



nulli secundus

2ND BATTALION ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT ASSOCIATION, INC THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

South West Pacific, Japan, Korea, Malaya, Thai-Malay Border, South Vietnam,
Cambodia, Rwanda, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq, Timor Lesté, Afghanistan

RINGO

Courage. Sacrifice. Mateship.

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2016

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the first issue of "RINGO" for 2016.

Late last year, the Association was pleased to continue to provide \$1,000 for the battalion's 'Outstanding Soldier' award; congratulations go to Pte Jens Springborg. The award was presented on the regiment's birthday: 23rd November at Samichon Lines.

Our first committee meeting for 2016 took place on 3 February and it set the tone for the busy year ahead. *Our second meeting will have taken place on 6 April. Ed.*

The year started on a rather sad note with the loss of our Association Patron, Col John Church, DSO, who passed away on 26 January. The Secretary and I attended the funeral which was held at the RMC Chapel in Canberra on 2 February 2016. It was a moving service and the eulogies and tributes provided by his close friends and associates confirmed a long and active career in the service of others.

Both the CO 2RAR, LtCol Michael Bassingthwaighe, DSM and the RSM, WO1 Trent Morris attended the funeral and provided a Battalion Piper for the ceremony.

In recognition of outstanding service to the Association, the management committee awarded the silver soldier to both Kevin "Dasher" Dean, OAM and Monsignor Eugene Harley, OAM.

Dasher was a founding member of the 2RAR Association and his service spans four decades. The committee organised a lunch in Brisbane for Kevin Dean where the President presented him with his award.

Monsignor Harley has continued to provide outstanding service to the Australian Army and the Association specifically over many years. Additionally, he has delivered long and loyal service throughout the years to the community through the Catholic Church. Due to the poor health of Monsignor Harley, the Secretary flew to Sydney to make the presentation. Terry Dinneen also attended.

The Secretary and I took the opportunity to represent 2RAR Association at the RARA (North Qld) annual dinner held at the Townsville RSL on 28 February. It was a wonderful evening.

Our planned visit with CO 2RAR and his staff did not occur however as 2RAR was called on to assist Fiji following the devastation of cyclone Winston.

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Jock Cassidy, continues to work closely with 2RAR to seek ways in which we can support battalion activities. A number of social activities have been planned and the Association has agreed to provide some financial assistance. He also organises fundraising activities to assist with the RAR National Memorial Walk. Well done Jock.

Aub Terry has put the final touches on the Commemorative Service to be held for L/Cpl Peter McDuff at the Darlington Point Cemetery, NSW on Friday 22 April 2016. Details of the service are included in this edition. Thanks Aub.

The next major 2RAR Association reunion is planned for May 2017 in Brisbane. The reunion committee is headed by Gordon Hurford and includes Arthur McDonald and myself. The overall outline program is starting to take shape. Being a member of the Association is not a prerequisite for attendance. This reunion can be attended by all those who have served with 2 and 2/4RAR and I encourage you to be there. Keep your eye on our website; see [website](#) address and contact details below.

The Association is actively seeking to increase its membership, especially of those members who served with 2 and 2/4RAR post-Vietnam.

If you know of anyone who falls in this category who is not a member the Association, your encouragement for them to become part of the 2RAR Association family would be appreciated.

Finally, I wish to thank the management committee for their continued outstanding contribution. Their hard work ensures that the Association remains in very good health.

"Second to None"

Leo Van De Kamp
President

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VICE PRESIDENT / EDITOR
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WARRIORS WHO HAVE MARCHED OUT

- 57005 Colonel John Murray CHURCH DSO, 3RAR Japan (BCOF)/Korea 1950-51 WIA, Malaysia/Borneo 1963-65, 2RAR Vietnam 1970-71 WIA. CO 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn. Passed away on 26 January at Canberra, ACT. Age: 87+ years. The family service was held on 2 February in the Royal Military College Chapel, Duntroon.
- 235355 Brigadier William Douglas (Bill) ROLFE AO, 2RAR Vietnam 1970; (Lt) WIA, MID. Bill passed away 4 March in Canberra. Age: 69+ years. Despite his disabilities, Bill led a very full life. Funeral was held at RMC Duntroon. The world is poorer for his passing. Thanks John Robbins, Pat Savage
- 215712 Corporal Malcolm GIBSON DCM, 4RAR Malaya/Borneo 1965-66, 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68 (WIA), 1ARU 1968, 4RAR 1968-69 (WIA). 'Bluey' passed away peacefully on Sunday 6 December. Age: 70+ years. Thanks Alan Price
- 151346, 1400604, 14004 Corporal Kenneth Humber CROCKFORD MM, WW2 1944-46 RAAF (LAC), 2RAR Korea 1953-54. The HOOK. Commanded a contact bunker between Hill 111 and Hill 121. Malaya 1955-57. Age: 90+ years. Funeral held on 3 February at Howard Qld. Thanks Kevin Dean
- 22349 Major Keith Francis HOULEY, 3RAR 1963 2IC B Coy, 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68 OC Admin Coy. Passed away 7 December. Age: 85+ years. An excellent man manager and a good officer. Thanks Ian Atkinson, Darcy Dugan
- 243154 Lance-Corporal Garnet (Buck) ROGERS, 4RAR Malaya/Borneo 1965-66, Vietnam 1968-69, 2RAR: Service history unknown. Passed away. Age: 73+ years. Funeral held on 1 February at Ridgehaven, SA. Enlisted as a musician in 1959 and completed 20 years' service. Thanks Keith Harrison, Malcolm Allen
- 335066 Major Ian Guildford PORTEOUS, 2RAR Malaya 1955-57 (Lt) 7PI, C Coy. AATTV 1968-69 (Maj). Age: 79+ years. Thanks Barry Tinkler
- 61780 Private Dennis James DENEHEY, HQ 1ATF 1967, 1ARU 1967, 2RAR 1967 D Coy (39 days). Passed away 12 November at Mount Morgan, Qld. Age: 69+ years. Dennis could not remember much of his time with D Coy. Thanks Sheriden Denehey (half-sister), Bradley Shaw (stepson), Terry Dinneen
- 3797717 Private Malcolm Fredrick BETTS, 1ARU, 2RAR 1970-71. Funeral held on 15 January at Malvern, Vic. Age: 67+ years. No further information. Rest in Peace.
- 213307 Corporal Neil Henry MCGAVOCK, 2RAR Malaya C Coy 1961-63, 1RAR Vietnam 1965 (Cpl). Neil passed away on 1 January. Age: 80 years. A career soldier of 23 years. Thanks Henry Chisholm, Jock Kaminski
- 12522 Private Stanley James PHILLIPS, 2RAR. Service history unknown. Passed away unexpectedly. Age: 82 years. Funeral held on 30 November at Tewantin, Qld. Rest in Peace. Thanks Brian Iselin
- 13578 Lance Corporal Keith Edward WALSH, 2RAR Malaya (Pte) 1955-57, Malaysia 1961-63. Vietnam 1971 (LCpl) 1ARU, 1ACAU. A private cremation was held on 9 February. Passed away age: 83+ years. Keith was born on Palm Island; late of Garbutt (Townsville). Thanks Jan 'Dutchy' Hemerik

- 36843 Allan George CLARKE, 2RAR. Service history including Rank not known. Date of passing not known. Formally of Nobil Park, Vic. No longer with us. Rest in Peace.
- 54576 Staff Sergeant Arthur JACKSON, 1st Australian Rest and Convalescence Centre 1967, 2RAR 1970, B Coy. Passed away at home at Mackay, Qld. Age: 85+ years. Funeral held Walkerston Cemetery 18th March. Thanks George Newton
- 19150527, 311077 Private Robert CHAPMAN, 2RAR Korea 1953-54, 1RAR 1957-58. Discharged: 17 July 1958 for family reasons. DOB: 27 January 1929 Ayr, Ayrshire, Scotland. DOD 2009 Australia: not confirmed. Age: 80 years. Location of burial not known. Previously served Royal Scots Fusiliers 1947-49 (Fusilier 6 Star and Private). Thanks Lt Col Neil Smith, AM ¹

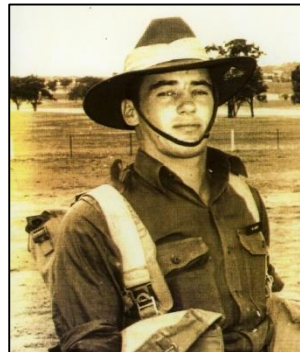


*Yes, you'll always march beside us,
And when our time is through
We'll muster on that "Last Parade"
To march again with you.*

LEST WE FORGET

COMMEMORATION: LCPL PETER MCDUFF, KIA

An invitation is extended to all members of 2RAR, especially members of D Coy, to attend Peter McDuff's Commemoration Service. Peter served with 5 Sect 11PI D Coy 2RAR 1967 and was Killed in Action in Vietnam on 28 September 1967, age 22 years.



Meet & Greet

A Meet and Greet will be held on Thursday 21 April 2016 at 6.00pm at the Sports Club. 6 De Mamiel St, Darlington Point, NSW.

Commemorative Service

The Commemorative Service will be held on Friday 22 April 2016, commencing at 10.00am, at Darlington Point Cemetery. Full size medals by request of the President.

Bus transport will be provided to and from Griffith, nominal cost for the Meet & Greet and the Service. Both days pickup at Kidman Way Motel. Suggest you book.

On Saturday 23 April 2016 some members are travelling to Melbourne (previously Adelaide) for ANZAC Day and if you wish to accompany them, you are most welcome to do so.

POC: Aub Terry: 0412 396 103

ACCESS TO GALLIPOLI BARRACKS

When planning a gathering, such a reunion, at the RAR National Memorial Walk at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, you will need to make arrangements beforehand.

To arrange access for your activity contact Secretary RAR Assoc. (Qld).

Greg Decker: 0417 464 251
secretary.rarassociationqld@gmail.com

PRINTED FOR FREE

This edition of RINGO has been printed courtesy of the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Federal Member for Dickson. This courtesy will continue for the 2016 printing of RINGO editions.

¹ Author: MOSTLY UNSUNG Australia and the Commonwealth in the Malayan War 1948-1960 © 1989. Website: <http://mostlyunsung.com.au/>

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Leo and I attended the funeral of John Church, in Canberra on 2nd February. Large number attended including CO, RSM and piper from 2RAR. I also attended the funeral of Bill Rolfe, again in Canberra. Bill passed away after a long battle with his health. This was also a large funeral with the Governor General delivering a eulogy.

Jock Cassidy in Townsville has been planning activities for the companies of the Battalion for 2016. Originally, Jock had planned a separate activity for each company but has now changed to bare-foot bowls for all four companies. The CO has approved the activities and the Association will assist with support for prizes and other expenses. This will continue to demonstrate to the Battalion our commitment to them.

Leo and I attended the RARA NQ dinner in Townsville on 27th February. It was a well-attended function with 3 tables of 2RAR personnel and Association. We had intended to have discussions with the CO at Lavarack Barracks, however Cyclone Winston demanded his presence in Fiji.

Just a reminder to all members that the financial year for the Association ends on 30th September each year. Check the label on your RINGO envelope and there it will show when your membership will expire. For example, if you have 2017, then your membership will expire on 30th September 2017. If you have 2015, your membership expired last September and technically you are now unfinancial.

Gordon Hurford
Secretary

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

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DONATIONS

We appreciate financial donations 'big and small', and we thank these members for their recent support:

Ron Walker	Colin Hush	Geoff Schulz
Boris Zoubakin	Ray Mackrill	Ken Blade
Brian Schmitzer		

THAT'S FUNNY

The Admiral

A young Naval officer was working in Russell Offices late one evening. As she clocks out of her office, she sees the Admiral standing by the classified document shredder in the passageway, with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Do you know how to work this thing?" the Admiral asks. "My secretary has left for the day and I have no idea how to run it."

"Yes Sir," says the young officer, who turns on the machine, takes the paper from the Admiral, and feeds it in...

"Thank you," says the Admiral, "I just need one copy...."

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 2016 committee meetings will be held as follows:

- Wed 3 Feb 16 ✓
- Wed 1 Jun 16
- Wed 5 Oct 16
- Wed 6 Apr 16 ✓
- Wed 3 Aug 16
- Wed 7 Dec 16

AGM, COMMEMORATION & REUNION

The AGM will be held on Sat 29 Oct 16 in the ANZAC Room Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL, the Commemoration Service at Chris Cunningham Park (under shade), and the Annual Reunion at Twin Towns Services Club.

NEW MEMBERSHIPS

A warm welcome to new members: (8)

NSW: 1, WA: 1, TAS: 0, QLD: 4, NT: 0, ACT: 0, VIC: 2, SA: 0, NZ: 0

Kerry (John) Smith	Bundaberg, Qld	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC)1970-71
William Lyttle	Endeavour Hills, Vic	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
George Ballard	Llanarth, NSW	2RAR Malaya 1961-63
Stanley Burke	Ningi, Qld	3RAR Korea 1953-54, 2RAR Malaya 1961-63
Simon Byth	2RAR Townsville, Qld	2RAR, 7RAR
John Angove	North Beach, WA	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC)1970-71
Peter Watson	Ningi, Qld	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC)1970-71, 7RAR
Barry Jane	Kings Park, Vic	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68

CORRECTION

In the RINGO December edition, we incorrectly included long time member Kerry Smith 2RAR Korea 1953-54 as a new member. As indicated above, new member Kerry 'John' Smith served with 2RAR Vietnam 1970-71. John was a member of the Australian Army Catering Corps, and also served for a short period with 106 Field Workshops in 1971. *My apologies. Ed.*

MEMBERS' DRAW

Congratulations to Alec Morris, OAM, DCM of Chermshire, Qld, winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 9 December who received the book: 'Duty First' A History of the Royal Australian Regiment, edited by David Horner & Jean Bou. © 2008.

Congratulations also to Robert Denham of Woonona, NSW who received the book: 'Just a Nasho', by Bill Parry (Cpl 4 PI B Coy 2RAR 1967-68.) This is the eighth year of the draw.

'RINGO' ITEMS

Do you have a story to tell? A snippet about a mate, or news about your recent get-together? Served in Korea, Malaya, Malaysia, Vietnam, Rwanda, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq, Timor Lesté, Afghanistan? Never served overseas? Give us an insight into your experiences, in any of the above. Post to: PO Box 1097 Toombul Qld 4012
Email: 2rarsecretary@gmail.com

OUR WEBSITES

2RAR ASSOCIATION (NATIONAL)

<http://www.2rar-association.com.au>

2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion 1967-68

<http://bit.ly/QTc4SG>

B Coy 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion 1970-71

<http://www.bcoy2raranz.com/>

2/4RAR ASSOCIATION

Website: <http://www.24rarassociation.com/index.html>

VALE: COLONEL JM CHURCH, DSO (RETD)

John Murray Church was born at Mount Lawley in Perth on 11 May 1928 and educated in Perth.



He entered the Royal Military College at Duntroon in 1945 and in December 1948 he graduated as an Infantry Lieutenant and was posted to the 3rd Battalion, The Australian Regiment. The regiment was granted the title "Royal" in March after he had joined it as part of the Occupation Force in Japan. In

1950, the Battalion was about to return to Australia, but was deployed to Korea in September 1950.

In Korea, he was wounded in the hand during an attack on a Chinese position, and was evacuated to Kure Japan, before being returned to Australia.

While posted to Western Australia he qualified as a military parachutist, and then in June 1957, he underwent a parachute jump instructor's course at RAF Abingdon, UK. On his return to Australia, he was appointed Senior Army Instructor at the Parachute School and was promoted to the rank of Major. He trained parachutists for the Army, in general, and for the Special Air Service and Commando units in particular.

In 1963 John was posted to Malaysia as a company commander in 2RAR and then 3RAR. In 1964, he was posted as the Brigade Major of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, involved in operations against Indonesia.

In 1968, he was appointed to command 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. The Battalion had just returned from its first tour of operations in Vietnam and was based at Enoggera Barracks in Brisbane, and later in Lavarack Barracks in Townsville.

John commanded 2RAR on its second tour of South Vietnam and it was during this period that John's reconnaissance helicopter was shot down, and he and his pilot were winched from the swamp by an RAAF helicopter. John had been wounded by one of the bullets that shot them down, and spent the next three weeks recovering in hospital. He returned to resume command of the battalion until it returned to Australia. In recognition of his service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in December 1971.

In 1972, John was appointed to raise the 11th Infantry Brigade at Kissing Point Barracks in Townsville, and promoted to the rank of Colonel. He was then posted as Colonel (Operations) in HQ Field Force Command, located at Victoria Barracks Sydney.

He Defence Attaché living in Islamabad and accredited to the governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. John returned to Australia in 1981 and retired from the Army in 1982.

He entered the Australian National University to read Archaeology in the Prehistory Department. On completion of his Honours year, he worked as a consultant in historical research at the Australian War Memorial, and also completed many consultancies for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

John passed away on Tuesday 26 January 2016. We lost a remarkably accomplished soldier, leader and a wonderful Australian.

RINGO VOL 2 NO 12. SEPTEMBER 1967

POETS CORNER

Mail

I cannot buy a card to send home to you
No matter just how much I have wanted to
So, instead, my thoughts, I type away
To try and express what I have to say.

No, not just a cheery hello to keep in touch
Because I have wanted to say so very much
Words alone my thoughts can never express
Why I feel that your letters are the best.

It might be your perfume which is so grand
5,000 miles over here in this foreign land
Or maybe those pictures of you beyond compare
With hair so long, and skin soft and fair.

These are nice but they're not quite all
That crosses the water to break this lonely wall
Your thoughts behind them mean so much more
Than physical things like a book or a door.

To know that someone back home really does care
And silently each night offers to God a prayer
For God be willing you needn't have any worry
With letters from you, it's home that I'll hurry

Corporal Brian Ellem²
2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn

"LIEUTENANT" STEPHEN 'POP' BERRIGAN³

Although he was a fierce officer I have to say Captain Kevin "Skinny" Grayson⁴ was a rather agreeable kind of man. He took me under his wing.

He must have had to do a fair bit of liaison with the Americans because the Yanks were often inviting him to come on "over" and have a talk. And when he went anywhere he always took me.

One of his invites was to the big US Air Force Base at Bien Hoa. We were going to be helicoptered over there of course. But some impediment must have been presented to the captain about his bringing an OR, that is, a soldier of "other rank" meaning private or corporal. "Skinny" got around this with his usual will-power. Out of the blue he said he was promoting me to Lieutenant for the night! And he pulled out the "pips", the shoulder crown-badges and insisted that I put them on. So away we flew, Captain Grayson and "Lieutenant Cole", to the US Air Base. We had a great time of course, wining and dining.

When we got back to Nui Dat late the next day, my hangover seemed worse than usual.

But "Lieutenant Cole" lived on in the memory of my friend. When I was demobilized and returned to dear old Hobart a year later, in 1969, I got a surprise phone call one morning. It was Captain Grayson--none other. He had been transferred from 2RAR to Anglesea Barracks, Hobart where he was instated in the role of Adjutant to the Commanding Officer. *This anecdote is from 'Pop's' book: to be published. Ed.*

NAME THE FACES: ANZAC BN BOOKS

We are asking the troops to identify photos of people in the ANZAC Battalions 1967-68 & 1970-71 'black books'. If you can help give Terry Dinneen a hoy.

(02) 4754 4238. Email: tmdinneen@bigpond.com

2RAR ASSOC. EMAIL LIST

Not receiving emails from us? Left out of the loop? In the dark? Email the Secretary!

2rarsecretary@gmail.com

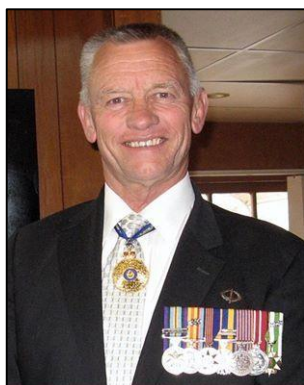
² 213357 Cpl Brian Hedley Ellem, Admin Coy 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn 1967-68 has been recorded as deceased. Thanks Wally Musgrave. *No further info. Ed.*

³ 3411977 Pte Stephen (Pop) BERRIGAN, 5 Sect 11 PI D Coy, 1967-68

⁴ Vietnam 2RAR A Coy 2IC 1967-68, Headquarters, Australian Force Vietnam (Army Component) 1970-71.

BRIGADIER BILL ROLFE AO (RETD)

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Dan Tehan, today paid tribute to a distinguished Australian, Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO (Retd), who has died after a long illness.



"I offer my sincere condolences to Brigadier Rolfe's family and friends as they mourn the loss of a man who served our nation and the community, particularly the ex-service community, with distinction," Minister Tehan said.

"Brigadier Rolfe was a Royal Military College Duntroon graduate who served as a platoon commander with the 2nd Battalion in South

Vietnam and was mentioned in dispatches for his service.

"During operations in Vietnam, he suffered injuries that led to the amputation of both legs below the knee. However, testament to his determination, Brigadier Rolfe overcame this setback, gaining a law degree from the Australian National University and continuing his military career in a variety of legal officer positions."

In 1982, Brigadier Rolfe was the first Australian officer to attend the Graduate Course at The Judge Advocate General's School, U.S. Army, in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was then appointed Director of Army Legal Services in 1986 and Director General of Defence Force Legal Services in 1989.

Brigadier Rolfe retired from the Australian Defence Force in 1992, when he joined the National Security Branch of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Legal Practice.

In 1997, he was appointed as head of the Veterans' Review Board, an independent statutory tribunal responsible for review of Repatriation Commission decisions on entitlement to, and assessment of, disability pensions. He resigned in 2007 to become a Commissioner of the Repatriation Commission and a Member of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, retiring in July 2010.

Brigadier Rolfe was appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List in 2008 for services to veterans.

The Minister said Brigadier Rolfe, a highly respected member of Australia's ex-service community, was involved with the Department of Veterans' Affairs until his death, most recently in relation to advocacy review work.

"As a result of this work, the creation of a new Advocacy Training and Development Program was endorsed by the ex-service community and the Government in late 2015," Minister Tehan said.

"Brigadier Rolfe retired as President of Legacy Canberra on 29 January 2016 due to his ill health.

"During this sad time, my deepest sympathies are with Brigadier Rolfe's widow, Joan Susanne, to whom he was married for more than 40 years, and their three children." ⁵

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Association is open to any person who has served in 2RAR after 16th October 1945: past members of 66 Bn AMF; 2RAR; 2/4RAR; 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC); 2RAR MTF-3; and all ranks currently serving in 2RAR.

Classes of Members: Ordinary, Associate, Honorary, & Life.

CALENDAR 2016

Mon 1 Feb	2/4RAR delinked to form 2RAR & 4RAR (1995)	Townsville, Qld Holsworthy, NSW
Mon 25 Apr	ANZAC Day	Local arrangements
Sat 7 May	Returned Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Day: Annual BBQ Lunch 11.00am	Sherwood - Indooroopilly RSL 2 Clewley Street, Corinda, Qld
Fri 22 Jul	Samichon Day commemorating the Battle of the HOOK 24/25 July 1953. Gus Breen Ph: (02) 9428 683 E-mail: gusbreen@yahoo.com.au	Venue is uncertain as Regimental Square in Sydney is being rebuilt
Sat 23 Jul	Korea Veterans' Day (Cascade Gardens): Date TBC	Korean War Memorial, Broadbeach, Qld
Sat 27 Jul	Korea Veterans' Day 63rd Anniversary of the Armistice in Korea 27 July 1953	Local arrangements
Mon 15 Aug	2RAR & 4 RAR link to form 2/4RAR (1973)	Townsville, Qld
Thu 18 Aug	Vietnam Veterans' Day	Local arrangements
Wed 31 Aug	National Malaya & Borneo Veterans' Day. Merdeka (Independence or Freedom) Day	Local arrangements
Sun 16 Oct	2RAR Birthday 1945 (71 st Anniversary)	Labuan, North Borneo
Fri 28 Oct	2RAR Annual National Reunion "Meet, Greet & Dine" (4.00pm Harbour Lounge)	Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads, NSW
Sat 29 Oct	8.30am: AGM: ANZAC Room	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL
	9.45am: Commemoration Service	Chris Cunningham Park
	10.30am: Reunion: 'River Room', Level 3 "Mates, Memories, Camaraderie"	Twin Towns Services Club
Fri 11 Nov	Remembrance Day	Local arrangements
Wed 23 Nov	RAR Birthday 1948 (68th Anniversary)	Hiro, Japan

BILL ROLFE: STUCK FOR WORDS

I can remember when I was an Instructor at RMC with Gary McKay, MC. Bill Rolfe was invited to give a presentation to the Graduating Class on the Rules of War. The presentation was in a room that was being renovated - the tiles, or lino, had just been removed.

Bill went to the lectern and opened his presentation with "I won't take up too much of your time as I cannot stand here for too long." When he had finished, he attempted to walk back to his chair but could not move. His shoes had stuck to the remaining glue on the floor. Without missing a beat, Bill said "Looks like I'll be here for longer than I thought." ⁶

Neil Weekes, AM, MC

⁵ Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, 4th March 2016

⁶ During operations in Vietnam, Bill suffered injuries that led to the amputation of both legs below the knee.

AWARD: SILVER SOLDIER

Kevin "Dasher" Dean, OAM

Kevin "Dasher" Dean, OAM was a founding member of 2RAR Association with a small group of like-minded 2RAR veterans. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Association in 1988; nurturing it and seeing it flourish over the following years. He was the inaugural Association President, a role he held until October 2007.



Kevin 'Dasher' Dean OAM, delivers the Eulogy for Cpl Kenneth Humber Crockford, MM at Howard, Qld

After his presidency, he remained on the 2RAR Association Management

Committee as Immediate Past President and then subsequently held the position of Vice President. His service to the Association spans over four decades.

In 1990 Kevin, together with the Secretary/Treasurer of the Association at the time, arranged for the inaugural 2RAR Association Annual Reunion to be held at Twin Towns, Tweed Heads on the last Saturday in October. It has been held there annually ever since.

Kevin was responsible for the placement of the 2RAR insignia at the entrances to the barracks where 2RAR had been based - Puckapunyal, Enoggera and Townsville.

He was also instrumental in the placement of other significant service commemorative plaques including a bronze relief of the Battle of the Hook (Korea 1953) in the 2RAR Lines at Lavarack Barracks and a 2RAR Association plaque at Chris Cunningham Park, Tweed Heads, the location of the annual Commemorative Service.

In addition to his 2RAR Association involvement, Kevin has dedicated many years of service to RSL advocacy, assisting many veterans and war widows with entitlements. He has also held executive positions with his local Sandgate RSL Sub-Branch.

Kevin "Dasher" Dean has exemplified a steadfast and unwavering commitment to 2RAR and 2RAR Association. His tireless efforts to the Association have been "second to none".

WILD DOG

Kevin 'Dasher' Dean had a gander on Google about the Malayan Emergency and A Company's mascot 'Wild Dog' being killed by a truck. 'Dasher' says this is incorrect because he was issued with a Smith and Western pistol and took Wild Dog away from the camp and put him to sleep.



Private John Milne A Company 2 RAR Malaya in 1955. Milne is with A Company's unofficial mascot Wild Dog, who was adopted by the men of the company in 1953 when they were serving in Korea. Wild Dog did not survive the Malayan Emergency; he often chased vehicles – at one stage he even knocked a

motorcyclist over – and was ultimately killed by a British truck in 1957. [AWM P05001.035]

AWARD: SILVER SOLDIER

Mons Eugene Harley, OAM

On Monday 14th December 2015, I visited Monsignor Eugene Harley, OAM at the BUPA Nursing Home in Mosman NSW. The purpose of the visit, apart from social, was to present him with the 2RAR Association Silver Soldier Award in recognition of his dedication and sustained contribution to 2RAR and the Association over a period of five decades. I also presented him with his name badge for his appointment as Honorary Padre to the Association.



L-R: Gordon Hurford AM, Mons Eugene Harley OAM, & Terry Dinneen

Terry Dinneen accompanied me on the visit and at the same time Mrs Lynne Shearman from Eugene's past

Parish in Mosman was also visiting.

I found Eugene was quite comfortable in his room, seated in a large reclining/elevating (electronically operated) chair. He was happy, cheerful and recognised me when I entered the room. I noticed that he was rather pallid in the face. He was coherent and both Terry and I were able to converse quite well with him. There were one or two slips of memory but generally I thought he did well.

When I presented him with his name badge his reaction was one of pleasure and gratitude. There were a couple of jokes about not forgetting who he was and he said he would wear it upside down so when he looked down he could read it.

On the presentation of the Silver Soldier he was rather animated and showed some emotion when he received it. I read out the citation and then I presented it to him. He was able to confirm that the information in the citation was indeed accurate, such as dates or periods of time. We were able to get some good photos, one of which appears above.

During the time that we were visiting, there was constant conversation, which although led by Terry or myself he certainly reacted and participated sufficiently. He mentioned that he had not received RINGO so I undertook to have one mailed to him ASAP.

His room is not overly large but has sufficient space for his needs. It has a single bed, a writing/work desk, television mounted on the wall, two straight-back chairs, his large comfortable lounge chair, a wardrobe and ensuite. In general, it is quite a comfortable room. It is bright and fresh but rather warm at the time of our visit. I did not detect air-conditioning and there was no fan in the room.

All in all, I found Eugene of good spirits and although physically beginning to show signs of advanced age, he was cheerful and lucid. It is clear from our conversation that he will not be able to travel to Tweed Heads for the reunion in the future. My guess is that apart from assisted outings by the staff, he will not leave the premises. He appeared well cared for and the lady from the church showed great compassion and friendliness towards him.

I told Eugene about the reunion and how Padre Graham Davis was a suitable deputy for the commemorative service although we missed Eugene. He endorsed Graham as a "soldier's padre" and I would say he would have Eugene's blessing.

Gordon Hurford
Secretary

1/400604 LCPL KENNETH HUMBER CROCKFORD, MM

Immediate Award on 25/26 July 1953, KOREA

On the night of 25/26 Jul 53 L/Cpl CROCKFORD was commanding the section of six men holding the Contact Bunker between Hill 111, the right flank of the United States 1st Marine Division, and Hill 121, on which was situated the left flank position of his own battalion.



L-R: At Ken Crockford's Funeral: Maj Andrew Titcomb OC B Coy, WO2 David Harding CSM B Coy, and Piper PTE Joshua Crockford, grandson of Ken Crockford.

At about 2030 hours a very heavy enemy artillery

barrage began to fall on the whole area of Hills 111 and 121. Immediately following the barrage, a fierce assault was made by an estimated enemy company, which first penetrated into the main defences of the Contact Bunker position and then infiltrated into and in rear of the bunker area itself.

In the bitter hand-to-hand fight that followed in the trenches around his position, L/Cpl CROCKFORD so skilfully and coolly directed the fire of his section, moving among them with complete disregard for his own safety, that he prevented the enemy from isolating the two hills, in spite of the fact that his own position was by this time surrounded and fighting on its own.

When the first assault had died down, realising that there were still many enemy in the area and that he would not be able to fight off many more attacks, he called for friendly artillery fire, himself giving the necessary corrections until the fire was falling onto and around his own position. His accurate control of this fire was amply proved the next morning when thirty-five enemy dead were found in the area. In addition, L/Cpl CROCKFORD throughout the night never ceased passing back information to his battalion over his wireless. Much of this he could only gain by going some hundred yards through the continuous shell fire to the Marine CP on Hill 111, whose own communications had been cut.

As he was the only source of information in the area, his work in this respect was of inestimable value both to his battalion and his brigade in keeping them in touch with the situation. L/Cpl CROCKFORD displayed outstanding leadership throughout the whole action. His cool appraisal of the situation, his realisation of the need to pass back information at all costs, and his refusal to be dismayed when his position was surrounded were beyond praise for a man of his rank and age, particularly in view of the fact that he and his section had already been under the strain of continuous and heavy fire throughout the previous day and night.

Second to None

Tributes

- *Pax Vobiscum*.⁷ Ron (Pappy) Walker, Atherton, Qld.
- Another Hero, gone. Butch Mathew, Gladstone, Qld.
- We were Section Commanders in C Coy Malaya. He was a fine Infantryman and a "good bloke". Don Lynch, Walkervale, Qld.

Ken Crockford's memory lives on: 1/400604 Corporal KH (Kenneth Humber) Crockford Street, Samichon Lines, 2RAR, Lavarack Barracks, Townsville, Qld. Ed.

WIDOW ENTITLEMENTS

Upon the death of a Veteran - under the "VEA" legislation the following payments will be paid by DVA i.e. bereavement payment and also a funeral benefit in most cases.

Bereavement Payment

Under the VEA the veteran if he was married - the widow would receive:

98 days of his Service Pension

6 payments of his Disability Pension at the rate he was receiving at the time of his death.

Under the VEA the veteran if he was single:

one payment of his Service Pension

one payment of his Disability Pension would be paid to the Estate, at the rate he was receiving at the time of his death.

If the veteran was receiving a Disability pension:

If the veteran was single - A extra bereavement payment of one payment equal to the fortnightly rate of disability pension that the veteran was receiving prior to their death may be paid to the Estate.

Where a veteran was a member of a couple, the extra bereavement payment equal to the fortnightly rate of disability pension that the veteran was receiving prior to their death would be paid to the surviving partner and would be equal to six pension instalments.

Funeral Benefits

Under the VEA - depending on what year the veteran died the maximum funeral benefits are as follows:

Veteran who died on or before 30 June 2004 - \$572.00

Veteran who died on or before 30th June 2007 - \$1000

Veteran who died on or after 1st July 2007 - \$2000

The current rate today is still \$2000.

In the October edition: Veterans' Aged Care

Free treatment is available to veterans if they have been diagnosed by a professional/specialist with a mental condition (i.e. PTSD, depression, anxiety) or cancer (i.e. prostate, skin, lung, etc). A Health Care application would need to be completed and sent to DVA - except for current Gold Card Holders who are automatically covered for all conditions.

If the veteran does not have a Gold Card, then DVA will issue the veteran with a new White Card - or add the acceptance for treatment on to his current White Card... for treatment purposes only ...but not as an accepted condition for compensation purposes.

A BAD DAY IN THE OFFICE⁸

Lance Corporal Denis Ferguson and Private Peter Haran had a "bad day in the office". Peter and Caesar (tracker dog) had just returned from a particularly nasty mission and Peter put a ground sheet on the floor and stripped his rifle for cleaning.

Denis sat at the table enjoying a mug of coffee and writing a letter to his mum. Peter finished assembling the weapon, cocked it, squeezed the trigger to ease the firing spring, and to his horror, the rifle fired. He had replaced a full magazine on to the weapon instead of an empty one.

The bullet smacked through the table and narrowly missed Denis. Denis hit the floor and tipped his coffee all over the place. Peter saw the fluid and thought that he had just shot his mate dead. Denis was not hit, and immediately tried to console Peter.

In a flash the 2RAR Regimental Police (RP) were at the tent and charged Peter with having an "accidental discharge" (a very serious offence). Peter was punished by his Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel C. Charlesworth, with two weeks of sandbag duty (aka: Field punishment), supervised by the RP.

⁷ Peace be with you.

⁸ Interviews with War Dog Operatives: <http://bit.ly/1WjyLMu>

SNIPPETS

- Brigadier Ben James (CO 2RAR 2007-08) recently took command of the 1st Brigade at Robertson Barracks, Darwin. *Well done, Sir! Ed.*
- The 2RAR Pioneer Sergeant can and does wear a beard. The current Pioneer Sergeant is Michael Morton. *Beards are only to be worn by males when a member who is posted as the Pioneer SGT 2RAR.*⁹
- ANZAC Day Brisbane 2016: Order of March: 8RAR, 2RAR, 3RAR, 4RAR, 5RAR, 6RAR, 7RAR, 9RAR, 8/9RAR. 2/4RAR, 5/7RAR, 1RAR. In 2017, 2RAR will lead the parade in Brisbane.
- The Brisbane City Council has agreed to rename a substantial and prominent portion of Ferguson Park, opposite Gallipoli Barracks on Samford Road, Enoggera, Qld as "The Royal Australian Regiment Place". RARA (Qld) has applied for a DVA grant to help fund the Regimental Memorial.
- Huge funeral yesterday for Bill Rolfe including a eulogy by the GG (Peter Cosgrove). Piper from 2RAR was present. Heaps of 2RAR people and past military types including those from Bill's class at RMC. Again you think you know a man until you attend his funeral! Thanks Gordon Hurford.
- Reg Gillian revisited Vietnam in January for engagement with former members of 274 VC Regiment. He had requested 15 x 2RAR Caps for presentation to ex-members of that Regiment. *Well done the Committee! Ed.*
- Thank you all very much for everything you have done. I now know more about my uncle Robert Chapman. I know he never left Australia as the lawyers contacted my uncle were Australian. He could not have changed his name as they traced his brother who still lived in Scotland. If I don't find him, I will visit where he was stationed if I can. We will be in Australia from the 23 Aug. Thank you once again. Sally Imrie. Email: sidreghorn@yahoo.co.uk Thanks Terry Dinneen.
- I met up with Barbara Handley at the rifleman's lunch today and she seems to be travelling reasonably well. 'Mostly good but some bad days' was her comment. She then said that she had changed phone number and wondered if we could advise our members as some member's wives may still wish to contact her. Her new number is 0448 241 010.

THAT'S HILARIOUS: LORRAE DESMOND

Eyes Right¹⁰

On my first visit to Vietnam in 1967 we were warmly welcomed in Nui Dat. The boys had gone to no end of trouble to make us welcome, even going as far as establishing a ladies' loo at the end of a pathway.

This consisted of hessian walls (which one's head protruded over when seated); there was also a dish and jug of water with soap and towel. It was very considerate of them.

I found it necessary to take advantage of this facility and whilst seated had to smile and wave to a never-ending stream of troops who marched by.

Everyone was extremely thoughtful and I was extremely pink.¹¹

THE DAY THE TAIL WAGGED THE DOG

Not much is written about Admin and Log. They are down the back where nothing of importance seems to occur and not up the front where all the action is. But without them functioning properly down the back there will be nothing of importance going on up the front. Simple fact.

Two of D Coy's tail were Ron 'Nutty' (short for nutshell) O'Halloran our CQMS and Ken 'Jessie' James our Sgt cook. At this stage the troops had been out on ops for more than a couple of weeks on 'C' rations, i.e. three days 'yank' and two days 'Oz' 24 hr packs. So the cuisine was getting a bit boring. There was a slight pause in tempo of the op as we took a resupply and the CO called an 'O' group to reveal the next stage of the plot to catch wily Charlie.

Between Nutty and Jessie they organised some extra goodies for us. We received several cartons of almost frozen pineapple juice and several more of those fresh 'tinned' buns of US manufacture with a thick slice of cold ham to go with. Enough for all of us and it went down a treat. Except before the OC could scoff his he was called to an 'O' group, a short walk away, where he duly arrived, weapon tucked under his arm and a cup of chilled pineapple juice in his right hand, the outside of the metal cup was dripping condensation in the humidity and in his left hand the half eaten fresh ham roll. He was the immediate object of every body's attention. It was like a quiz show, were did you get that? Repetitively.

Now John Knell our OC had a reputation as a bit of a stirrer as has been noted previously and has been known to ham it up on occasions. So playing dumb retorted, 'What's the matter, didn't you blokes get yours' and he promptly finished his feast before he was asked to share, and the 'O' group proceeded among mutterings of discontent from the other coy reps.

When the Bn returned to Nui Dat from this Op questions were asked of the other Coy CQ's and Sgt cooks as to why D Coy got 'goodies' in the field and they didn't? D Coy were not popular elsewhere but our morale was in the black because we understood our Admin & Log worked and what's more it cared for us.

Multiple lessons are applicable here and are timeless in application, initiative and leadership being up the top of the list.

I reckon that day the tail wagged the dog at several levels.

Terry Dinneen
Winmalee, NSW

THE VICKERS GUN IS ONE OF THE BEST¹²

The Vickers was retired from British military service in 1968, having finally become obsolete.

In 1963 in Yorkshire, a class of British Army armorers put one Vickers gun through probably the most strenuous test ever given to an individual gun. The base had a stockpile of approximately 5 million rounds of Mk VII ammunition which was no longer approved for military use.

They took a newly rebuilt Vickers gun, and proceeded to fire the entire stock of ammo through it over the course of seven days. They worked in pairs, switching off at 30 minute intervals, with a third man shovelling away spent brass. The gun was fired in 250-round solid bursts, and the worn out barrels were changed every hour and a half.

At the end of the five million rounds, the gun was taken back into the shop for inspection. It was found to be within service spec in every dimension.

⁹ Army dress Manual AL1 dated 2013. Beards 2.34

¹⁰ The Australian Government invited Lorrae Desmond to tour Vietnam from 1967 to 1971, to entertain the troops.

¹¹ A Look at the Bright Side, by Martin Cameron © 1988

¹² The Vickers Gun Is One of the Best Firearms Ever Made, by Ian McCollum I Popular Mechanics. <http://bit.ly/1QbiSUx>

PRESENTATION OF GUNNERS' WINGS

During the 1967-68 tour of South Vietnam, 9 B Coy machine gunners were attached to the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHfV) which was part of the 135th US Army Assault Helicopter Company in the Experimental Military Unit (EMU).

The B Coy soldiers (below) flew as door gunners: Bill Wearne, Stan Jaruga, Bob Devers, Geoff Kingdon, Roland Lee (deceased), Dave Mansfield, Ralph Hoger, AK (Kerry) Pearce (deceased) and Rob Carmichael.



On 23rd March four of these men were presented with their wings at HMAS Cerberus, Victoria: Bill Wearne, Rob Carmichael, Stan Jaruga and Bob Devers (pictured).

The Navy went to special effort to make the occasion very special, and the guys were quite

emotional. We were welcomed by the Naval Officer in Charge.

We were addressed by CMDR Max Speedy, DSC, RAN Retd (who was the second in command of the second flight Sep 68-69) who outlined the history of our service, mentioning Major Carter (OC B Coy) and Pat Vickers (2IC RANHfV) and how this all came about.

Stan Jaruga made a speech on our behalf, and I would like to thank those in the background who put this in place.

Bob Devers

On the same day there was a similar ceremony at Navy HQ (SQ) at Bulimba QLD. However, the remaining 2RAR recipients were unable to attend.

It was decided that the wings would be presented to me as Secretary 2RAR Association who will arrange for the wings and certificates to be appropriately presented. The surviving families of Roland and Kerry will receive the wings and certificate.

Commodore Vince Di Pietro, CSC made the presentations and spoke of the involvement of the 2RAR soldiers and their contribution to the unit.

During the ceremony, 6 ex-RAN personnel who flew with the 135th were presented with their wings. I was presented with the wings and certificates for Geoff Kingdon, Roland Lee, Dave Mansfield and Kerry Pearce.

Ian Atkinson and Ray Godfrey were also at the presentation. The topic of the US Air Medal was raised and I have undertaken to use the best resources of 2RAR Association to try to move things along.

The certificate reads:

"In recognition of his service while participating in sustained aerial flight in support of allied combat ground forces in the Republic of South Vietnam."

From January 1968 to February 1968 [*] he participated in aerial missions over hostile territory to support operations against communist aggression. During these flights, conducted by day and night in fair weather and foul, he displayed a high order of air discipline and acted in accordance with the best traditions of military service in a role for which he volunteered to contribute to the accomplishment of the tasked mission in spite of the hazards inherent in repeated aerial flights over hostile territory. By his professionalism and devotion to duty, he has brought great credit upon himself, Australia and the Australian Army."

Congratulations to all who were door gunners for 135th AHC. You have performed in the true traditions of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. You are "second to none"

Gordon Hurford
Secretary

DROP SHORTS

MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES

1731783 2nd Lieutenant Murray James Fletcher¹³

"On 1st August, 1967, Second Lieutenant Fletcher was commanding 12th Platoon, D Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, involved in Operation Cairns, a search and destroy operation to clear the area East of Hoi My.

At approximately 1220 hours, the forward section of the platoon found a Viet Cong camp and exploded an antipersonnel mine, killing two soldiers and wounding three. Second Lieutenant Fletcher moved forward taking his platoon medical assistant with him and gave immediate first aid to the wounded and removed them from the area. He also removed the body of one of his soldiers, in the process of which a further mine was uncovered.

His actions enabled the swift evacuation of the wounded, who without immediate attention, could also have died. His choice in this action was to probe slowly forward, which later took trained engineers one and a half hours, or to move quickly disregarding his own personal safety.

Second Lieutenant Fletcher by his action allowed seriously wounded soldiers of his platoon to be evacuated quickly; possibly preventing more deaths than had already occurred. His disregard for his own personal safety in moving into an area known to contain mines displayed a standard of personal courage and bravery that brings great credit upon himself, the 2nd Battalion and the Australian Regular Army."

Not long after the event of 1st August 1967, Murray Fletcher was again lucky to survive when he and others were observing a demonstration of American fire power, when a rocket from a U.S. helicopter went astray and landed among the group, killing several Australian soldiers. These two incidents were to have a profound effect on Murray, but he did manage to survive any physical injuries in Vietnam. Murray finished his tour of Vietnam and was discharged in February, 1968.

Murray and Barbara Bolton married at Toowoomba in October, 1968 and returned to Mt. Tyson where they managed the family property growing sorghum, wheat and barley, as well as breeding Hereford cattle. They raised two children, and lived a quiet life until tragedy struck on 22nd April, 1980, when Murray's life was tragically shortened, certainly hastened by his war time experiences in Vietnam.

Murray's funeral service was conducted in Toowoomba a few days later and afterwards, his ashes were transported by an army helicopter to Mt. Russell, where they were reverently scattered over the place that Murray had a deep and everlasting love for. Murray James Fletcher's name can be placed among those other Scots College's heroes of World War 2 who adorn the Memorial Hall wall.

Although he did not die in battle as they did, his exploits in Vietnam and his actions for his fellow men are in the highest traditions of those who went before him.

*Murray Fletcher your Alma Mater salutes you and hopes this story honours you.*¹⁴

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Medical Orderlies in Malaysia

In the RINGO December 2015 edition, on page 11 "Our Presence in Malaysia", by Bryan Pannell says ... "only Medical Orderlies carry Medical kits and they are usually located at Company HQ ..."

In my case, I was a medic with 2RAR in Malaya 1955-57 and was assigned to 2 PI A Coy and carried a medical kit that was quite comprehensive which included suturing material, dressings and drugs.

Kevin "Dasher" Dean
Durack, QLD

¹³ 1731783 2nd Lieutenant Murray Fletcher's name does not appear in Honours and Awards Presented to Members Serving with 2nd Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment 1945-1995. (John Baker & Bob Downey) © 1997;

but does appear in the Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans (On-line) here: <http://bit.ly/22nHAbP>

¹⁴ By John Telfer. March 19, 2010 <http://bit.ly/1UeBrgu>

AUSTRALIA DAY 2016: VUNG TAU, VIETNAM

On Australia Day 1968, during the Tet Offensive in Bien Hoa Province, soldiers of 9 PI 'C' Coy 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn encountered a numerically superior force of the VC 274th & 445th Regiments.



Former enemy at the 2016 Australia Day function at Tommy's Bar 3 in Vung Tau. The Bar is run by Glenn Nolan (ex-6RAR).

The 2RAR caps were sought after and were provided by the 2RAR Association Committee.

In 2015, now 47 years later, Reg Gillian, Barry Wallis & wife Annette returned to Vietnam to organise a self-funded reunification dinner with the former enemy.

After a long period of planning with provincial administrators, their efforts culminated in a function being held at Tommy's 3 Bar in Vung Tau. A large contingent of former VC soldiers attended the function as well as representatives of the Peoples Committee of Baria-Vung Tau Province & the Union of Baria-Vung Tau Friendship Organisation, plus local dignitaries. The function lasted several hours and was very well received. A donation by us to a local children's orphanage was also appreciated

In January this year, now 48 years on, Reg, Barry & Annette were joined by Roy Marek & Ken Blade as well as Reg's local Member, Ted Sorensen. Ted was interested in pursuing the idea of Vung Tau & Hervey Bay becoming sister cities.

The function was held at Tommy's 3 Bar again, this time on Australia Day. Although there were some familiar faces from last year there seemed to be more dignitaries & white shirted officials than former soldiers.

The emphasis appeared to have shifted from a reunification dinner to an Australia Day celebration complete with welcoming Banner, an elaborate cake & entertainment, all aimed at strengthening the friendship bond between the two counties – perhaps getting away from the original intention of reunification but not a bad thing anyway. Again we made a donation to the children's orphanage.

The excellent hospitality provided by Glenn & Annette & the smiling faces & numerous handshakes accompanied by "cheers" all made it worthwhile.

We will now look forward to 26 January 2018 to remember the 50th Anniversary of our encounter. We hope by then that we can generate more interest from platoon members and join in the celebrations – hopefully the more the merrier.

Barry Wallis
Sandstone Point, Qld

DVA CLAIMS: MISSING EVIDENCE

It is still possible to put in a claim to DVA without the physical evidence of an After Action Report.

"Any case where a person who has served with the Battalion is denied entitlements because of a lack of evidence, whether that person is an Association member or otherwise, our Association will take all steps available to help that person obtain evidence, from any and all sources we can identify.

Section 14 of the Veterans Entitlement Act Part II sub-para 3 and 4 refer. As the system has lost the 2RAR 1967-68 After Action Reports (AARs), sub-para 4 allows for the claimant to produce whatever evidence that may be available including statements from others who may have witnessed or have immediate knowledge of the event or injury which caused the disability being claimed".

OUR PRESENCE IN MALAYSIA

By Bryan Pannell
More CT Contact¹⁵

Because of the A Company contact (see *opposite*), plus the fact that B Company had turned up nothing on the West side of the main North/South road to the (Thai/Malay) border, the whole Battalion was deployed on the Eastern side for the next phase of operations.



C Company soon came upon a hastily vacated CT base camp and we spent nearly a week searching the jungle around this site but with no results. We were then allocated new search areas further away in the hope of crossing an escape route that might lead us to a more fruitful result.

Some of us were allocated a couple of Malay soldiers who had operated in the area before as guides and it was

hoped they might provide a measure of local knowledge. In my platoon's area of operations there had been a CT camp adjacent to the Thai border which the Thai Police Field Force had stumbled on to some months before and attacked causing them to flee deep into Southern Thailand. At the end of a day's patrolling, I decided to take one of these soldiers who had visited the campsite before, and to see if there were signs of its re-use.

The two of us set off in the general direction of the camp, we didn't know its exact location, and about half an hour later we were in the vicinity but didn't know it. We could see a ridgeline that indicated the Malay/Thai border, but no other signs. We walked towards the ridge thinking that with a little elevation, we might then see something. As we crossed a small shallow stream at the base of the ridge, we realized that we were standing in the middle of the abandoned camp. What was even more sobering was the fact that where we had been standing a few minutes before was in a "perfect killing ground" for the weapon pits and other defensive works that had been built to protect the camp.

The CTs had used the terrain very skilfully and had dug weapon pits into the rear of each clump of bamboo which made for natural camouflage from the front. Unfortunately for the CT's who occupied the site, they had defended it from an attack from the South, not thinking an attack would come from the Thais in the North. There was still plenty of evidence of the battle; spent cartridges were lying everywhere. There was no sign of reoccupation.

Our 10-day operation came to an end without result and we were resupplied and moved to another search area.

*(More anecdotes (Final Operation) from Bryan Pannell in July.)*¹⁶

AUSTRALIAN ARMY IN AFGHANISTAN

More than 26,000 Australian soldiers served in Afghanistan on Operation Slipper (2001-2014). For them and their families, this was a time of joy and grief, pride and loss.

In more than a decade of operations, 41 Australian Army soldiers died in Afghanistan. Many more were wounded, some physically and others mentally. We also saw countless acts of courage and bravery - our soldiers have received commendations, medals and awards for gallantry, including four Victoria Crosses for Australia, the first in almost 40 years.

7Army units have received citations for gallantry and meritorious service, as well as a unit battle honour.¹⁷

¹⁵ Communist Terrorists

¹⁶ An article by Jan 'Dutchy' Hemerik: 'Malaysia: 3 Platoon A Company 1961-63', will appear in the RINGO July edition. Ed.

¹⁷ The Longest War: <http://bit.ly/1UzAeR5>

AFGHANISTAN: AUSTRALIA'S WAR¹⁸

Motivation is rarely an issue for soldiers at war and just prior to the battle of Chenartu the Australians lost two combat engineers, Jacob Moerland and Darren Smith. A bomb built from components that had passed through the Shah Wali Kot area killed them.

'Parts of this operation were for them,' Burns said. 'We take that job very, very seriously. Our job is to enhance the force protection of our other Australian comrades and other coalition partners and every death means something. And therefore we will go out and make sure that environment is safe for them.'

Another young Australian who made the ultimate sacrifice was sniper Private Matthew Lambert from the 2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment.

He was patrolling with a group of about twenty Australian, American and ANA soldiers who headed into a Taliban hotspot during the night of 22 August 2011. The plan was to insert overnight, walk to the other side of the hill before sunrise and sweep back in the opposite direction from where the Taliban expected them.

At about two or three o'clock in the morning they began to put the snipers in position on higher ground, with Lambert taking the lead of the patrol to show them where to go. 'And Matt took an IED,' recalled one of his close team members. 'And it was the loudest thing I ever heard. It blew me over and blew a bunch of guys in the patrol over and to be honest I didn't even know what was going on for about the first ten or so seconds. For some reason I didn't think it was an IED, I thought it was something gone wrong, I thought one of the Americans might even have put a charger on something for some stupid reason. Anyway, before long it was over the radio, "Yep you've obviously been hit"

Two patrol members went straight to Lambert to begin first aid. 'He'd lost a leg, there were cuts and bruises all over him, obviously. And from then on it was just crazy for a while. We started hearing over the radio set we had that [enabled] us to listen to the Taliban, that they knew the IED had gone off and were starting to mount for an attack. So that was pretty hairy. And then it probably took thirty, thirty-five minutes and then the casualty evacuation chopper was there,' the soldier said. 'So we were getting dribs and drabs of fire from different random Taliban positions who knew they weren't going to get there in time to get us before the chopper came in, so they were just putting in sporadic fire. And before we knew it the casevac chopper was out with Matt and it wasn't until we got back to the patrol base — we got pulled out about a half hour later [by] a random Chinook that happened to be in the area — that we got the phone calls through that Matty was dead.'

It sent a massive jolt through the patrol because they had been a fairly constant team.

'All I remember is just being numb, not sad or angry or any of that shit they tell you you're going to be, just sort of numb, and you didn't know what to feel. I was like "Fuck, I am supposed to be sad, I am supposed to be angry, I'm supposed to be showing some sort of exemplary leadership." It was just ... there was nothing, you know. So it was really weird, but we went on a massive downer after that. You try to repair — not to repair but to continue your relationship with the ANA after that and anything that they do will piss you off. They're not responsible for Matt in any way, they weren't negligent, nothing that they did led to Matt's death. But little things start to piss you off.' Yet the Afghan soldiers did what they could to help.

The ANA commander, who's quite a good bloke and competent as well, he came up to offer his condolences. And I remember him saying, "For us to lose one fighting for our country and our people is one thing, but for you guys to lose a soldier coming from the other side of the world to fight for our people and for our reasons is something else, so thank you." And that really meant a lot.'

Wounded Australian soldiers were collected from battlefields and flown to hospital on United States casualty evacuation (casevac) Black Hawk helicopters known as DUSTOFF (Dedicated Unhesitating Service to Our Fighting Forces). Photographer Gary Ramage, who spent weeks with the chopper crews, found them to be some of the bravest men and women he ever met during numerous assignments to the combat zone.

Their motto is: 'Never refuse a mission, never return with an empty helicopter and the needs of the patient come first.'

Many Australian and other coalition troops owe their lives to the bravery and professionalism of the medics and aircrew who often flew in under fire (the DUSTOFF machines are unarmed) to collect and treat gravely wounded soldiers or locals.

The Australian military refused to allow any media to cover the extraction of its dead or wounded but Ramage was given unfettered access by the Americans as he embedded with a number of rotary-wing medevac units, including Charlie Company, 6th Battalion Combat Airmobile Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division at Forward Operating Base Dwyer in Helmand Province.

There, he witnessed the risks and intensity of DUSTOFF operations first hand on many occasions. The crews have a fifteen-minute target from notification of a medevac to being airborne. Usually they are gone well inside that. One morning Ramage had just sat down with his breakfast when the loudspeakers blared 'Medevac, Medevac, Medevac'. 'We were up and gone in well under fifteen minutes,' he said.

The crews are given three levels of patient priority — Alpha for most urgent, Bravo and Charlie. The objective is always to reach the patient and have them lifted off the battlefield within the so-called 'golden hour'. The first sixty minutes is the optimum time to save a life.

Soon a message came over the chopper's intercom. 'One wounded Marine, sucking chest wound.' Medics dread those three words because the survival rate from a serious gunshot wound to the chest is not high. Next came word that DUSTOFF 66 was flying into a hot landing zone (LZ) where the Marines were pinned down by accurate enemy fire.

There was total confusion at the LZ as the Cobra helicopter gunship escorting the DUSTOFF chopper tried to find the enemy and 'light 'em up'.

Soon an urgent call came through, 'Patient crashing.' A minute or so later the chopper was cleared to go in. Medic Sergeant Adam Montavon raced from the machine across 200 metres of open ground to where the Marines were struggling under the weight of their wounded comrade as well as enemy fire. 'By the time I reached him on the ground I could see he was in trouble and told the Marines to get him to the bird,' Montavon said.

The wounded man was bleeding profusely and the crew went to work on him straight away. 'I tried to get a pulse, but there was none,' Montavon said. 'I began compressions and Ryan started squeezing the bag to get oxygen into him. He wasn't responding.'

They kept working on him for the entire flight back to the hospital. At one point Ramage dropped his camera and took over the CPR to give the crew some respite.

'The Marine was gone. He most probably left us before being placed on the Black Hawk, but I still had to try and save him, that's my job,' the medic said.

After the Marine was unloaded the crew had the unpleasant but regular task of cleaning out the blood and used medical supplies that littered the cabin. Everyone, including Ramage, was issued with gloves and went to work scrubbing out the helicopter.

It was 10.30 a.m. on day two of his embed with DUSTOFF. It was going to be a busy two weeks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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¹⁸ Afghanistan Australia's War. Gary Ramage & Ian McPhedran © 2014. Page 24-26

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