



*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**

**PATRON: MAJOR GENERAL M.D. SLATER AO, DSC, CSC (RETD)**

**DECEMBER 2016**

### THE BATTALION REPORT

2016 has seen the continued achievement of significant milestones for the Battalion, the Australian Amphibious Force and the Australian Defence Force's amphibious capability.



Through the exercises this year, the Battalion, in 12 weeks, achieved combat team level danger close live fire in all phases of war, amphibious raids at the company and Platoon level, airmobile, small boat insertions by day and night, Amphibious Ready Element Bravo supported HMAS Adelaide's first amphibious exercise. Amphibious Ready Element Alpha participated in HMAS Canberra's first operational deployment, Operation Fiji Assist, and first international engagement deployment, to Hawaii and back to Fiji. On RIMPAC the Battalion formed the 2nd Battalion Landing Team (ANZAC) within the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade for the exercise which included live fire with our international partners in Pohakuloa Training Area on the big island of Hawaii. Finally we wrapped up the year with an Amphibious Ready Unit live fire raid and Support Company Courses. Ceremonially we exercised the Battalion's right to Freedom of Entry to the City of Townsville and laid up our old colours in the Lavarack Chapel.

The Battalion won the Unit Teams Weapons Championship at AASAM this year and came first in the Brigade military skills and the shooting competitions. We finished second in the Pozieres Endurance Challenge and third in the Obstacle Course and Orienteering. We raised over \$10,000 for Mates 4 Mates during the Long Walk with everyone pushing the limit and Mortars and DFSW putting in a particular effort carrying their primary weapons. There were many more achievements and a greater diversity of activity in 2016 than

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Warriors Who Have Marched Out	2
The President's Report	2
Commemoration & Camaraderie 2016	5-8
Histories Page: Vietnam Veterans' March 1968	9
Drop Shorts: WO2 K.A. Wheatley, VC	10
Nui Dat Battle: Graham Jones, Terry Dinneen	11

is expressed here, but this brief summary should give you a sense of great pride. In recounting the stories of 2016, I am reminded by what a remarkably professional body of soldiers the 2nd Battalion is. The hallmarks of professionalism are attention to the little things, a strong sense of service to our nation, and a drive to achieve the mission. These factors, coupled with a long tradition of letting our actions speak louder than our words, are the hallmarks of the 2nd Battalion. Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, have through their actions yet again this year, lived up to the great tradition of soldiering established by our forebears. We are fortunate to have been so ably supported by our colleagues within the 3rd Brigade, other local units, the Townsville community, as well as our sea-faring comrades from the Navy. We are also very fortunate to have been supported so selflessly by our spouses and loved ones. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their patience and tolerance throughout a year of long absences and hard work. The 2RAR Association is also foremost in my mind; their tireless work and dedication to the 2RAR family can never be overstated.

In 2017 the Battalion will again assist in the progression of the amphibious capability to its next key milestone with the certification of the Amphibious Ready Group and the demonstration of the full amphibious capability that has been developed over the past few years. This coupled with maintaining foundation war fighting skills to achieve the required effects on land whilst combining movement and fires from the sea makes for a busy and demanding year that offers a professionally rewarding environment for all involved. I have had the greatest of all possible fortunes, which is to command this fine Battalion over the last three years during such an exciting time and it has been a privilege to serve as the Commanding Officer. I wish you all the very best and look forward to serving with you again sometime in the future.

Second to None!

Lieutenant Colonel MB Bassingthwaighe, DSM  
Commanding Officer

### PRINTED FOR FREE

This colour edition of RINGO has been printed courtesy of the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Federal Member for Dickson.

PRESIDENT  
VICE PRESIDENT / EDITOR  
SECRETARY  
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MEMBERS

L (LEO) VAN DE KAMP  
RJ (RICK) HOLLINGDRAKE, OAM  
GW (GORDON) HURFORD, AM  
NJ (NORM) DEVEREUX  
AJ (ARTHUR) MACDONALD  
RW (ROSS) BIMROSE  
PT (PAUL) KING

07 5444 0889  
07 3285 4197  
07 5443 5583  
07 3203 0254  
07 3901 4266  
07 5493 1834  
07 3267 0914

vandekam@powerup.com.au  
rjhollingdrake@gmail.com  
2rarsecretary@gmail.com  
normdev12@bigpond.com  
maba2783@optusnet.com.au  
daphne.bimrose@bigpond.com  
ptking@bigpond.net.au

HONORARY PADRE  
Postal Address: PO Box 1097 Toombul Qld 4012

MONSIGNOR EA (EUGENE) HARLEY, OAM  
Website: <http://www.2rar-association.net.au>

### WARRIORS WHO HAVE MARCHED OUT

- 1200074 Private James Thomas HUET, 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68, 1970-71. Jimmy Huet passed away 25 July. Age 72+ years. Husband of Olga. Funeral held at Gympie Qld, 8 August; formerly of Buderim. Gone to the big rifle club in the sky. Thanks, Lofty Went, Wally Musgrave
- 213399 Warrant-Officer Class 2 Lachlan Brian Claude SCOWCROFT, 2RAR Malaya B Coy 1961-63, 8RAR Malaysia 1967-69, AATTV Vietnam 1969-70. Awarded US Valorous Unit Award and the US Bronze Star. Passed away age 80+ years. Funeral on 27 February at Broulee NSW. Thanks, Ray Payne OAM
- 135212 Private William James WHITE, 1ARU 1970, 8RAR 1970, 2RAR 2PI A Coy 1970-71. Bill passed away 22 October after a very short battle with Melanoma. Age: 65 years. A huge man who made an impression on everybody he met. Funeral held in Biloela, Qld. Thanks, Julie White, Bill Taylor
- 1202991 Private Ronald Fredrick TORRENS, 1ARU 1970-71, 2RAR 1970-71 8 PI C Coy, HQ 1ATF 1971, 1ARU 1971. Ron was involved in a vehicle accident and died on 8 November. Age: 65+ years. He was driving to Perth, WA for a PI/Coy Reunion. A memorial service was later held at Imbil, Qld. Thanks, Andy Anderson, Mick Bell
- 5716872 Private Graham Scott MORTIMORE, 2RAR Vietnam 1970-71. Passed away at Osborne Park, WA on 30 September. Age: 68 years. A fine gentleman, one of the best men I have had the privilege to know. Thanks, Anthony Farmer (Brisbane), Wally Musgrave
- 5716498 Private Cecil Rodney HIPPER, 2RAR Vietnam 1970. Born: 26 August 1948. No further information. Thanks, Wally Musgrave
- 534268 Private Rudolph SLAGBOOM, 2RAR Vietnam 1970-71. Passed away from cancer on 31 December 2000. Age: 52 years. No further information. Thanks, Wally Musgrave



*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

### AGM, COMMEMORATION & REUNION 2017

The AGM will be held on Sat 28 Oct 17 in the ANZAC Room Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL, the Commemoration Service at Chris Cunningham Park (under shade), and the Reunion in the River Room at Twin Towns Services Club.

Looking forward to seeing YOU.

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 2016 committee meetings will be held as follows:

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • Wed 3 Feb 16 ✓  | • Wed 6 Apr 16 ✓ |
| • Wed 1 Jun 16 ✓  | • Wed 3 Aug 16 ✓ |
| • Wed 12 Oct 16 ✓ | • Wed 14 Dec 16  |

### 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.

### THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the December issue of Ringo. 2016 has again been a challenging year for the Association with a number of projects being undertaken. The management committee continues to work hard and it is their commitment that ensures that the 2RAR Association remains such an effective organisation. I want to thank all the members for their outstanding contributions. I would like to welcome Simon Whitehead as the 2RAR Association ACT representative.



The 2RAR Reunion and AGM was held at Tweed Heads 28-29 October and was well attended. The reunion was attended by both Maj Gen Mick Slater, AO, DSC, CSC (Retd), Association Patron, and CO 2RAR LtCol Michael Bassingthwaighte, DSM. Following a most enjoyable Meet and Greet on the Friday night, the AGM on Saturday morning saw our committee members except for the Association Historian, Terry Dinneen and committee member Alf Vockler, re-elected to the committee of management. I would like to congratulate and thank all members for their continued contributions. Because of his extensive workload, Terry Dinneen advised that he can no longer commit to the position of Association Historian. Alf Vockler also resigned from the committee because of family commitments and was replaced by Kevin "Aub" Terry. Welcome to the team Aub. I would like to thank both Terry and Alf, on behalf of the Association, for their considerable contribution over the years.

Following the morning Service in Chris Cunningham Park, members and guests gathered at the River Room of the Tweed Heads Services Club for "mates, memories and camaraderie". During the gathering, three presentations were made. The Association Treasurer, Norm Devereux, was made a life member for his outstanding commitment as treasurer. Congratulations Norm. Also, CO 2RAR was presented with a Silver Soldier for his exceptional support to the Association during his tenure as CO. LtCol Bassingthwaighte will finish his tour after three years as Commanding Officer, and the Association has enjoyed a very close relationship with the Battalion during this time. I would like to thank him for his generous support and encouragement during his time with the Battalion and we wish him and his family well in Canberra.

Reg Gillian, representing 9 Platoon C Company 2RAR Vietnam 1967/68, presented CO 2RAR with a banner of friendship between the Australian soldiers and North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers who were involved in an extensive battle on 26 January 1968. In a gesture of friendship and reconciliation, the banner was presented by their former enemy to a representative Australian contingent from 9 platoon in Vung Tau, Vietnam, in January this year. LtCol Bassingthwaighte thanked all the members for this gift and indicated that a suitable place will be allocated within the battalion for this banner to be put on display.

The Association has advertised widely for a major national reunion to be held in Brisbane from 17-21 May 2017. All those who served with 2RAR and 2/4RAR as well as those currently serving in the Battalion are invited to attend. The reunion allows for sub-unit reunions on 17 May followed by a "Meet and Greet" on 18 May at South Bank in Brisbane. On 19 May, a commemorative service will be held at the RAR National Memorial Walk, Enoggera Barracks, followed by an informal lunch. After lunch there will be a static display possibly of military aircraft and equipment.



Saturday 20 May will see a formal dinner at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre at South Bank with music provided by the Australian Army Band Brisbane. The final day will see a wives/partners luncheon at the Pony Restaurant in Eagle Street while the members will head for the Breakfast Creek Hotel for final farewells. I urge everyone who hasn't yet registered to do so. Also, see insert pg. 6-7.

The 2RAR website is a major medium for our communication with members. Have a look at our site at <http://www.2rar-association.net.au> which contains details of the battalion history, the honour roll, future activities, details of upcoming events and any other items of interest. The Association has also recently developed a Facebook Page. To access and view our specific 2RAR Association Facebook Page, please follow this [link](#)<sup>1</sup>

The 2RAR display at the Vietnam Veterans' Association Australia (VVAA) museum on Phillip Island in Victoria is poorly presented. Our Association sub-committee has made a number of recommendations which are being followed up. The Association has agreed to fund the upgrade to the display. CO 2RAR has indicated his support for this project which is expected to be completed in the new year. Our current membership sits at close to 600. This does not include all 2RAR members who are automatically granted full membership. We encourage those leaving the Battalion to continue their membership as a means of maintaining a link with the 2RAR family. The Association would also like to see some of the younger post-Vietnam veterans join our ranks, as it will be the younger generation that will be responsible for perpetuating the unit's history.

On a more sober note, we have had to say farewell to quite a few of our members this year. Our thoughts are with the families of those who have left us as well as those that are struggling as a result of their service to this country. We must not forget them.

On behalf of the 2RAR Association, I would like to wish all members and their families an enjoyable and safe festive season. I am sure that 2017 will again provide us with many challenges which will no doubt test all aspects of resources. I hope to see you at the May 2017 Brisbane reunion.

"Second to None"  
Leo Van De Kamp  
President

### **2RAR CHAMPION SOLDIER 2016**

#### **8591484 LCPL Mathew David Nixon**

The Champion Soldier will be 8591484 LCPL Mathew David Nixon from Reconnaissance Platoon. The reasons for his selection are as follows:

\*He received the award at the 2016 DOG CUP for the highest individual performance (he was only promoted in Sept). This was against the cream of the RAR inclusive of Section Commanders', and Section 2IC's.

\*He then backed up from DOG CUP and was in the winning team 2RAR Team for the 3 BDE Military Skills Competition.

\*His performance both individual and collective was mentioned to me by a number of RSM's in the Brigade for his conduct during the competition.

\*He was panelled at short notice (3 Days) for the OFF/NCO Recon Course which he is currently attending. This was an opportunity presented when another Battalion could not fill the position.

\*Then members' performance on OP FIJI ASSIT.

He is a quiet and professional soldier who has represented both himself and the Battalion in the highest order throughout the year, and as such is a worthy recipient of the 2RAR Soldier of the Year.

Of note, the above examples occurred prior to the member being promoted to LCPL in Sept 16. LCPL Nixon will be attending the OFF/NCO Recon Course until 2 Dec 16.

Warrant Officer Class One Trent Morris  
Regimental Sergeant Major

[Association Vice President, Rick Hollingdrake, had the honour to present a cheque for \$1000.00 to Mathew's Company Commander on behalf of the Association. Well done Mathew!]

### **MEMBERS' DRAW**

Congratulations to Richard Selwood, of East Fremantle, WA winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 12 October who received the book: Trackers 'The untold story of Australian dogs of war', by Peter Haran. © 2000, 2013. Drawn by Rick Hollingdrake

### **ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016**

On Saturday 29th October, the Association conducted its Annual General Meeting at Tweed Heads. There were 39 financial members in attendance. The following Committee was elected for the year 2016/2017:

President - Leo Van De Kamp  
Vice President - Rick Hollingdrake, OAM  
Treasurer - Norm Devereux  
Secretary - Gordon Hurford, AM  
Members - Paul King, Ross Bimrose, Arthur MacDonald, Aub Terry.

*Note:* Alf Vockler and Terry Dinneen did not seek re-election.

At the reunion, Norm Devereux was made a Life Member, CO 2RAR Lt Col Michael Bassingthwaighe, DSM was presented with a Silver Soldier for his dedication and sustained contribution to the robust relationship with the 2RAR Association, and David Mansfield was presented with his door gunner wings from the RAN.

Reg Gillian also presented the CO 2RAR with a banner from the dinner in Vietnam on Australia Day this year. The banner will be housed in the museum.

### **DVA WEBSITE: NOMINAL ROLLS**

The new DVA website combines the Nominal Rolls of veterans who served during WW2, Korean War, Vietnam War and First Gulf War. Why no Malaya/Malaysia?

View new site here: <http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/home>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/2RAR-Association-Inc-1183231068415223/>

### CHEQUES AND BANKING

The Association bank account's full name is "2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Association Inc".

When cheques are raised, they should show the full name of the account. In our case this is obviously too long to write out and we have over the years been writing "2 RAR Association Inc" which does make more sense.



Due to a significant tightening by the bank auditors it has become a problem with the shortening of the name. Having spoken to several Suncorp advisors and consultants have not come up with a solution to the problem. The standard answer is, that is the name of the account

and it cannot be changed. We could close the account and open a new one but then it would be classified as a business account which would then cost us to run.

Having spoken to one of the consultants, I was advised that in her case the minimum she would accept on the name of the account would be "2nd Battalion RAR Association Inc". It seems that the banks don't want us using cheques as it is too much bother. If one uses a postal order it is not a cheap option, the same as using a bank cheque.

One option is to go to your own bank and request an external bank transfer. This at some banks is a free service and at others very cheap. It must show our Association BSB and Account Number, and a reference (your name).

If you still use a cheque could you please in future enter our account name as "2nd Battalion RAR Association Inc" as a minimum, and we will cross our fingers when we go to bank the cheques.

Norm Devereux  
Treasurer

### NEW MEMBERSHIPS

A warm welcome to new members (3)

Peter O'Brien	Merbein, Vic	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967
Keith Walker	Kettering, Tas	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Susanne McKeown (Robert McKeown)	Lloyd, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68; 1970-71

### DONATIONS

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

Frank Curphy	Ray Mackrill	Margaret Gibbons
Paul King	Greg Holmes	

### ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

Grahame EDWARDS (NSW)	(02) 9520 7262 gk_edwards8@bigpond.com
Simon WHITEHEAD (ACT)	(02) 6288 8403 keenedgesharp@hotmail.com
Jim COOPER (VIC)	(03) 9548 0016 jimwend1@gmail.com
Cameron SIMPKINS (Tas)	0458 660 866 cameron.simpkins3@bigpond.com
Malcolm ALLEN (SA)	0451 374 133 mal@aladdco.com.au
Alexander NIE (WA)	(08) 9256 4423/0417 993 751 alexander.nie@bigpond.com
Vacant (NT)	VACANT
John 'Jock' CASSIDY (Townsville)	(07) 4772 3535/0431 355 579 johncassidy65@hotmail.com
Bill MARTIN (NZ)	(0011649) 267 7545 bwmartin@xtra.co.nz

### KOREAN WAR HONOUR ROLL QUILT

Mrs. Olwyn Green OAM widow of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hercules Green DSO, Silver Star (United States) CO 3RAR, who died of wounds during the 1950-1953 Korean War, has commissioned the Honour Roll Quilt to honour all Australian servicemen who lost their lives defending the freedom of the Republic of Korea.

The Quilt was launched in Grafton NSW on 27 July 2003, timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice. Since then, this beautiful object has been displayed at several locations in Australia: the Australian War Memorial, the Shrine of Remembrance in Victoria, and the Army Infantry Museum, Lone Pine Barracks, Singleton.

The Quilt has now travelled to the Republic of Korea. Its first exhibition in that country, at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery Korea in Busan, opened on 25 October 2016. Here the quilt will speak to the world in a memorable, artistic way of service and sacrifice.

### MEMORIAL SERVICE: DAYLE MORRISON, KIA

Dayle Morrison was born at Maleny, Qld and touched the lives of many in his 22 years. He served in Vietnam with 1ARU, 6RAR & B Coy 2RAR, and was killed in action (GSW) during TET 1968 on 26 January. Dayle is buried at the Mount Gravatt Cemetery. Plot: ANZAC Portion 1 Section D Grave 186; he is also commemorated in the Garden of Remembrance, Commemoration Position Wall 3 - Row E.

Don Roberts, who is a Pastor, Nasho and Vietnam Vet, will conduct the ceremony. There will be plenty of time to attend the 'Meet and Greet' at Southbank at 5pm.

Date: Thursday 18th May 2017

Time: 12 noon

Loc: Mt Gravatt Cemetery and Crematorium

582 Mains Road MacGregor, Qld.

Ted Barber: 0418 723 569;

Kevin Treschman: 0438140908

### HEAVEN SENT

One day in 1965, I was down at the local tip getting rid of some unwanted stuff when I chanced to see some gaiters Aust pairs – one lying on the floor. As I bent to pick them up I spied another pair and then discovered their source. There was a breakfast cereal cardboard box, i.e. the one cubic metre size, full of them. I can only surmise that someone bought a 'lot' at the disposal sales and took what was wanted and the gaiters Aust were dumped. At that time, we had just started Corps training the first intake of National Servicemen at Enoggera. They only had one pair of gaiters that alternated between the parade ground and the bush so their gaiters got a lot of attention as the NSM at that stage had not acquired a spare or 'bush' pair.

Monday morning, problem solved at least it was for our PI and one or two others and even John George's PI got in on the act. I don't think we made any money with the enterprise, not even for PI funds. In those days' gaiters were one for one at the Q store so L & D's were not a problem. We had a lot of satisfied customers and so got on with our training.

Then one morning not too long after while filling in time out of sight in the PI office I had an unexpected visitor, the QM. My first thought was 'I am in trouble here' when Jim stated 'Hi Terry I hear you might have some gaiters spare' I thought 'I am gone' and he continued 'we have just done a spot check on gaiters and we are down about 18 pairs, can you help me out?' My instant reply was 'Yes Jim help yourself'. He just about cleaned me out. Now I am always extra vigilant whenever I visit the tip. Now and then it pays off.

Terry Dinneen  
Winmalee, NSW

COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2016



COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2016

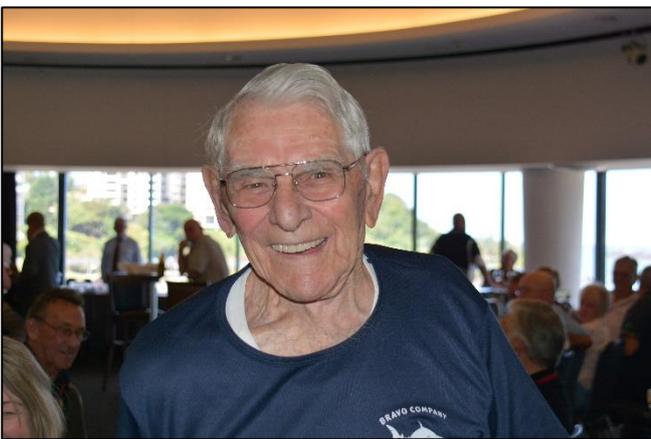


COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2016





COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2016



SECOND TO NONE



## SNIPPETS

- Congratulations to Kevin 'Dasher' Dean OAM on his recent award of the RSL Meritorious Service Medal. The Award is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon a member of the League. The 2RAR Association awarded Kevin the Silver Soldier in October 2015.
- Ken and Selma Cupples had the honour of cutting the cake on the Royal Australian Regiment's 68th birthday at Enoggera. Ken served with 3RAR & 1RAR Malaya, and 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68. Ken is also a long-time Dad's Army member at the RAR National Memorial Walk.
- Bill White from Biloela passed away recently after a short battle with Melanoma. Some of his 2RAR mates attended: Lou Kucks, Ashes Baldwin, Ray Smith, Geoff & Leanne, Col & Sue Falla, Keith & Debbie Rollings, Glenn & Julie Smallwood. Thanks Julie White.
- **Book Prize:** Many thanks to whoever drew out my name to receive a copy of "Tracker", it's greatly appreciated. Dick Selwood. *T'was me! Rick*
- Please give my condolences to those veterans who have recently passed away. I have met and talked with many whilst my husband Ken was alive, particularly with Kevin 'Dasher' Dean, Monsignor Eugene Harley & Col John Church. Melita Barrington
- Thank you for the latest Ringo, as usual a good read. I enjoyed Jack Hungerford's 'Battle of Nui Dat.' I don't know if you are interested but I will attach my memories of that night from the mortar line.
- My reason for not being at the reunion is because I had a heart attack on Wednesday and was admitted to the Wesley Hospital and operated on Friday. They found the blockage and put a stent in. My doctor told me it was an easy operation. Dasher
- To Chrissie Thomas (Functions Manager): The reunion in the River Room went down well with a bigger turnout we have had for years. Your staff were most helpful and nothing was a bother. The bar worked very well and the food was great. To you and the staff a big thank you. Norm Devereux, Treasurer
- We have had five editions of RINGO printed free by Peter Dutton's office; 2 in colour (Dec 15 & Dec 16).

## TIPS TO BECOMING AN OLD SOLDIER

At the last AGM I managed to say g'day to Frank Moffitt, probably our oldest soldier, just turned 92.

I can recall on one of our earliest Ops down in the 'green', we had propped for the night and Sunray had decided prove one of the DF's on the most likely covered approach for Charlie. We had dug shell-scrapes and were sitting on the edge of them during 'stand to' casually observing FO register a close target. It helped to pass the time.

The first round was a fair way out but we knew they were getting close when bits of tree started to fall around us and the bang of the impact got louder. A couple more rounds and the effect on the greenery became quite noticeable. Lots of zipping noises and now branches were falling.

I began to contemplate adopting the lying position in the scrape but did not want to be seen as the first to move. I could see Frank a visual distance to the front and observed the added protection he had adopted. He had bent his tools-entrenching spade at right angles to the handle and was using it as an umbrella to protect his head from the shrapnel.

More effective than insurance and I don't think that is mentioned in the Operating Instructions for the Tools Entrenching either. It just goes to show, that a hat will look after your head but a shovel can look after both ends. ☺

Terry Dinneen  
Winmalee, NSW

## HISTORIES PAGE: VIETNAM VETERANS' MARCH

Troops of the 2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and the 4th Field Regiment of the Royal Australian Artillery were given a rousing welcome when they marched through Brisbane on June 13, 1968, on their return from Vietnam.



*Pic: Bill Whalley Source: The Sunday Mail (Qld)*

The 2nd Battalion fought in Vietnam with two companies of New Zealand troops and killed 187 of the enemy, The Courier-Mail reported. The battalion saw 27 killed in action and had 122 wounded. Office workers released clouds of ticker tape and streamers from upper-floor windows as the troops marched in Alice, George, Queen, Creek, Adelaide, Ann and Albert streets at lunchtime, the soldiers wearing jungle-green uniforms and the famous slouch hats and carrying M16 (?) self-loading rifles. The Australian Mutual Provident Society staff stretched a 10-metre banner between their Queen St office windows to say welcome home to a former workmate.

Most of 2nd Bn arrived on the navy's troop transport, HMAS Sydney. During the two-day trip down the Queensland coast, the soldiers had received leave passes and bulging packets of accumulated pay and were set for 50 days' leave. "The army had advised friends and relatives not to meet the Sydney when she berthed at Hamilton wharf. But there were several hundred people there, each straining to pick out one man from the ranks lined up on the deck."

Three days later, The Sunday Mail reported some of those returned soldiers on leave "jeered openly . . . as more than 100 students and a smattering of trade unionists" took part in an anti-war demonstration at Queen St. It was a touchy time for marchers and demos, and a police inspector avoided confrontation and handled the matter with tongue-in-cheek tact. Asked if a permit had been issued for a march, the inspector said, "What march? I don't see anyone marching. All I see is a lot of people walking down the footpath."

Earlier that week, about 300 anti-conscription marchers converged on Ingleburn army camp at Sydney, where conscientious objector Simon Townsend was held. Townsend, a journalist and later TV presenter of Simon Townsend's Wonder World, served time in military and civilian jails for his refusal to be conscripted as a fighter.

The protesters carried red and black flags (associated with the North Vietnamese) and posters attacking the federal government's policy of conscription.

At Canungra army camp in the Gold Coast hinterland, what the newspapers called "The Case of the Missing Private" referred to a conscientious objector who refused his duties as a cook. The soldier had spoken a few days earlier to then federal opposition member Jim Cairns, later deputy prime minister in the Whitlam Government. Dr Cairns was a leading opponent of the war, and said his conversation with the soldier had been bugged.

Australia lost 521 dead and more than 3000 wounded in the Vietnam War.

Let us not forget.

## DROP SHORTS

### VICTORIA CROSS

#### 29890 Warrant Officer Class II Kevin Arthur Wheatley

On 13 November 1965 at approximately 1300 hours, a Vietnamese Civil Irregular Defence Group company commenced a search and destroy operation in the Tra Bong valley, 15 kilometres (9.3 mi) east of Tra Bong Special Forces camp in Quang Ngai Province. Accompanying the force were Captain F. Fazekas, senior Australian Advisor, with the centre platoon, and Warrant Officers K. A. Wheatley and R. J. Swanton with the right hand platoon. At about 1340 hours, Warrant Officer Wheatley reported contact with Viet Cong elements. The Viet Cong resistance increased in strength until finally Warrant Officer Wheatley asked for assistance. Captain Fazekas immediately organised the centre platoon to help and personally led and fought towards the action area. While moving towards this area he received another radio message from Warrant Officer Wheatley to say that Warrant Officer Swanton had been hit in the chest, and requested an air strike and an aircraft, for the evacuation of casualties. At about this time the right platoon broke in the face of heavy Viet Cong fire and began to scatter. Although told by the Civil Irregular Defence Group medical assistant that Warrant Officer Swanton was dying, Warrant Officer Wheatley refused to abandon him. He discarded his radio to enable him to half drag, half carry Warrant Officer Swanton, under heavy machine-gun and automatic rifle fire, out of the open rice paddies into the comparative safety of a wooded area, some 200 metres away. He was assisted by a Civil Irregular Defence Group member, Private Dinh Do who, when the Viet Cong were only some ten metres away, urged him to leave his dying comrade. Again he refused, and was seen to pull the pins from two grenades and calmly awaited the Viet Cong, holding one grenade in each hand. Shortly afterwards, two grenade explosions were heard, followed by several bursts of small arms fire.

The two bodies were found at first light next morning after the fighting had ceased, with Warrant Officer Wheatley lying beside Warrant Officer Swanton. Both had died of gunshot wounds.

Warrant Officer Wheatley displayed magnificent courage in the face of an overwhelming Viet Cong force which was later estimated at more than a company. He had the clear choice of abandoning a wounded comrade and saving himself by escaping through the dense timber or of staying with Warrant Officer Swanton and thereby facing certain death. He deliberately chose the latter course. His acts of heroism, determination and unflinching loyalty in the face of the enemy will always stand as examples of the true meaning of valour.

#### ABOUT: KEVIN ARTHUR WHEATLEY, VC

Kevin Arthur Wheatley (1937-1965), soldier, was born on 13 March 1937 at Surry Hills, Sydney, third child of Raymond George Wheatley, labourer, and his wife Ivy Sarah Ann, née Newman, both born in Sydney. Educated at Maroubra Junction Junior Technical School, Kevin worked as a milk carter, food sterilizer, machine operator and brick burner.

On 12 June 1956 Wheatley enlisted in the Australian Regular Army. Following recruit training he joined 4RAR in September 1956 and transferred to 3RAR in March 1957. He served in the Malayan Emergency from September that year to July 1959, before transferring in August to 2RAR and in June 1961 to 1RAR. In January 1964, he was promoted sergeant and in August, temporary warrant officer, class two. Short and stocky, he was a highly respected and well-liked non-commissioned officer with a reputation as a rough, wild man who was a good soldier. He was known as 'Dasher' for his Rugby Union prowess.

## THEY STILL LIVE

The madness has ended and you are free from bloody strife  
Grieve not for us, the fallen, for you are our life  
As it was in time of war, you will never be alone  
We are still with you, no matter where you roam

We are the cooling breeze at end of summer's day  
The joyful calls from the bush greeting dawn's crimson rays  
The comforting and welcome warmth from a winter sun  
In dying coals of campfires, see our ghostly faces merge as one

We are the silent green mountains in distance afar  
Look for the beloved bright Southern Cross among the stars  
Breathe deeply the familiar scent of the wattle brush  
All of this and more of our native land are part of us

You are us and we are you; always together  
Our time of history etched in marble and stone forever  
Spirits and flesh mingled, never to be alone  
In the great southern land which will always be home

Let not our sacrifice be for nought  
Those dreams we all shared must be sought  
Go forth; enrich our proud nation's life for tomorrow  
Far better to stand and strive than bow to deep sorrow

George Mansford  
© September 2010

## BOB CHAPMAN 2RAR KOREA

Two adverts appeared in Ringo's last two issues for 2015 requesting information about the whereabouts (last resting place) of Pte Bob Chapman who served with 2RAR 1953-54 in Korea. They were requested by his niece Sally Imire who lives in Ayrshire Scotland.



L-R: 3/11077 Private R. Chapman, 2RAR; 22540493 Corporal E. Graham, The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) and 2/10696 Private R. Isherwood, 2RAR

She provided what information she had about her uncle who had passed away about 10 years previously possibly in Melbourne. She expressed a desire to visit Australia to see where he lived and served and visit his final resting place.

His Service Record told us what he did while in uniform but nothing afterwards. But until Sally visited Oz and personally applied to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Melbourne his whereabouts and date of death remained unknown. We now know that Bob passed away in 2004 in Melbourne after being cared for close to his home before his final demise. He is buried in Yan Yean Cemetery which is about 7 km south of Whittlesea, Vic.

It took a while but the desired results were obtained finally and Sally and her uncle, that's Bob's very frail brother in Ayr, are most grateful and happy with the outcome.

Terry Dinneen  
Winmalee, NSW

## **BATTLE FOR NUI DAT**

### **"The Mortar Line" by L/Cpl Graham Jones**

During the night of the 'battle', the mortar section I was with, 1 Sec, had our night off and had been to the Sp. Coy boozier. We wended our way back to the baseplate position and went to bed as the rain started. We all remember that great feeling of being under shelter when some other poor bastard is out in the rain. Well, so it was this night. We heard the machine gun start firing from B Coy perimeter and the duty mortar section was called out as the rain hammered down and we, in our tent were glad it wasn't us. As the firing increased the platoon stood to and we ran to the mortar pits and CP. I was wearing shorts and unlaced GPs as were all except Frank Van Leeuwin who was stark naked except for flip flops. Frank if I recall was the No1 on No2 mortar and Ronnie Allen was No1 on No1 mortar. I was in the CP on the plotting board with Jono Johnston as my sig. The CP tent was crowded with the other sections sigs and plotters and fire orders were coming through from the companies calling for illumination rounds. In the CP we were plotting the bearing, elevation and time setting for the fuse on the illumination rounds and passing it on to our section commander, John McDonald, to give the fire orders to the section. Meantime, in the mortar pits the crews were wading around serving the tubes. The other two sections were doing the same.

The rain was so heavy that the secondary charges on the rounds were getting wet in the approximately two metre journey from the sheltered ammo bay to the muzzle of the mortar despite all the crew could do. I wouldn't say it was chaotic but it was certainly frantic at times. We counted eleven rounds that only fired on primary charge or had an incomplete burn of the secondary charges and thus dropped short. Luckily an illumination round's fuse needs the full inertia of firing to ignite the powder-train of the time fuse to function properly. It was very fortunate that we weren't called on to fire high explosive rounds that night because HE will arm in flight on primary charge.

With all the thunder and lightning and the rain roaring down Frank had a misfire on his mortar. He and his crew carried their misfire drill: Kick the barrel hard with the heel of the boot to see if it fires, (good luck doing it in thongs) then if it doesn't fire, very carefully rotate the barrel so it unlocks from the baseplate and lift the barrel very gingerly up past the horizontal and shake the unfired round out of the barrel and into the waiting hands of the No 2. This was not a drill we liked to do in real time I might add as the possibility of the round firing in that condition could cause some damage to life, limb or dignity.

This time, the bomb would not come out and with a lot of bad language from the section commander and Frankie the barrel was shaken with more vigour. Still no round appeared into the waiting hands of the No 2. Meanwhile the fire orders were coming in from the companies and as Jack pointed out the roar of the firing had spread around the Task Force base as everyone wanted part of the action. Even the arty from the Horseshoe had a go! I suppose the swaying of the illumination rounds over the perimeter set the shadows moving and dancing and showed up as movement in the wire.

Meanwhile back at Frank's mortar things weren't going well and Frank was not a patient man as we all know! As well as being starkers in the cold rain his mortar was out of action. He took things in hand as it were and freed the barrel from the bipod and as I looked out of the CP tent I saw him thumping the muzzle down on a rubber tree stump trying to dislodge the round. Seeing that I told him to unscrew the firing pin and shine a torch down the muzzle. Sure enough, the light beam shone out of the hole left by the removed pin! The round had fired a long time before and in the dark and

rain with all the noise and the fact that it was firing on a low charge none of the crew had heard it go. As Jack points out, things eventually calmed down and the battle drew to an inconclusive finish and by that time our section were all freezing cold and sober. After cleaning up the pits we went back to bed.

Next morning, for our platoon there was still heaps to do. For a start, there was eleven unexploded illumination rounds that had dropped short that we had to find, so a few of us were dispatched out on the various bearings that the fire missions had departed on. I found one round and then walked further on the same bearing and came to the battalion Q store or ration store which was a corrugated iron building; in charge of Slim Irwin who was a sergeant at the time. I knocked on the door and said words to the effect, "Hello Sergeant Irwin, have you seen any mortar bombs around here?"

Well! There was Slim in a towering rage, "Come here Lance-Corporal Jones. Look!" There, propped up in the corner of the little room where Slim had his bed was my lost mortar bomb. Above it in the roof was a rather neat 81mm hole. I said "Thanks Sergeant" and bent down to pick it up, keen to escape his wrath. "Don't touch it! roared Slim "It could go off." "No, no, it is quite safe," I told him, and grabbed the bomb and bolted for the mortar line. I know I shouldn't have, but as soon as I got out of earshot I was nearly wetting myself laughing. All the unexploded rounds were found in short order and taken outside the wire for demolition. And that is my memory of the great battle and the vast expenditure of ammunition.

Graham Jones  
Gelorup, WA

### **"The Delta Coy Lines" by Capt Terry Dinneen**

I do recall that evening, or at least some aspects. I thought I had just closed our canteen when we got the order to 'Stand to.' We were just in from an Op so most blokes would have had more than their two cans per day ration, I am thinking.

It was the first time we had occupied the TOC (Tactical Operations Centre) so named by Harry Smith, and it was a bit crowded. So, I went up top and tried to ensure that the Coy HQ blokes providing close protection for the CP did not fire as D Coy faced south whereas A, B and C Coy faced east. Had D Coy fired it would have ended up in amongst the Engineers opposite. The PIs were told by telephone so we did not respond other than by manning our FDL's.

I remained up top until the mortars began to fire illumination from I don't know where. The Horse Shoe was just out of range I think and they were not from the battalion's base plate position, but they were from a southerly direction. The front of the wire was illuminated but the spent shells were woop, woop-wooping and falling around us. You could hear them coming through the rubber trees. I was reminded what OHP was for and quickly put it to good use.

I thought the ruckus started in C Coy but if B Coy wants to take the blame that's OK with me. I do recall those in C Coy who occupied the forward pits being cranky with those in C Coy who occupied their rear pits. Most of the rubber trees between them were pretty shot up on the western side of the trees, i.e. the depth pits did not want to be left out of it and expended their ammo.

It turns out that D Coy were the only Coy who did not need to re-supply their ammo the next day.

Terry Dinneen  
Winmalee, NSW

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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