funding (prizemoney and horse sales) from the races also allows me to help some of those in life who are less fortunate than me.

“I always think that those in life who have more should take care of those in life who have less.”

Many of Grimish’s horses have names with a military meaning, such as Red Tracer who was named after the tracer bullets which flew through the sky in a battle in Vietnam in 1968.



Geoff Grimish makes regular trips back to Vietnam for charity work, including supporting an orphanage.

Counterattack, who has the same mother as Red Tracer and Shellscape, is another with a military connotation.

The Chris Waller-trained colt is on the second line of Stradbroke betting at \$5 after his dominant win in the Fred Best Classic, sitting wide for the trip.

Grimish reckons the three-year-old sprinter, to be ridden by the “Magic Man” Joao Moreira, has a great chance to win Queensland’s richest race.

But as much as Grimish is looking forward to the Stradbroke, he is looking forward more to sharing a few beers with some of his old army mates at Eagle Farm on Saturday.

“That is what racing is all about — enjoying the experience with your mates,” Grimish says.

“There’s a few of us old army mates who catch up every year and we have a lot of fun together.

“At our age, it is about getting together and spending some money on food and grog and swapping some tall tales.”

Counterattack is having his second successive Winter in Queensland, after campaigning here as a two-year-old when he ran seventh in the Group 1 JJ Atkins.

He is only now starting to bridge the gap between potential and performance and Grimish reckons the colt has matured into a future Group 1 winner.

“Chris (Waller) was always of the view that Counterattack was going to be a better three-year-old than he was a two-year-old,” Grimish says.

“The colt is only now starting to put it all together and hopefully, with a bit of help from Joao, he can win the Stradbroke.”