



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)

JULY 2016

### THE BATTALION REPORT

The Battalion is currently afloat on their way to Hawaii for the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise with US Forces therefore there will be no report from CO for this RINGO.

The Battalion will lay-up their old colours in the All Saints Chapel at Lavarack Barracks in September. In conjunction with the Laying-up, The Battalion will exercise its right of Freedom to the City of Townsville which will be conducted on The Strand and there will be a Battalion Ball as well. All over 3 days. Invitations will be issued (not known how wide the invitation list will be). No word yet on what celebrations are planned for Battalion Birthday, if any.

Current CO will be posted out at the end of the year. New CO is named but no indication of the current CO's posting.

### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

#### Member (AM) in the Military Division of the Order of Australia

Brigadier Christopher Antony FIELD AM CSC. For exceptional service to the Australian Army as the Chief Operations and Plans, Queensland Reconstruction Authority in 2011, and as the Chief of Staff of Headquarters Forces Command from 2012. Brigadier Field is the current Commander 3rd Brigade, at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville, Qld. Brigadier Field previously served as commanding officer of 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), and with both 2/4RAR (PI Comd/MLO) and 2RAR (Coy Comd, OPSO East Timor).

#### Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division

The Reverend Graeme Robert DAVIS, OAM, CSM of Goonellabah, NSW. For service to veterans and their families. Graeme served in Australia with E Coy 3RAR, C Coy 2RAR, & with 12 PI D Coy 6RAR at Long Tan (WIA).

### B COMPANY REUNION 2016

An invitation is extended to all members of B Company Vietnam 1967-68 to our biannual reunion to be held 16-20 August 2016 in Rockhampton, Qld, to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of Vietnam Veterans Day. Contact: Ken Boaler. Email: boalerken@gmail.com Ph: (07) 4927 5118

### 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.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Warriors Who Have Marched Out	2
Patron: Maj-Gen M.D. Slater AO, DSC, CSC	2
The President & Secretary Reports	3
Commemoration: Peter Edward McDuff	6
Farewell Jacky Walsh, and The Door Gunners	8
The HOOK: Maj-Gen D.M. Butler, AO, DSO	9
Malaya Perspectives: Pannell, Smith, & Hemerik	10-11
Membership/Merchandise Form	12

### AGM, COMMEMORATION & REUNION 2016

#### See you in October!

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.

### 2RAR NATIONAL REUNION 2017: BRISBANE

#### Warning Order

2RAR Association will be holding a National Reunion 18-20 May 2017 in Brisbane. All those who served in 2RAR and 2/4RAR and families are welcome to attend. Full details will be published shortly and will also be made available on the 2RAR Association website:

[www.2rar-association.com.au](http://www.2rar-association.com.au)

Please reserve these dates in your diary now.

### AASAM TOP SHOT

ARMY Reserve soldier Pte Jarrod Mollison has outmatched hundreds of competitors to take out the Army and overall ADF top shot for 2016 at the Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting (AASAM) at Puckapunyal.

The former ARA soldier, who now works as a firearms instructor with Victoria Police, said he was proud of finally taking out top honours in his sixth year of the hotly contested competition. "I came second last year, and third the year before, so to me, winning means I've actually learnt something over the six years," he said.

"To be able to build on my weaknesses in each different area to get the overall win was fantastic."

### PRINTED FOR FREE

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## WARRIORS WHO HAVE MARCHED OUT

- WX40384, 52852 Lance-Corporal Herbert Oswald BECKE, WW2 1943-46, 10 LH, 11 Bn AIF, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aust Fd Arty Trg Regt, 1RAR Korea 1952-53, 2RAR Malaya/Malaysia 1955-57, 1960-61, 4RAR Vietnam 1968-69, 1971. Passed away 18 May 16, WA. Age: 91+ years. Thanks Geoff 'Yuki' Barnes, Charles Tony 'Toad' Fletcher
- 3400970 William Edward HOARE, 2RAR Korea 1953-54. Veteran of the HOOK. Passed away December 2015. Age: 95+ years. Published in KVAA 'The Voice'.
- 5400348 Maxwell BROADHURST, 2RAR Korea 1953-54. Veteran of the HOOK. Passed away Esperance WA in 2004 after a long illness. Age: 74 years. Published in KVAA 'The Voice'.
- 3400638 Private Frederick Desmond DRAKE, 1RAR Korea 1952-53, 2RAR 1953. Passed away peacefully 17 May 2016. Aged 83+ years. Funeral held Dandenong South 23 May followed by a Burial Service. Published in KVAA 'The Voice'.
- 15390 Major Eric James ANDREWS, 2RAR, OCS Portsea, 6RAR Vietnam 1966-67 (2Lt), 3RAR 1971 (Capt) PNG (Wewak) 1973-75. Passed away Toowoomba, Qld. Age: 74 years. A memorial service at St Paul's Anglican Church Parish Hall Stanthorpe, Qld on 10th July. Thanks Darcy Duggan
- 3411739 Private Robert Leslie DOWSE, 1ARU Vietnam 1967, 2RAR 1967-68. D Coy (our stowaway). Passed away 19 May 16 at Pakenham, Vic. Age: 68+ years. Thanks John Hawes
- 218886 Lance-Corporal Michael John (Mick) PRICE, 2RAR Vietnam 1970-71. A Coy. Born: Coventry England 17 March 1951. Passed away Murwillumbah, NSW on 28 April. Age: 64+ years. A boisterous wake held at the Hotel Victory at Mooball, NSW. Thanks Ross Kenny
- 25795 Corporal Keith Patrick JORDAN, 2RAR Malaya 1955-57. Passed away 18 May 16 at Cootamundra, NSW. Thanks Robert Bak

†

*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

### **APOLOGY: 12522 STANLEY JAMES PHILLIPS**

In the April edition of RINGO, we overlooked the service history of Private Stanley James PHILLIPS who passed away unexpectedly on 30 November 2015 at Tewantin, Qld. Age: 82 years. Stanley had operational service in Korea/Japan with B Coy 2RAR from 17 March 1953 to 6 April 1954. He was a veteran of the Battle of the HOOK 24/25 July 1953. Stanley also served with 3RAR in 1955 & 1RAR in 1956. Our apologies. Thanks 'Dasher' Dean, OAM

### **TUG OF WAR**

In the 1950s & 60s, the home of 3RAR was at Enoggera occupying an area where the Memorial Walk has been established. In the Afghan area there is a row of gum trees. There was a training program, but OC "Charlie" decided the men needed something different: sport and strengthening exercises. So the row of trees was put to use. A chain was placed around the base of the tree, and a pulley at the top. A rope ran up the tree and it was hooked onto a concrete roller. This then had to be pulled up the tree!

Evidence of the chains can still be seen on the trees.

## PATRON: MAJ-GEN M.D. SLATER AO, DSC, CSC (RETD)

Before joining the Army in 1978 Mick Slater worked and studied surveying through Queensland University of Technology.



Following officer training at the Officer Cadet School Portsea, Mick was posted to 8/9RAR where he served as a platoon commander before undertaking a variety of infantry regimental and instructional appointments in Australia and overseas. During this period, he served at the Infantry Centre Singleton, 1RAR in Townsville and the Canadian Infantry Centre. In 1989 he returned to Australia to serve in

2/4RAR as IO, Company Commander and then Operations Officer. After a number of staff postings Mick returned to Townsville to assume command of 2RAR in 1999.

Mick has commanded at all levels from platoon to division. His operational commands have included the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment during INTERFET in 1999 and he commanded the international stabilisation forces, based on the 3rd Brigade, in Timor Lesté in 2006.

Major General Slater has also served on the staff of the United States 3rd Army Headquarters in Kuwait on Operation POLLARD.

Major General Slater's senior staff appointments have included Director General Preparedness and Plans, Director General Personnel, Director General Intelligence Support to Operations, Head of the Defence Personnel Executive and the Chair of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority after the floods and cyclones which devastated QLD in 2011.

His final appointment in Army was as Commander Forces Command in the period 2012-15. Since retiring in April 15, Mick has moved to Melbourne where he now works for Linfox, another great Australian organisation.

"I believe I have an enduring obligation to the men of 2RAR, particularly those who served in INTERFET in 1999. This is an obligation I have always taken seriously and will continue to do so."

### **HEAD OF CORPS**

#### **Brigadier "Jake" Ellwood DSC**

Brigadier "Jake" Ellwood DSC has been appointed RA Inf Head of Corps and RAR Regimental Colonel; replacing Brigadier Chris Field who is now the 3 Brigade Commander.

Brigadier Ellwood graduated to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in 1990. He served in a number of Regimental appointments within 2/4RAR and 5/7RAR. He commanded B Coy, 5/7RAR on operations in East Timor in 2000.

He assumed command of 5RAR at the unlinking ceremony of 5/7RAR on 3 December 2006. He commanded the third rotation of the Overwatch Battle Group (West) on operations in Iraq in 2007.

In 2008, he commanded the fifth rotation of the Timor Lesté Battle Group (TLBG 5) in East Timor. He handed over command of 5RAR during his second operational tour as CO 5RAR."

In 2009, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) as Commander of Rotation Three of the Overwatch Battle Group-West during Op Catalyst in Iraq; this was mainly the 5RAR Battle Group Tiger that he commanded.

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the July 2016 edition of "Ringo". The year continues to be a busy one for your management team and considerable planning is underway for the 2017 2RAR reunion to be held in Brisbane in May next year. More about that a bit later.

On behalf of the 2RAR Association I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Patron Maj Gen Mick Slater, AO, DSC, CSC (Retd). Maj Gen Slater is a previous CO 2RAR and we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship. Background details of Maj Gen Slater's career are contained in this issue.



Mrs Nola & Col. John Church at the Annual Reunion 2013

The Association congratulates the Reverend (Major, Retd) Graeme Robert Davis OAM CSM, on being honoured with the Order of Australia General Division (OAM) for his service to veterans and their families. The Reverend Davis is a member of our Association and an Honorary Padre for 2RAR Association (Assistant to Monsignor Eugene Harley). Our congratulations to Graeme for an outstanding record of service to the wider veteran community as well as his contributions within his civilian parishes.

A number of Association members attended the Memorial Service for LCPL Peter McDuff at Darlington Point (near Griffith) NSW on 22nd April. It was a wonderful service and extremely well organised by Aub Terry and his group.

I will be attending the RAR Association National Council Meeting and AGM at Keswick Barracks in Adelaide 2-4 October 2016. Areas covered during this conference include DVA and mental health issues, current RAR military and other relevant topics. This conference provides a good opportunity to discuss what is happening within the wider RAR family. It also provides updates on the RAR battalion associations and activities.

The Management Committee has agreed to support the upgrading of the 2RAR display at the VVAA Museum Phillip Island, Vic. The current display is seriously inadequate and a reconnaissance was recently undertaken by Max Inglis, Alan Roberts and Noel Rumsey. They have made a number of recommendations to the committee and the sum of up to \$3000 has been approved for the project. 2RAR has also agreed to support this undertaking. Discussions with VVAA Phillip Island management is ongoing.

The 2017 National Reunion sub-committee:

Gordon Hurford - Chairman

Members: Arthur MacDonald & Leo Van De Kamp

Ms Jan Berryman - Event Coordinator

Planning is well underway and details are contained in this newsletter. I encourage all 2RAR Association members to attend; including those who are not members of the Association.

Keep an eye on our website for information and updates. I urge you to register early to take advantage of the early bird savings.

Website: <http://2rar-association.net.au/>

The 2RAR Association AGM and Annual Reunion will be held at the Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads on 28-29 October 2016. Please put this date in your calendar and we would love to see you there.

We continue to seek ex members of 2RAR and 2/4RAR to join the Association. We ask for your help in encouraging new members to become part of the 2RAR family. Your support is needed to spread the word to ensure that the Association continues to grow.

I would like to commend all committee members for their continued dedication and commitment to the Association which continues to thrive. It is their efforts that ensures the Association continues to be a successful organisation.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the October reunion. "Second to None"

Leo Van De Kamp  
President

## THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

### Door Gunners

Much has been happening for the door gunners and their recognition on the Wall of Service at Fleet Air Arm Nowra, NSW. NOK agreements have been received and applications have been lodged with the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia. Wings are still to be presented to:

*Dave Mansfield, Geoff Kingdon, NOK of Roland Lee & NOK of Kerry Pearce*

Chief of Army has responded positively to our request for assistance in pursuing recognition of the 9 door gunners for the US Air Medal.

### Peter McDuff Memorial Service

The Memorial Service for LCPL Peter McDuff at Darlington Point (near Griffith) NSW on 22nd April was a huge success.

It was a wonderful service and impeccably organised by Aub Terry and his working group.

The McDuff family were most appreciative and fully participated. This was the last of the Memorial Services for D Coy first tour KIA.

### Merchandise

Heritage Tie. Due to popular demand we have reordered the black tie that was the previous Association tie (solid black with gold badge in the centre).

Many have asked for it and we will no doubt have them available in the near future.

50th Anniversary Lapel Badge. 2017 is 50 years since the Battalion's deployment to Vietnam in 1967. We have been offered 40 badges (produced privately by a member) commemorating the event. It is a fine badge and will sell for \$20.00 at the reunion at Tweed Heads in October.

### Sponsorship with Australian Leisure and Hospitality

Three hotels participate in the sponsorship program with our Association. They are Buderim Tavern on the Sunshine Coast, and The Vale Hotel and Kirwan Tavern in Townsville. The new contract is that instead of 10% of sales coming to the Association, it will now be 5% discount to the customer, and 5% on total spend to the Association.

If the opportunity arises, we would appreciate your patronage at these hotels. When you place your order at these establishments, simply tell them 2RAR Association and your discount will be applied.

Support them to support us!

**2017 National Reunion**  
 "Where old mates reunite"

It is important for all to understand that this is a nation-wide reunion for all who have served in 2RAR & 2/4RAR at any time. Planning is progressing well with the following being confirmed:

Thursday 18 May 2017	Meet and Greet: 5.00pm - 7.00pm	South Bank Piazza, South Bank
Friday 19 May 2017	Commemorative Service: 10.00am National Memorial Walk Lunch: 12.00 midday	National Memorial Walk, Enoggera
Saturday 20 May 2017	Reunion Dinner: 6.30pm - 12.00 midnight	Brisbane Convention and Entertainment Centre, South Bank

There may be some other activity arranged for the Friday afternoon such as a static weapons and vehicles display, or even a demonstration. Details are yet to be determined. Pricing is yet to be confirmed. Registration by attendees will be necessary and details will be published in the not too distant future.

The Reunion Committee suggests that if you want to get in early for accommodation in Brisbane, we would suggest that the centre of gravity would be South Bank. There is plenty of accommodation on South Bank and just across the river in the Brisbane CBD. There are also a number of caravan/holiday parks around Brisbane. The closest ones to the CBD are Newmarket and Aspley. Check the Internet for further details.

**VVAA Museum Phillip Island.** It came to the Committee's attention that the 2RAR display at the VVAA Museum on Phillip Island left much to be desired and was a poor representation of the Battalion's two tours of Vietnam. We have set out to correct this and there is now a team, led by Max Ingles, preparing to significantly upgrade the display. The recon has been completed. Their plan includes some interactive technology and Museum CEO John Methven (ex 7RAR) is most cooperative and happy to work with our team. More details will be published as the work progresses.

Gordon Hurford  
Secretary

**2RAR FISHING COMPETITION 2016**

The Battalion Fishing Club began in 2015. The idea was to get members of the battalion, friends and family involved in a social activity outside of work. We also hoped to develop a link between the current serving, and ex-serving members of the Battalion. This year more than 50 registered.

The categories are: Champion Adult Male, Champion Adult Female and Champion Boy or Girl. We also have a number of 'Mini Comps'. The Mystery Fish Comp consists of a random fish picked by the CO; whoever catches the largest species of that fish wins. WO2 George Bale took out the prize and received a \$100 voucher. We have other prizes, including the Blind Mullet award, for the funniest story.

On our second weekend we escaped to Lucinda; what a great spot! The weather man had other plans however, and for a while some were green around the gills. It flattened out eventually and we managed to get on to a few fish, with a few beautiful coral trout being taken and a nice sized Spanish Mackerel destined for the BBQ that night.

An excellent weekend. We were glad to see the kids getting amongst the prizes with Ashleigh West winning the Mystery Fish and the \$100 voucher, for her Red Throat Emperor.

The competition will be fairly quiet over the coming months as ARE Alpha heads off to Hawaii. Our next weekend will be at Lake Proserpine in September, and some big Barra!

Thanks to 2RAR Association for their support.

Visit: '2RAR Fishing Competition' page on Facebook'.

**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

**NEW MEMBERSHIPS**

We welcome our new members: (19)

NSW: 7, WA: 2, TAS: 2, QLD: 4, NT: 0, ACT: 1, VIC: 3, SA: 0, NZ: 0

Thomas O'Brien	Killarney Vale, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
David Whitehouse	Sandy Bay, Tas	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Denis Gleeson	Mole Creek, Tas	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Edward (Grahame) McKenzie	Giralang, ACT	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Harold Rapmund	Kilcoy, Qld	2RAR Korea 1953-54. The HOOK
Stan Jaruga	Bell Park, Vic	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Bob Devers	Croydon North, Vic	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Mark Gladwell	Kioloa, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68; 9RAR 1969
James Phillis	North Rothbury, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Noel Daly	Blackheath, NSW	2RAR Malaya 1961-63
Wal Konowec	Cleveland, Qld	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967
Gary McDonald	Beelbanger, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1970-71
Gregory Symonds	East Fremantle, WA	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967
Lenny Webster	West Wodonga, Vic	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Michael Bell	Leeming, WA	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1970-71; 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1971
Laurence Tremenheere	Highfields, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1967-68
Ron Bird	Hamilton, Qld	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1970
Dennis Moore	Coffs Harbour, NSW	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1970-71
Ross Roberts	Alexandra Headland, Qld	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1970-71

**MEMBERS' DRAW**

Congratulations to Max Farrow of Richmond, Vic winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 6 April who received the book: A Duty Done A Summary of Operations by the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam War 1965-1972, by Lt Col Fred Fairhead (Retd)

Congratulations also to Don Lynch of Walkerville, Qld winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 1 June who received the book: Australian Military Operations In Vietnam, by Albert Palazzo. Second Edition ©2006.

**2RAR HEADS FOR LARGEST MARITIME EXERCISE**

TOWNSVILLE soldiers once again found their sea legs as they embarked in one of the Navy's largest vessels to participate in Exercise Rim of the Pacific (Rimpac) off the coast of Hawaii. Troops and vehicles from 2RAR boarded the landing helicopter dock HMAS Canberra for a three-month deployment during which the ship will take part in her first international exercise.

Twenty-seven nations, 45 ships, five submarines, more than 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel will participate in the exercise, which runs until August 4.

Rimpac 2016 is the 25th exercise in a series that began in 1971.

**THAT'S A SHOCKER!**

**Ticket: State of Origin**

A friend has a ticket for the 3<sup>rd</sup> State of Origin game. Unfortunately, it clashes with his wedding.

Do you know anyone who wants to get married?

**ANZAC DAY: MELBOURNE**

Vietnam Veterans had the honour of leading the ANZAC Day march this year to commemorate the 59th Anniversary of the raising of 1ATF Vietnam and the Battle of Long Tan.



About 50 former and current members of 2RAR marched with pride behind our "Black Banner".

After the march a few quiet ales were had at various venues close to public transport before gathering at the "College Lawn" Hotel for an enjoyable lunch and time of fellowship.

Jim Cooper  
Mulgrave, Vic

**ANZAC DAY: BRISBANE**

There was some chaos at the Brisbane ANZAC Day Parade. Information provided by SE Districts RSL had RARA (Qld) forming up in George/Elizabeth streets instead of Mary/George streets. Rod Newman got a copy of the official program and had it sorted fairly quickly.

30 to 40 2RAR veterans marched; Tom Gibbons & a new generation 2RAR veteran, carried the Banner. Very, very windy, we will arrange wind holes. Rod Newham carried the NZ flag, and Grahame Edwards (NSW) carried the National Flag. Saw 2RAR Association contingent marching in Brisbane. Looked very good. The commentators discussed "Samichon", but they had no idea.

A big crowd cheered from the sidelines.

**ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES**

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**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.bcoy2rarnz.com/>

**2/4RAR ASSOCIATION**

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

**RINGO VOL 2 NO 16. OCTOBER 1967**

**POETS CORNER**

**Lights of Home**

The joy of coming home is the sweetest thrill I know  
Though travellers by ship or train are smiling as they go;  
Their eyes are not so bright nor smile so wide or true  
As when they see their home light and know their tour is through.

Yes, to know once more the brightness of our city streets  
Or for some the farm, or maybe a seaside retreat;  
Home must surely be worth this year's hard long fight  
When again one can hold their girl by moon's soft luminous light.

You remember that day when you left to start your tour  
And your love said she'd be true and now you're sure;  
That you know this love was ever worth the fighting for  
And your thoughts of her love carried you through this war.

Corporal Brian Ellem<sup>1</sup>  
2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn

**VALE: BOB DOWSE**

Robert Leslie (Bob) Dowse was born in Melbourne, Vic on 16 March 1948 and passed away at Pakenham, Vic on 19 May 2016, age 68 years.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL CAM/57/1129/VN

L-R: Vic Anderson, Allan Baunach, & Robert (Bob) Dowse

Bob enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in early 1966. After basic training at Kapooka and Corps training at Inf Centre Ingleburn, he was posted to 2RAR at Enoggera.

A week or so before leaving for South Vietnam, he was declared medically unfit for service in a war zone. In spite of this, on the day the Battalion were embarking on the "Vung Tau" ferry, Bob was granted leave to farewell his mates at the dock. Amidst the crowd he was able to slip aboard and hide. This didn't last long, he was discovered, and promptly choppered back Enoggera. It was said it was the first time anyone had stowed away determined to go to battle with his mates. After the necessary medical treatment, he re-joined the Battalion at Nui Dat in November 1967, and stayed with the Battalion until its return to Australia in May 1968.

After his discharge from the Army in 1969, Bob trained as a Roof Plumber, in roofing circles he was called the 'Guru'. He was a keen golfer, Gun Dog Trainer and ideas man. He was loved and respected by his family and the wider Pakenham area. About 200 people gathered to say their final farewell to a man who was always willing to help. A moving RSL segment was led by Gary Elliot, a fellow Vietnam veteran.

**2RAR ASSOC. EMAIL LIST**

Not receiving emails from us? Left out of the loop? In the dark? Email the Secretary! 2rarsecretary@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> 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.

**VALE: PETER EDWARD MCDUFF**

Peters McDuff's commemorative service was conducted on a bright sunny April morning with in excess of 250 persons in attendance, which included Peter's 2 brothers and 2 sisters, the Federal Member for Riverina and Assistant Defence Minister, the Honourable Michael McCormack, MP, the Commandant Army Recruit Training Centre Kapooka, Colonel Stephen Johnson, CSC, who attended with Chaplain Captain Joel Vergara and Warrant Officer Class Two Shane Swan and whose attendance was greatly appreciated and was a meaningful reminder that 1 Recruit Training Battalion Kapooka had provided the soldiers for the catafalque party at Peter's funeral in 1966.



L-R: Roger Watkins, Harry Leggett, Gordon Steven, Elvon King, Bruce Williams, & Tom O'Brien

The attendance of six of Peter's comrades of 5 Section, 11 Platoon, D Company, who were with Peter when he was killed was a most poignant tribute to their mate. They were joined by the President of 2RAR Association Major Leo Van De Kamp (Retd) and the Secretary 2RAR Association Colonel Gordon Hurford, AM, (Retd) who was the Platoon Commander of 11 Platoon D Company and a very large turnout of former members of 11 Platoon and those from D Company and associated 2RAR Company's together with their wives and partners.

Colonel Hurford delivered a most moving tribute to Peter entitled 'Reflections' based on his service with Peter from April 1966 until his demise in September 1967. It might be said that not a dry eye was to be seen amongst the attendees which endorsed the immense regard in which Peter was held by his peers and superiors. Whilst a firm and fair leader both in Australia and South Vietnam, Gordon held his soldiers in high esteem and was a man of great compassion.

Peter's commemorative Australian Flag which was borne in the Welcome Home Parade in 1987 was positioned in the place of honour at his gravesite. Wreaths were laid by the President 2RAR Association Major Leo Van De Kamp (Retd); 11 Platoon Commander Colonel Gordon Hurford AM (Retd); 5 Section 11 Platoon members; Members of 13 Platoon B Company 1 RTB Kapooka 1966; Commandant Army Recruit Training Centre Colonel Stephen Jobson, CSC; Federal Member for Riverina and Assistant Defence Minister The Hon Michael McCormack, MP. Various other dignitaries and the local Vietnam Veterans' Association also laid wreaths.

We would like to convey our thanks to the former members of 11 Platoon D Company and other members of 2RAR for their attendance and particularly those who had travelled long distances from afar including Geraldton WA, Bundaberg QLD, Tasmania and other mainland States. We would also take the opportunity to thank 2RAR Association (Cont. over)

**CALENDAR 2016**

Mon 1 Feb	2/4RAR delinked to form 2RAR & 4RAR (1995)	Townsville, Qld Holsworthy, NSW
Mon 25 Apr	ANZAC Day	Local arrangements
Fri 22 Jul	Samichon Day Commemorating the Battle of the HOOK 24/25 July 1953. At 11am. Mick Kohlhoff (02) 9451 7603	The Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney, NSW
Sat 23 Jul	Korea Veterans' Day Memorial Service (Cascade Gardens). At 10am.	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 <sup>st</sup> 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 9.45am: Commemoration Service 10.30am: Reunion: 'River Room', Level 3 "Mates, Memories, Camaraderie"	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL Chris Cunningham Park Twin Towns Services Club
Fri 11 Nov	Remembrance Day	Local arrangements
Wed 23 Nov	RAR Birthday 1948 (68th Anniversary)	Hiro, Japan
Thu 18 - Sat 20 May 2017	2RAR National Reunion <i>Where old mates reunite</i>	Brisbane, Qld

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(Cont.) for their generous donation of poppies and wreaths and special thanks to Max Ingles who conducted the service with great dignity together with the Anglican Minister St Mark The Evangelist Coleambally and St Paul's Darlington Point, Reverend Sue-Ellen Chilvers.

Following the service, a luncheon was held at the Darlington Point Sports Club where a fitting memorial plaque was presented by Colonel Gordon Hurford, AM, (Retd) to Mrs Tiffany Young, widow of Tom Young, who was responsible for all previous commemorative services for the members of D Company, Killed in Action in South Vietnam during the Battalion's tour in 1967-1968.

Duplicate plaques which contain Tom's photo and are suitably engraved in relation to his endeavours, and also a recipient of 2RAR's prestigious award of the Silver Soldier are displayed in the Walkerville S.A. RSL Club and as a courtesy in his favourite watering hole The British Hotel, North Adelaide S.A.

## HISTORIES PAGE



Of the hundreds of gifts which poured into Vietnam for Australian soldiers (in 1967), this 100lb Christmas cake probably has aroused most interest among soldiers of 8th field ambulance at the 1st Australian logistic support group (1ALSG) base Vung Tau.

The artistically decorated cake was a gift from the 1st Mitchell Park Scout Group, South Australia.

One of the patients, who is heavily bandaged, Private Paul KING, 22, of Banyo, QLD, and army nurse Lieutenant Colleen Mealy of Port Augusta, SA, admire the cake's intricate designs. *Paul is a Committee Member & LM. Ed.*

## SNIPPETS

- The Association facilitated a visit to Lavarack Barracks, through Jock Cassidy and the RSM, for Cathy Young, daughter of Stan Phillips who passed away recently. Stan was a veteran of The Hook. His daughter was visiting Townsville and wished to see the plaque in the Battalion area and the painting of The Hook in BHQ. The visit was successfully completed on 11 May 2016. Cathy was most impressed. She even had the opportunity to visit the museum and to watch and listen to the Pipes and Drums practise.
- Well done Brigadier Ben James, who took command of the 1st Brigade, Darwin on 1 February. The Brigade is split between Darwin (5RAR) & RAAF Base Edinburgh Adelaide (7RAR). Ben was CO 2RAR 2007-08
- Kevin 'Dasher' Dean, OAM will know at the end of the month whether he has been selected to attend the Revisit Korea 2017 program. Kevin is 82 years young, and, if selected, will be accompanied by his son Darryl who is a nurse. *Fingers crossed. Ed.*
- Please find enclosed membership for 2 years. I attended the Commemoration for Peter McDuff at Darlington Point with my dear wife. She gave me a kick in the bum and made me join up! Looking forward to the next Reunion! Grahame Mackenzie.
- From the Diary: Friday 19 May 1967 was LCpl Vic Anderson's 21st Birthday, and he had snuck Pte Bob Dowse aboard HMAS Sydney departing Brisbane for Vung Tau. CSM 'Lofty' May happened upon Bob and he got a chopper ride back to land and a slap on the wrist. Bob (the stowaway) re-joined D Coy later as an M-60 gunner. Pte Wally J Musgrave (Retd).<sup>2</sup>
- NUI DAT: In accordance with 2RAR Admin Instr No 6/67 (as amended): Selling prices are: Beers all brands: \$3.60 per carton, Cigarettes: \$1.20 per carton. All other items including gift shop merchandise are to be sold at the 1ATF PX retail price i.e. the cost price. CO 2RAR (signed by David Smith, Maj)
- Alex Nie, our WA Rep, is arranging a regular lunch for the boys. Give Alex a call and make it happen. Mob. 0417 993 751 Email: alexander.nie@bigpond.com
- I would like to thank those involved in putting Ringo together. Jeff Jorgensen

## DROP SHORTS

### BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL

**13519 Corporal Keith BRYANT BEM**

Date applicable to Citation: 2 August 1962

Place: Malacca, Malaya

In October 1961 he embarked for a second tour of Malaya with the Second Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment as a section commander in A Company. In this capacity this NCO has shown a splendid example to the troops under his command. On 2nd August 1962, Cpl Bryant was in charge of a patrol operating against Communists terrorists in the area of the Thai/Malayan border. Under the skilful leadership of this NCO the patrol found a Communist camp well hidden in thick bamboo.

The next day Corporal Bryant was a member of a successful ambush party which opened fire on two Communist terrorists who entered this camp as a result of which one was killed and one was wounded. This successful contact with Communist terrorists was the first in this area for over two years and resulted in an immediate increase in morale of the Security Forces. The finding of the camp and the casualties inflicted on the enemy were to a large part due to the example, skilful leadership and devotion to duty shown by this NCO.<sup>3</sup>

## HELP ABOUT: PRIVATE IAN CLEMENTS

218944 Private Ian George CLEMENTS

Vietnam

2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment

25/06/1970 to 01/06/1971

Australian Regular Army

DOB: 08/12/1944

POB: Maitland NSW

Private Ian George Clements was my younger brother. He was killed in a motor accident about 10 years ago (when he was in his early-60's) and I had revived my interest in Ian's military life when I met a group of the 10th intake National Service while on a cruise earlier this year. I was very impressed at the camaraderie that the men all held for each other to this day.

One of Ian's two sons mentioned that Ian had bowel cancer when he died and it was assumed that the motor accident was no accident, but a final way out. This he never once mentioned to me and others that I know of, but then that was the way many of the men handled their lives and future at that time. What a terrible way out from their nightmares when if the future, in the early days, could have been different and they could have lived happy days like everyone else has been able to do.

How we take things for granted after the fact. The general public should be made more aware of how much these men had sacrificed then, and also now, with the fallout from that war...nightmares, post-traumatic stress syndrome and the many cancers incurred from that war, and above all, the fact that many men have committed suicide because the memories of that time in their life was too much to cope with...their lives were taken unfairly, much too early and more heartbreak for their family and friends again.

I am extremely grateful for all our Veterans for putting their life and indeed their future on the line for us all.

Doreen Avery  
Rutherford, NSW

*If you are able to provide information about Ian Clements' military service, particularly in the battalion's deployment to South Vietnam in 1970-71, please contact Doreen here:*

*Email: doreen.avery@bigpond.com*

<sup>2</sup> Bob had two GPMG M-60's, tent lines & field versions, one without a forward handgrip & one with. As some will recall, Bob was aided and abetted by *Bluebell*.

<sup>3</sup> 13519 Private Keith BRYANT served in 1RAR Korea 1955-56. <http://bit.ly/1VNobzK>

### **FAREWELL, JACKY WALSH <sup>4</sup>**

*Malaya, Malaysia and Vietnam*

Was it so long ago in troubled times under a blazing sun  
We were all together as one  
Black, white and in between donned in military khaki on parade  
Marching in step with a proud military ethos we all obeyed

How many hungry, thirsty, weary miles did we march together?  
Training for war in harsh cruel country and god forsaken weather  
Yet, whatever the challenges, always caring and sharing for each other  
No matter race, colour or religion, we were proud brothers

Cobber, you served your country in peace and war  
Always true blue to the oath you swore  
I still hear your happy shouts of "all for one and one for all"  
As we scrambled to react to each and every bugle call

I remember so well your reassuring smile  
As we waited to face the unknown more than once in a while  
Your humour and sharp wit in times of stress was a comfort to all  
Such strong armour that helped us stand fast, proud and tall

Now you rest in sacred country already aged from so long ago  
Guarded by screeching birds and ever alert howling dingo  
A spirit world of dreamtime with ancient warriors just like you  
Mid ghostly shadows, we salute you dear brother and bid fond adieu

George Mansford, AM  
©March 2016

### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

#### **Jacky Walsh - Soldier and Brother**

It was a sad day to hear that our cobber, Jacky Walsh has passed on. How the memories flowed as I recalled this wonderful bloke from the very beginning of soldiering days when we first said giddy.

We joined a column which marched into all those tomorrows. Jacky was one of many indigenous soldiers whom I had the honour to serve with. Over the years there were many indigenous in our family and some of whom paid the supreme sacrifice.

Fortunately, our soldiering days were long before political correctness arrived on parade. It didn't matter who we were or where we had come from. It was the same ethos, the same rules and the same punishment for all. It didn't take long before we were a close band of brothers.

In the course of soldiering, we never blinked if someone in our military family used the term "black or white bastard." For us it was a term of endearment. Mind you, if used by a stranger it was considered an insult to all in our group.

Jacky had a sharp sense of humour. In later years he passed a message via another old comrade, Frank Moffitt which stated "Just passed George's place but short of time. I placed some rocks on his property and an official note that I am claiming his land."

Oh, Jacky Walsh, we're going to miss you, you magnificent old bastard.

George Mansford  
Gordonvale, Qld

### **THE DOOR GUNNERS**

*Vietnam*

'Get your gear boys  
You're going with some Yanks.  
No more bashing bush for you,  
You'll be with the 'Septic Tanks'

So Stan and several others  
Gathered up their gear.  
Night flying in a chopper  
Flack jacket on, door open, no fear.

They flew across the Mekong  
Peril, danger every hour,  
Choppers pumping noise and dust,  
Weapons full of blazing power.

For thirty days they did it.  
Sat in choppers, at the door.  
Below, the jungle hiding  
A slower, stealthy war.

They had no recognition,  
No special medal then.  
Few people knew what they had done,  
This group of 2RAR men.

But, just a few had not forgotten,  
They argued through the years  
For wings to wear with medals.  
Recognition - earned with fear.

On ANZAC Day he got them.  
His wings now worn with pride,  
And 48 years later  
Stan remembers his 'GREAT RIDE'.

Margaret Gibbons, OAM  
© April 2016

### **NOT ALWAYS AS THEY SEEM**



Before the end of Infantry Corps Training for the 3rd National Service intake in the second quarter of 1966 at 2RAR Enoggera, it was required that each trainee had an assessment completed that reflected his training performance that eventually would result in an increase in his pay.

The platoon commanders usually drafted the contents of the form which was then passed to the OC who went over it with the trainee and then both signed off on it.

One particular trainee misread the Remarks column of his and went off thinking he was judged to be a snappy dresser. This delusion continued for a while until one of his mates happened to read his assessment of performance sometime later and subsequently corrected him. It said in fact he was a sloppy dresser.

You can judge for yourself. This is Max Ingles photographed returning from an Op in the 'funny farm' (Vietnam) convinced he was a snappy dresser.

Terry Dinneen  
Winmalee, NSW

<sup>4</sup> 13578 LCpl Keith Walsh, 2RAR Malaya 1955-57, Malaysia 1961-63, 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit Vietnam 1971

### **DAVID BUTLER: THE HOOK BATTLE**

*When the 28th Brigade took over the defences on the Hook on 9 and 10 July 1953, Brigadier Wilton placed both Australian battalions in the two forward positions, with 2RAR on the left and 3RAR on the right, immediately to the west of the Samichon River. This position was the most threatened area on the Commonwealth Division's front in the last three months of the war.*

2RAR took over the Hook from the Kings Regiment, who had replaced the Duke of Wellington's after their gallant defence against the odds. The Kings were only there for a week, so a lot remained for 2RAR to complete. For starters the Chinese were on the wire. Quite literally they were camped there. Shortly after the hour appointed for the Truce a reinforced Chinese platoon suddenly appeared. They were dug in on the northern (reverse) slope of the Green Finger, 30 to 40 yards from the forward pits of the Hook Company. Their orders had been to fight to the last man. It was no wonder the patrol battle for 2RAR had been so fierce.

Every night for ten days or so there had been intense, savage patrol battles to force the Chinese off the wire. At those close ranges it was difficult to even get out of the trench without contest with the enemy. It was a deadly race at dusk every day for those brave men. The cost had been heavy, but the battalion endured and was successful.

The Chinese were slowly forced back. That Chinese platoon on first contact with our soldiers after the Truce, before the hierarchy arrived, made it quite clear they had not expected to withstand the aggressive Australian patrols for much longer. They were at the end of their tether. How vital it proved, when the main battle commenced, that 2RAR standing patrols were forward of the main line and able to direct heavy fire on to the first sign of enemy approach.

What is not generally appreciated is that that standing patrol on the Green Finger was manned and remained in position throughout each night of the battle despite the presence of enemy in overwhelming strength. Furthermore, a Vickers machine gun section, located with the US Marine right forward company, about 500 yards west of the 2RAR position, sited so as to fire in enfilade across the battalion front, held its position when the US company was over run and continued to support the battalion.

The section commander took as many men as could be spared from the guns and formed a defensive position, which gallantly and effectively halted successive Chinese attacks. Immediately east of those intrepid machine gunners was the Contact Bunker. It was so named because it was the link on the divisional boundary, sitting to cover the entrant leading up to the 121 feature. The position, manned by a rifle section, was right on the axis of the Chinese thrust. Not only did they endure the maelstrom of artillery fire the enemy directed against their area but also continued to call for the devastating friendly fire, at times onto their own position, which so grievously thwarted the Chinese thrust. It is not enough to talk generally about the patrol battle.

People must be aware of the absolute necessity of capitalising on the advantages so hard won in that patrol battle. Those two cool young corporals at the Green Finger standing patrol and the Contact Bunker, together with the machine gun sergeant, each with their gallant sections, played such an important part in the successful defence and the final victory and provide a classic example of what should be done. Incidentally, the three gallant NCO's were each awarded the Military Medal for their outstanding feats of arms. I have often wondered whether, at other times, in other units, in other armies, or, in other wars, they may have been differently rewarded.<sup>5</sup>

### **NOTES ON THE DEFENSIVE FIRE AND HARASSING FIRE TASKS OF THE BATTALION'S MMG AND MORTAR PLATOONS**

On Hill 159 between 5th May and 16th June 1953 there was one section of MMGs on the left forward feature and two sections and platoon HQ low down on the spur behind the Anti-tank platoon with the task of firing almost due west along the Bowling Alley. The location of the MMGs on the HOOK was as related and as shown on the map on page 4. Nearly all shooting was done "off the map" using dial sights. This was quite accurate although there was the usual problem with map enlargements causing map distortion in the process as did moisture. Using an eight figure map reference was quite useless to the rifle companies who had to rely on 1:50,000 maps.

The Machine-guns used Mk VIIIZ ammunition with alleged maximum range of 4,500 yards, but were rarely fired over 3,500 yards. The ammunition proved good, but the barrels stripped their rifling after a few thousand rounds and had to be replaced. The factory loaded belts were poor with loose rounds causing many stoppages.

The one mortar base plate position on Hill 159 was at the rear at about GR 150175. On the HOOK there were two base plate positions. Mortar Fire controllers were located on Hill 121 with C Company, on the HOOK with B and later D Company, and the two 3RAR Mortar Platoon fire controllers were situated in their forward platoons.

The 2RAR Mortar platoon had six Defensive fire tasks and thirteen counter mortar tasks. The MMG platoon had twelve defensive fire tasks and the 3RAR defensive fire tasks were four. The Durham Light Infantry, one of the Reserve Battalions, was also tasked with MMG and Mortar defensive fire tasks.

When not engaged the 2RAR MMG sections were laid on Warsaw and Seattle. Calls for MMG fire could only be sanctioned by Company commanders, and for mortar support through the mortar fire controllers to the Officer Commanding Support Company.

### **DAVID BUTLER: REGIMENTAL HONOURS**

I share Bob Downey's (PI Comd B Coy) concern there is no specific regimental battle honour for the Hook; currently the generic, The Samichon, is judged to cover the battle. The battle in which 2RAR played such a significant part produced the only clear-cut victory achieved by either side in any of those torrid Hook battles. Since the two British regiments engaged in the earlier battles, The Black Watch and The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (and The Kings Regiment), each were awarded the singular battle honour, The Hook, it seems only proper the Royal Australian Regiment should be also rewarded for 2RAR's battle. Ironically the Samichon is not even emblazoned on the Regimental Colour.

*Major General D.M. Butler, AO, DSO served with 3RAR (Lt, 1950-51) & 2RAR (Capt, Signals Offr 1953-54) in Korea. He commanded 6RAR during its second tour in South Vietnam in 1969-70. Ed.*

### **MALAYA: LEAD IN**

In 1955, the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) was formed in Malaya. The Australian Army component was mainly a battalion group, based on an RAR battalion, forming part of 28 Commonwealth Brigade Group. The primary role of the BCFESR was 'to provide a deterrent to, and be available at short notice to assist in countering, further communist aggression in South East Asia'. Its secondary and related role was to assist in the maintenance of the security of Malaya by participating in operations against Communist Terrorists (CT). A communist insurrection to seize control of Malaya had commenced in 1948 and became the Malayan Emergency.

<sup>5</sup> The 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment in Korea, 1953-1954  
By H R (Bob) Downey on behalf of the 2RAR Association Inc.

## **OUR PRESENCE IN MALAYA 1961-63**

By Bryan Pannell

### **The Final Operation**

The final operation involved an entirely new area further to the East near the "Bettong Salient" (an area where the border is in a "V" shape, South into Malaya proper). This involved a five-day approach march along a large river to the Company search area. This was particularly arduous as we were in and out of the river all the way and as it meandered considerably, we seemed to be doing a lot of hard work but not getting very far. When it was time for my Platoon to take the lead for the Company, I sent my point Section over a small ridge line hoping to escape the waterlogged drudgery of the river. After about half an hour of effort, it became obvious that there was one false crest after another but as we were now committed to this route we kept going ever upwards. After an hour, we stopped for the usual five-minute break with Company HQ not far behind all looking very "black" in my direction. Luckily, the OC was too pooped to abuse me but I got the message so it was back to the river.

We eventually got to our designated search area, did five days patrolling and then received an "air drop" of rations and supplies including some demi-johns of British Navy rum - very potent stuff left over from Nelson's days. This was standard "fare" for air drops and every soldier got his "tot". It was truly vile stuff so not everyone took up the offer so those that did, got more than their intended share. This was disastrous. The Company was a shambles, with drunk and violently ill soldiers lying around everywhere. My platoon was a "write off" and all we, who had "signed the pledge" could do, was to ensure that no one died from alcoholic poisoning. There were some very sore heads after that.

We did another 10 days patrolling without result then it was time to pull out. However, rather than walk back along the river, Diplomatic permission was given for us to walk into Thailand and BE driven back to our base at Kroh. We very pleased to meet up with our vehicles.

I travelled back to Terendak by train after a short period of hospitalization due to an obscure jungle fever and arrived to find a very relaxed Battalion and that I had a new job. Because of my hospitalization, the CO decided I needed a rest from running around on training exercises and the like and some sort of staff position was warranted. The Battalion was experiencing an unusual number of visitors from both Australia and Singapore and they were accommodated in the Officer's Mess. The CO decided that they needed to be looked after and redeployed the 2ic of the Mortar Platoon to the Officer's Mess as the permanent Mess Secretary. Lt 'Sos' Nesbit had been doing this job for six months and was due for rotation so I was posted to Support Company as 2ic of the Mortar Platoon and spent the next six months in the Secretary's office, at the Mess.

This was not the sort of job I had been looking for but it wasn't going to be forever. It introduced me to catering matters, planning social events, book keeping and even the bar operations. As staff I had a Sergeant Cook plus a Corporal and three Private Cooks, an acting Mess Sergeant in the form of a Lance Corporal Barman, God knows where the real Mess Sergeant was employed as I can't recall seeing him for the whole two years we were there. There were also three Malaysian Stewards and five Malaysian Batmen to look after the "living in" officers. The job gave me the perfect opportunity to plan and arrange my wedding, the reception for which was held in the Mess. After our wedding, I was reposted as the Assistant Adjutant at Battalion HQ & remained in this position until well after we returned to Australia.

*(More anecdotes (Return to Australia) from Bryan Pannell in October.)*

## **MALAYA 1955-57: HARRY SMITH**

After National Service 1952, followed by OCS and Platoon Commander 18 NS Trg Bn near Hobart, I was posted to 2RAR Malaya in October 1955, flown up as a reinforcement officer. I was a Second Lieutenant, and posted to 9 Platoon Charlie Company at Sungei Siput. 8 Platoon Commander was Brian McFarlane who was to be the neighbouring Charlie Company Commander in Vietnam. The Battalion Operational HQ was at Kuala Kangsar, and the rear base was in lovely old UK Colonial Barracks on Penang Island.

I recall being told to get a crew haircut and being driven to the Company Forward Base in rubber tapper huts in a plantation. Early next morning I saw a young Malay boy walking towards the hut on a track, carrying the usual tapper's pole over his shoulder with two buckets of latex rubber. I greeted this boy with my Malay version of Good Morning - "Selamat Pagi". He looked up at me with his big eyes and bright smile and said "Good Morning Sir" in clear English. That was the last time I used Malay. And all the Bar Girls spoke good English.

We normally spent four weeks patrolling in the jungle hills or searching villages, with a weekend break back at Penang. Married officers were lucky to get a Married Quarter home with a Malay servant, but being the most junior officer I had to wait until 1956 before I could bring my young wife up from Hobart. My eldest Daughter Debbie was born at Penang in June 1956. Most of the officers were from Duntroon, and young OCS officers and their wives were not the flavour of the month, but one or two OCS wives helped my wife when I was away, which was most of the time.

Not long after I arrived I was sent to Kota Tinggi just north of Singapore for a four week UK Jungle Warfare Course and we went through the mill with very good UK Instructors. My CSM in Vietnam 1966-67, the late Jack Kirby, was to serve there as an Instructor circa 1963-65. At weekends we were given leave in Singapore, and that was my introduction to "Change Alley"; Bar Girls, and the cheap clothing, where one could have a tailor made suit finished in a day.

On the way back north from the Course on the fast Singapore Express, the train hit a UK Army Saracen Armoured Car which had stalled on a crossing and opened it up like a can of sardines. Army people on the train, like myself, were solicited to walk back along the railway track and pick up pieces of bodies, personal items, and equipment - a grizzly task I will always remember, surpassed only by the blood and gore on the Long Tan battlefield.

There was not a lot of action on patrols. On one-night ambush placed on a track between two villages, we set trip flares across the track at each end, covering the track with two Bren guns, one each end, firing along it. It was known that CTs (Communist Terrorists) often came into villages at night to collect food and money and visit families. As in Vietnam, villagers were sympathetic or forced into helping the local guerillas, or suffer atrocities.

I recall trying to keep the eyelids open and ignoring the incessant mosquitoes. It must have been about 9-30pm when a trip flare went off, the light blinding us, but revealing a figure riding a bicycle along the track. As briefed, the two Bren gunners opened up and killed the man, who turned out to be a village elder, late home after having drunk too much wine at another village. Next morning the local Police took his body and the next day a group from the Battalion attended the funeral and paid respects. Unlike all the fuss about killing civilians in Afghanistan, the Law was quite clear - anyone outside the 6pm to 6am Curfew was enemy.

Some weeks later my platoon was ordered to go into the jungle with two Iban (Borneo) Trackers and try to find a CT who had been reported going up a certain hill by local people. I moved up front just behind the Trackers, and after several hours of climbing up the ridgeline track on the hill the Trackers pointed to a figure hiding behind a bush. Armed with a US .30 Cal Carbine, I moved forward to investigate and the enemy appeared to be about to throw a grenade, so I shot him. And I must say that I fired too many rounds, but in hindsight I wanted to ensure he was dead. I can add there was a policy that a dead enemy was

better than a wounded man. I guess it was like the US Body-Count Policy in Vietnam – bodies being the status symbol of success. We carried the body down to the local road and it was taken by the Police and hung up outside the Police Station for two days with a sign indicating this is the fate of those who support the Communist push.

It was Christmas 1956 and my Platoon was ordered to be the Duty Platoon to guard Battalion HQ at Kuala Kangsar while most sub-units went back to Penang on leave. Our Adjutant was a strict former Scots Guards Captain, Donald Ramsay, who used to chastise young officers if their shorts were too short or socks too short. He would actually measure the distances above and below the knees and advise what had to be done to observe the regulations. When I reported for duty at HQ, he gave instructions that one of my main tasks was to try and locate the soldiers who were drinking and gambling after Lights Out.

With my Orderly Sergeant, Alan Seale, we would patrol the lines every night after Lights Out, but could never pin the blokes who were making the noise. They probably had a parrot on duty. But, a week or so later, the parrot must have fallen asleep and we walked right into the hut making the noise and I said "Gotcha, you rats", and my Sergeant confiscated the grog and cards. That incident earned me a nickname of "Harry The Ratcatcher", which was to be revised in Vietnam by previous 2RAR soldiers. It wasn't as has been rumoured, for giving a bonus to my men for catching the large rats that plagued our tent lines at Nui Dat. And after Long Tan it became "Harry the Cong Catcher" for a time. But I am happy with "Ratcatcher", and a flag to that effect was given to the Museum in 2011 by one of my former soldiers from Bowen, Sting Hornett. In early 1957, promoted to Lieutenant, I was selected to lead our Charlie Company half platoon patrol to set ambushes along tracks on the high mountains on the Thai border, as part of a force of five similar patrols, one from each Company including Support Company. It was reported by Agents that the leader of the Communist Terrorist organisation, Chin Peng, was moving from sanctuary in Thailand into Malaya. We set ambushes and made a HQ area well away, where those not on duty could rest, mostly playing cards to pass the long hours. But, when we wanted fresh water, more than rain we could collect off our small poncho tents, we had to patrol down steep hills to locate a creek, fill up our special water bags, then climb back up hand over hand on vines and tree roots.

Apart from signs of tigers and elephants, we saw no sign of enemy in our area, although the Support Company patrol had a kill and Sergeant Des Kennedy was awarded a MM. We were called back to Base after about four weeks, and then the Battalion returned to Holsworthy NSW in July 1957, where I became T/Captain, Vickers Machine Gun Platoon Commander with Des Kennedy as my Platoon Sergeant.<sup>6</sup>

#### **ANOTHER FIRST: MALAYA 1962**

After the departure of 1RAR (in October 1961), Malay and Gurkha battalions had assumed responsibility for the operations on the Thai border, but in mid-1962, in response to a request from the Malayan government, 2RAR deployed to the border area for three months. (Lt Col Alan) Stretton's directive placed his battalion under the operational command of the 1st Malayan Brigade; but if matters with a political context arose he was to contact the Commander 28th Brigade, and if he received orders which he thought might endanger Australian national interests or unduly imperil his men, he was to report at once to the Commander, AAF (Australian Army Force), FARELF (Far East Land Forces) and the Commander 28th Brigade (28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade). The directives issued to subsequent battalion commanders operating in Malaya and Borneo were much the same. Stretton wrote that this 'was the first occasion where Australian troops had been placed under an Asian commander so I felt I was making history when I reported to Brigadier Hamid at Ipoh to receive my orders'.<sup>7</sup>

#### **MALAYA 1961-63: 'DUTCHY' HEMERIK**

A Coy 2RAR was under the command of Major Geoffrey J Leary, (Comd AATTV 1970/71) during our tour of duty 1961/63. 3 PI A Coy was commanded by Lt Graham R Honner, PI Sgt "Tiny" Herbert, Sec Comd's "Taffy" Burt, "Blacky" Batiste, and "Skeitta" Bryant; the 2-inch mortar Cpl none other than Alec Morris, (later Lt Col OAM, DCM).

After being dumped in the middle of the night along the Singapore/Bangkok Railway line in late July 1962 we went about finding our gear and loading up before moving into the jungle to "hutchie up". We had commenced border operations on the Thai/Malay border.

It was on 3rd August 1962, when we found an unoccupied communist camp and laid out an ambush whilst the rest of 3 platoon moved to a rear area. In the camp, which was in a bamboo patch along a small creek we found a quantity of papers, food, a kitchen dug out of an ant hill covered by an attap roof (*thatch made in SE Asia from palm fronds*), and signs of occupation from not that long ago. In a tree stump, about 3 metres up, was found a modified Sten gun which to this day is on display in the 2RAR museum in Townsville.

After spending all night in ambush we were relieved around lunch time and moved into the rear area. The section that took over was "Skeitta" Bryant's section, and one of the Bren-gunners was Vince Roberts, who had a communist terrorist in his sights. Whilst waiting for the word to fire the ambush was seen on the flank by another CT. Fire was exchanged between the section and the enemy who broke contact and disappeared into the jungle. Later we learned that one communist terrorist died of wounds and a second was recovering.

We in 3 platoon were extremely proud of our contact as it was the first encounter with the communist terrorists for over two years. The battalion found further evidence of camps and food hides and proved that the locals were still helping the terrorists, whom in our area had moved over the border into Thailand.

It was the actions of the men of the 2nd Battalion during its second tour of duty in Malaya between October 1961 and August 1963 whilst engaged in anti-terrorist operations during July/October 1962 and May/June 1963 on the Malayan/Thailand border which the Committee of Inquiry into Defence and Defence Related awards 1994, considered was worthy of an award.

The Committee found that border operations were serious undertakings for which units received a full complement of ammunitions. Operations were conducted under long periods of intense activity in extreme heat and humidity carrying ammunition, rations and water.

I have no doubt that the part 2RAR and Cpl Keith "Skeitta" Bryant's actions for which he received the British Empire Medal, played a major part in the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 with Thai/Malay clasp being awarded for the period 1 August 1960 and the 16 August 1964.

The award benefited members of 1RAR in 1960/61 and 3RAR in early 1964, no doubt the 2nd Battalion not only looks after its own, but also the member battalions of The Royal Australian Regiment.<sup>8</sup>

*It should be noted here that the award of the ASM 1945/75 with Clasp Thai-Malay border was upgraded to the Australian Active Service Medal 1945/75 with Clasp Thai/Malay, land and air anti-terrorist operations, wef. 1 Aug 1960 — 31 Aug 1964. The Clasp Thai/Malay was removed from the ASM 1945/75 and the Clasp SE Asia was awarded for the period 1 Aug 1960 — 16 Aug 1964 on the ASM 1945/75, for service on land in Malaysia, excluding Thai-Malay border when on warlike operations.*

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Printed courtesy of: Hon Peter Dutton MP, Federal Member for Dickson, 3/199 Gympie Rd Strathpine Qld 4500

<sup>6</sup> Lt Col Harry Smith SG, MC saw service during the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War. He was OC D Coy, 6RAR at the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966.

<sup>7</sup> Duty First: A history of the Royal Australian Regiment. Edited by David Horner & Jean Bou. © 2008. Page 127

<sup>8</sup> WO1 J.H (Dutchy) Hemerik RSM 2/4RAR 1977-79

**2ND BATTALION  
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT  
ASSOCIATION, INC.**



**II**

**NEW MEMBERSHIP**     
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**RAR Service**

RAR Battalions	1 RAR	2RAR	3RAR	4 RAR	5 RAR	6 RAR	7 RAR	8 RAR	9 RAR	2/4 RAR	5/7 RAR	8/9 RAR
Years e.g. 1970-71												

**Theatres Served/Years:**

Japan	Korea	Malaya	Malaysia	Vietnam	Cambodia	Rwanda	East Timor	Solomon Is	Iraq	Timor Lesté	Afghanistan	Other
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**Post-Nominals:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Wife/Partner's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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*(Financial Year: 1 October to 30 September)*

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

\$20

**MULTI-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

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**Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ 2014 **Receipt Required? YES/NO**

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Book: Trackers Vietnam 1967/68. Peter Haran	\$29.00		Name Tag: Preferred name: _____	\$28.00	

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