



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 2017

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the last issue of Ringo for 2017. The year has again been a busy one and it was highlighted by a most successful reunion we held in Brisbane 17-21 May this year. It is the continued hard work and dedication of the management team that ensures that the Association continues to maintain its effectiveness.

The annual 2RAR Association AGM and reunion was again held at Tweed Heads 27-28 October and although well attended, numbers were down slightly from last year. The May reunion may have had something to do with that.

Congratulations to all the committee members who were re-elected at the 2017 AGM; and we welcome our incoming committee member, Dave Hatton, OAM. Paul King who has been on the committee for some 20 years has resigned his position. The Association thanks Paul and his wife Judith for their outstanding support to the Association over many years. At the reunion on 28 October, Paul was recognised for his service by being awarded the Silver Soldier. Also awarded were Norm Devereux and Rick Hollingdrake, OAM.

Following the AGM, a Commemorative Service was held at Cunningham Park and was officiated by our Honorary Padre Graeme Davis, OAM, CSM. Following the service, members and their guests gathered at the Visions Room in the Mantra resort for fellowship, camaraderie, and good cheer. It was a most enjoyable day. The whole reunion was well organised and Rick Hollingdrake, OAM and his team that put together the program are to be commended for their efforts. Well done indeed.

In early October CO 2RAR sent the following message to the Association:

The Battalion's 72nd birthday marks another significant milestone for the unit, transferring from the 3rd Brigade, Forces Command to Headquarters 1st Division. We have already commenced this journey in leading Army's contribution to amphibious operations. As a Battalion we look forward to the new role and challenges of generating the Australian Defence Force's specialist pre-landing force. Although smaller, we will be more agile and innovative, and provide a specialised capability.

We will continue as a Battalion as we have so far, achieving the tasks and missions set for us as quiet professionals. Thank you for your continued support.

2RAR formally transitioned to 2RAR (Amphib) on 15 October and the restructure was marked by a parade on November 23 – the 69th anniversary of the Royal Australian Regiment.

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The Association was formally represented by the Secretary Gordon Hurford, AM and Dave Hatton, OAM. During the visit to Townsville, Gordon Hurford took the opportunity to present Tom Florence with the 2RAR Association award for being the unit champion soldier for 2017. Well done!

WO1 Trent Morris, RSM 2RAR, will be leaving the Battalion at the end of the year. WO1 Morris has always been very supportive of the Association and has ensured an enduring spirit of cooperation and camaraderie between the Battalion and the Association. A job extremely well done, and the Association wishes him and his family well. Gordon Hurford, on behalf of the Association, presented WO1 Morris with a Silver Soldier at Lavarack Barracks for his outstanding contribution in further cementing the good relationship between the Battalion and the Association.

Our Association representative in North Qld, Jock Cassidy, has continued to work closely with 2RAR to seek ways in which the Association can support Battalion activities. Jock has resigned from his position as Nth Qld rep and the Association is extremely grateful for his outstanding efforts over the years. The excellent relationship between the Battalion and the Association is in no small way the result of Jock's hard work and dedication. For his outstanding contribution over many years, Jock was presented with Life Membership, the highest accolade we can give to a member. The Association congratulates Jock and we wish him and his family well.

Sadly, again this year we have farewelled almost 40 of our members. On behalf of the Association I would like to extend my condolences to the families and friends of those who have passed away. There are also many veteran members who continue to struggle because of their service and our thoughts are with them as we wish them well. If you have information on any of our members being seriously ill or have passed away, please let the Association Secretary know as soon as possible so arrangements can be made. Cont. next page below...

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

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WARRIORS WHO HAVE MARCHED OUT

- 311542 Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Hepworth (Jerry) TAYLOR AM, MC. 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68 (Spt Coy), 4RAR Vietnam 1971-72 OC D Coy Battle of Nui Le September 1971. Jerry passed away on 18 November 2017. Age: 77+ years. POB: Chester, Cheshire England. Jerry requested there will be no service at all. Thanks Greg Shannon, Warren Dowell, Alan Price
- 1200336 Christopher James MAGUIRE, 2/4RAR A Coy Rwanda (1979-81), 2RAR, 4RAR(Commando). Taken suddenly from us all. Age: 44+ years. James's funeral was held on 30 October at the Great Southern Memorial Park Cemetery, Carbrook, Qld. Forever and always in our hearts. Thanks Jason Harrison
- 38658 Private Gordon Stanley JESSUP, 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68. Sad news on the passing of Gordon. Age: 82+ years. Gordon's funeral was held on 12 October 2017 at Shepparton Vic. Gordon was a member of the Battalion Band. Thanks Jim Cooper
- 17620 Corporal Barry George RITCHIE, 2RAR Vietnam 1967-68 Spt Company/Mor PI (MFC). Passed away on 19 October 2017 at St Andrew's Hospital, Ipswich, Qld. Age: 81+ years. Barry's funeral was held on 26 October; afterwards at the Kerwick Hotel Redbank, Qld. Barry passed away a week before the annual reunion catch-up. Thanks Deidre Ritchie
- 2782987 Corporal Bohdan (Bill, Storkie) STOROK, 2RAR Vietnam 1967 (A/Tk PI). POB: Germany. Bill passed away 20 November 2017 of lung cancer at Johns River, NSW. Age: 72+ years. Service held at St Peter the Fisherman, Laurieton, NSW. Best known as Storkie, he left behind Irene and 9 children; 8 girls & 1 boy. Thanks Bob Moody.
- 33461 Major Ian Gordon HANDS, MID 2RAR Malaya 1955-57. 3RAR Vietnam 1967-68 (OC C Coy). Ian passed away peacefully on 27 Nov 2017. A Poppy Service for the "Major" was conducted on 4 Dec 2017 at Currumbin RSL. A man of integrity who treated his soldiers with respect. Thanks Wayne Eastgate
- 15725 Ronald ORGAN 2RAR Malaysia 1961-63, 1RAR Vietnam 1965-66, 8RAR Vietnam 1969-70. Late of Gaythorne, Qld. Ron passed away peacefully 30th October 2017 at the Holy Spirit Hospital Brisbane, Qld. Age: 78 years. A celebration of Ron's life was held on 13 November at Burpengary, Qld. Ron was a good supporter of Dads Army RAR NMW, Enoggera. Thanks Ray Payne OAM, Greg Decker



*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: FRED CLARKE

In the October 2017 edition of RINGO, we unfortunately recorded the passing of Fred Clark. Fred in turn was most surprised when the phone rang hot from mates checking on the veracity of his demise. Not to be outdone, in the same edition of RINGO, we congratulated Fred for being a winner of the Members' Draw held on 2 August. A great outcome!

The book prize was successfully hand-delivered by me. When I said 'we', I meant I. Ed.

Cont. from page above...

The project to upgrade the 2RAR display at the VVAA museum on Phillip Island is now complete. Max Ingles and his team are complimented on the development of this project. The 2RAR Association has provided the funds for this upgrade. The official opening was held at the VVA museum on 21 November at the VVAA Phillip Island Museum and was well attended. Our patron, Maj-Gen Mick Slater, AO, DSC, CSC, (Retd) also made time to be there. Following the short address by the President, members enjoyed an informal lunch.

The Association remains in a sound financial position. The current membership sits at around 550 and while most of these are Vietnam veterans, we are starting to see a number of younger ex-2RAR members coming on board. The committee is developing a strategy to attract more post-Vietnam members into the Association.

I attended the annual RAR Association conference in Melbourne recently where there was considerable discussion on the way ahead for all unit and state RAR Associations. This is an exciting time for all RAR associations. A development plan has been prepared looking at the way ahead for the next 5-7 years.

We have a current 2RAR Honours and Awards publication which lists 2RAR members who received awards as a result of operational service. This publication covers the unit from 1945 to 1995.¹

The committee is currently examining how this project might be progressed and we are looking at a variety of options available. If there is anyone out there who is interested in taking on or become involved in this project we would like to know as honour and awards is an important element of the Battalion's history.

The Association is heading in the right direction as we seek to increase the younger veteran membership base. I would like to acknowledge the ongoing dedication and hard work of the 2RAR Association committee members who through their efforts ensure that the Association continues to thrive.

Finally, I would like to wish all members and their families a most enjoyable and safe festive season.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Leo Van De Kamp
President

IN THE NEWS

Maj Gen Chris Field, AM CSC (CO 1RAR 2004-05)

Townsville's most senior ADF officer has farewelled Lavarack Barracks after handing over command of Townsville's 3rd Brigade to incoming Brigadier Scott Winter, AM (RAAC).

Maj Gen Field and his wife will move to MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. There Maj Gen Field will be the next United States Central Command's deputy director of operations. "It is a great opportunity for us as coalition partners with United States to contribute to that great endeavour and I look forward to the challenges," he said.

Maj-Gen Field has held four postings to Lavarack Barracks, including as CO 1RAR, and having served with both 2/4RAR and 2RAR.

CHRISTMAS RIDDLES ²

1. What lies at the bottom of the sea and shivers?
2. What do you call a prawn who won't let you play with his present?
3. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?
4. What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back?
5. How do sheep greet each other at Christmas?

¹ © 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment Association, Inc. 1997

² Answers to Christmas riddles on page 11

AGM, COMMEMORATION & REUNION 2018

The AGM will be held on Sat 27 Oct 18 in the ANZAC Room Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL, the Commemoration Service at Chris Cunningham Park (under shade), and the Reunion at Twin Towns Services Club.

Looking forward to seeing YOU.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 2017 committee meetings were held as follows:

- Wed 1 Feb 17 ✓
- Wed 7 Jun 17 ✓
- Wed 4 Oct 17 ✓
- Wed 5 Apr 17 ✓
- Wed 2 Aug 17 ✓
- Thu 14 Dec 17 ✓

FROM THE TREASURER

Some members when making payments for membership and/or merchandise send Australian Money Orders through the Post Office. However, there is a cost involved.

Rather than spending extra money, suggest going to your bank and asking for a direct transfer to the Association bank account. In most cases no cost is involved.

Suncorp bank: BSB: 484 799 / Account No: 063 350 355

Please provide name or service number so we can identify who has done the bank transfer.

MEMBERS' DRAW

Congratulations to Brian Humphrey of Terang, Vic winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 12 October who received the book: Afghanistan: Australia's War by Gary Ramage & Ian McPhedran. © 2014.

Congratulations also to Kevin Tupper of Bridgeman Downs, Qld winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 14 December who received the book: Afghanistan: Australia's War by Gary Ramage & Ian McPhedran. © 2014.

NEW MEMBERSHIPS

A warm welcome to new members (3)

Neil Roberts	Bundamba, Qld	2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) 1970-71
Graeme Smith	Buderim, Qld	East Timor 1999, 2001
David Bell	Elanora, Qld	2/4RAR, 5/7RAR

DONATIONS

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

Dasher Dean	Norm Devereux	Paul King
Boris Zoubakin		

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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 (Amphib).

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

COMMANDING OFFICER'S ORDER OF THE DAY

Today marks the occasion on which 2RAR transitions from being a light infantry battalion in the 3rd Brigade to a specialised pre-landing force of the Amphibious Task Group and part of the 1st Division.

Raised as the 66th Battalion on the 16th of October 1945, renamed the 2nd Battalion on the 23rd of November 1948 and then becoming one of the foundation units of the RAR on the 31st of March 1949 the black Battalion is one of Australia's finest units, serving with distinction in Japan, Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan. Since its inception, 2RAR has carried a well-earned reputation for outstanding performance in the field and the relentless pursuit of excellence, regardless of the task. Through your actions in support of the amphibious trial and from what you have shown that you are capable of in 2017, you have enhanced the reputation of a Battalion that is second to none. As we embark on the journey towards delivering a world class pre-landing force (PLF) capability for our nation, the impressive reputation of 2RAR will endure. The successful conclusion of the amphibious trial is a critical milestone and it is important to recognise the significant contributions of all of the 1300 soldiers and officers who have been posted to 2RAR during the trial. I thank you for your efforts. Regardless of whether you are staying or leaving 2RAR (Amphib), you can all hold your heads high in the knowledge that you have played a valuable role in delivering a strategically significant and credible amphibious capability for your nation. You can be proud of your service in 2RAR and of what this unit has achieved. You will always be part of the 2RAR family and welcome at Samichon Lines.

The transition of 2RAR is a unique and exciting opportunity. Leaner and more agile, 2RAR (Amphib) will be a specialist amphibious support unit, with specialist roles requiring specialist equipment and expertise. We will become the Army's conventional force experts at amphibious reconnaissance and surveillance, small boat operations, battle space shaping, riverine operations, deep ground reconnaissance and limited scale raids in support of a joint force. We are forging new ground and we will drive the PLF capability forward to ensure that 2RAR (Amphib) becomes the premier conventional amphibious and land reconnaissance unit in the world.

The culture, professionalism and excellence in foundation warfighting skills that have been the hallmark of 2RAR since 1945 will not change. These strengths have allowed 2RAR to make an effective contribution to the amphibious trial and these same attributes will be the foundation stone on which 2RAR (Amphib) builds a world class PLF capability. At the same time, we will remain ready to switch our focus and to once again function as one of Army's most capable Infantry Battalions. Your agility and professionalism, underpinned by outstanding leadership at all levels, will enable this flexibility.

2RAR's transition and the generation of a new capability will not be without its challenges. That's ok. We'll confront these challenges head on, find a solution and then move on without fuss. That is the 2RAR way. We are the quiet professionals. Composed, fit, adaptable, and humble men and women who let our actions speak louder than our words and who can be relied upon to do whatever it takes to get the job done. These qualities will enable us to rise to meet any challenge. I am proud to serve as CO 2RAR (Amphib) and of what we have achieved in 2017. It will be a privilege to continue serving alongside you as we take the next step in the very proud history of a unit that will always be, second to no one.

Doug Pashley
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer
Second Battalion (Amphibious),
The Royal Australian Regiment
15 October 2017

CITATION: LIFE MEMBERSHIP

John "Jock" Cassidy

"Jock" joined the Army in 1966. He served in 2RAR from 1967 to 1973. He was a Rifleman on the first tour of duty with 2RAR in Vietnam and as a Section Commander on the second tour.



*Presented to John "Jock"
Cassidy
In recognition of his
appointment to Life
Membership
of 2RAR Association
November 2017*

Jock has had extensive involvement in the ex-service community of North Queensland for many years. These included Legacy, RSL as Welfare and Pensions Officer, Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (including President) and The Royal Australian Regiment Association QLD. Each organisation enjoyed his complete involvement and dedication in the roles that he performed.

Jock assumed the responsibility as the 2RAR Association North Queensland Representative in 2009. For many years, Jock has maintained a close relationship with the men of 2RAR. He has seen the Battalion or elements of it, deploy on several occasions. On each occasion he has

been in the forefront of organising, on behalf of the Association, activities and outings for the families of the Battalion, particularly the children. Through these he has been able to ease the burden of the isolation for the family that can so easily occur when the Battalion deploys.

Jock also helped to raise a fishing club for the Battalion; he conducted golf days and outings for the soldiers and family days in the park. His fundraising efforts are extraordinary, raising funds for the National Memorial Walk and the Association. He continues to conduct raffles on behalf of the Association.

Jock Cassidy continues to provide unconditional and caring support to the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families, dispensed with compassion and good humour. He has exceptional organisational skills; he is big-hearted and has generosity of spirit. He is dedicated to and passionate about helping others. He is persistent, enthusiastic, and tireless in his work on behalf of the Association.

He has exemplified a steadfast and unwavering commitment to 2RAR and 2RAR Association. His tireless efforts in support of the Association have been "Second to None".

The Association is pleased to recognise the services of John "Jock" Cassidy and appoint him to Life Membership. *Well done, Mate! Ed.*

THE KURE BELL

By Brig Gen M.A. (Mick) Mahy: CO 2RAR 2005-06

I note in the newsletter there is also a request for clarification on the Kure Bell. The plaque in question was positioned next to the bell that hung in the bar at the 2/4 and then the 2RAR Officers Mess. The bell itself was substantial and very large but I seem to recall that it didn't belong to 2RAR regimental property and was in-fact a 4RAR item.

I was ADJT at the time of delinking and we were fortunate to find in the bottom draw of the Bn 2ICs (Maj Sam McCall RIP) 4 drawer safe an original copy of the minutes from the linking meeting between the Bn 2ICs for 2 and 4RAR discussing Regimental property and funds.

The museum may well still have the document in their records. I also seem to recall that 4RAR wanted their bell back and we threw smoke for a long time to ensure it remained with 2RAR. I'm not sure where it is now.

NATIONAL VIET NAM VETERAN'S MUSEUM

2RAR Display: Phillip Island, Victoria

By Major General M.D. Slater AO, DSC, CSC (Retd)

Recently a small group of the Battalion's veterans sat in silence under the wing of a magnificent Canberra bomber inside the National Viet Nam Veteran's Museum on Phillip Island as Lance Corporal Kevin Aub Terry (Retd) called the Battalion's Viet Nam Roll of Honour. Heavy hearts and solemn faces reflected the intense emotions of the small number of veterans who gathered with wives, friends and museum staff.



A gathering of friends of the battalion

This gathering of our members was like others that take place throughout the year at many places across Australia. On this occasion, like many others the people in attendance were few but the quality of the small ceremony and deep respect for the fallen was ever present as always.

This shared respect for service and sacrifice, mateship and duty has and will always provide the bonds which link each generation of soldiers to the next. It is often the same determined few of our veterans who give freely of their time with great determination to ensure the memories and the deeds of the many are always remembered, and that history is recorded and remembered accurately.

The tragic events of 28 September 1967 when a US gunship killed 3 and wounded 14 members of D Coy during a firing demonstration in front of the battalion's position were recalled in detail by Private Harry Leggett (Retd). Harry was one of the men badly wounded when a rocket malfunctioned and struck the company gathered to see the show. This little-known event, an undisclosed story of loss and pain for many now features as the centrepiece of the 2RAR display.

The museum is a worthy tribute to the men and women who served in the Viet Nam war. The various displays and military hardware tell of many fights and of life's hardships and any chance to visit the museum should be taken. But on this day when I attended the opening ceremony I could clearly see the most valued inclusion in the collection that day were the visiting men of the 2RAR Association who sat silently as Aub Terry called the Roll of Honour in memory of their fallen mates.

These are the men who, with their mates executed their duty so finely that they forged a reputation for all who would follow in their footsteps. Their traditions and reputation continue today and will continue tomorrow because of the professionalism and courage of the battalion today. It is a reputation that is Second to None.

A GOOD READ

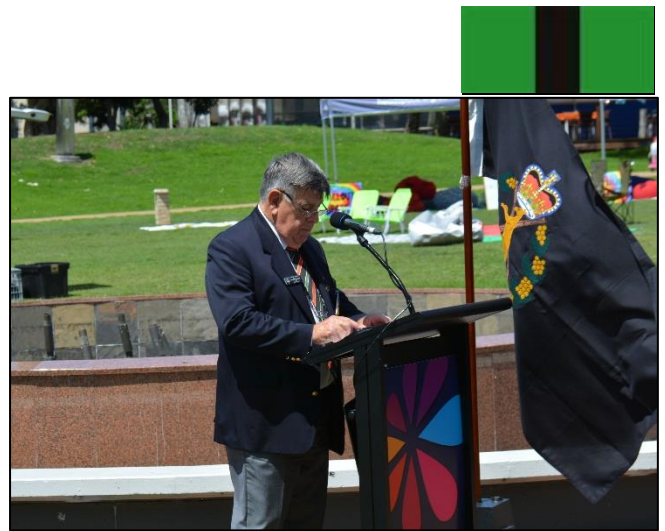
"Fun, Fear & Frivolity" by Ian Cavanaugh

I am a retired Sapper who served with Div Int in Vietnam in 1968-69. On the Internet, I found a book by Ian Cavanaugh who served in Vietnam with 2 PI A Coy 2RAR in 1970-71. The book is a good read, including Enlistment, Recruit Trg, Corps Trg and posting to 2RAR in Townsville, and deployment to Vietnam.

Neil Garland: lastmove15@bigpond.com

HQ AFV (Army Component)

COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2017



COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2017



COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2017



COMMEMORATION & COMARADERIE 2017



SECOND TO NONE

'POP' BERRIGAN: IN VIETNAM 2RAR 1967-68



L to R: Pte Stephen 'Pop' Berrigan & Pte Edwin Wolfe (No.2)

Op Coburg 25 Jan 68: Exhuming Bodies

"We were conveyed by Armoured Personal Carriers and accompanied by Centurion Tanks to the Nui Dinh Hills to confirm some kills by a US airstrike on the VC. We exhumed some bodies from the graves. Each of the bodies was then wrapped in a nylon hammock. The body I exhumed was that of a 12 or 14-year-old boy. There were no visible wounds on him. Bubbles of air were still coming from his mouth. The fact that this body which I exhumed, and then reburied, was that of a child and had a great effect upon me."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

CAM/67/0541/VN

216678 Pte William (Bill) Thomas (Sig PI)

Op Nullarbor 17 Feb 68: Search of Hoa Long Village

"We were protecting the marshalling point where the villagers were gathered for searching and questioning. The VC had previously opened fire on the troops at the marshalling point. During the night there were sporadic fire fights. In the morning a Vietnamese police officer went up in a chopper with a loud speaker and told the VC to surrender or the Australians would mortar the village and sweep through the village and kill them. Apparently, a few VC did surrender. We then swept through the village and killed 5 VC and captured a rocket launcher, machine guns and rifles. A Coy killed 15 VC the day before to total 20 VC KIA. Three truckloads of suspects were carted off for questioning."

Op Clayton 21 Feb 68: Cordon & Search of Long Dien

"We went through the search of Long Dien and found quite a few old people too sick or too old to walk to the marshalling area. I carried an old bloke to one of the trucks sent to pick them up. Hell, he was a frail old thing. I never thought a person could be so light. He was nothing but skin and bone. We wondered how many wars these old people had seen. The country has hardly ever had peace. The man I carried was hidden under bags on the table in the house by his family. He was so frail and frightened. Carrying him in my arms was a privilege. I never forgot him."

OP MAGNUS: THAI-MALAY BORDER

By 15345 Donald Godley: 6 PI B Coy 2RAR 1962

Early on the morning of the 31st July 1962, the battalion left Terendak Camp, Malacca and went by truck to the Tampin Railway Station. There we boarded a Troop Train headed north towards Thailand. We only made regular stops to refill the water tank on the steam engine, but we were not permitted to get off and stretch our legs. Yes, the entire move north was conducted in the most secret manner, just as General (AB) Stretton (CO 2RAR 1961-63) has described in his book. In Malaya we operated as an Air Portable Battalion. This meant that when ever the balloon went up, we were out of camp in eight hours. The Malayan Government would not permit any of the Far East Strategic Reserve from leaving for war duties from their country. It was therefore arranged that Singapore would be our jump off point, therefore whenever we left Terendak Camp, we always went to Singapore, either by road, train or air. On Singapore we usually camped at Nee Soon camp, though that only came into being following our first visit to the large British Army Camp of war time fame, which turned into a fiasco the first night because we refused to follow British Army tradition that stated that all Corporals must drink in a separate canteen, unlike us Australians. A blue developed which resulted in considerable damage to the British corporals wet canteen. Following a Battalion parade the next day, it was decided by Aust. Army, Singapore the best place to house us was out at Nee Soon, well out of harms way. Sometimes we drew ammunition before departing camp, so on this occasion when leaving for actual operational duty, the usual camp spies, be they Boot Boys, Doby Wallahs or the camp Tailor/Photographer, were completely fooled. This was how we came to get the jump on the C.T.s at the Border. They had no idea that 2RAR was coming. The Battalion travelled right through the day and on until about midnight. We alighted just short of the Thai Border and the train, our link with civilisation, steamed off. That is how we came to meet with the most north-western and smallest state of Malaya, Peris.

The platoon broke open the ammo boxes, fully loaded all magazines for the weapons, fused and handed around the grenades and it was ready for action. This was the first time for most of us and it felt rather strange. We were setting off to hunt men. All our rubbish was buried, and we moved off into the forbidding, black jungle, where we slept the remainder of the night, lying in a close group on the ground. There would be no more talking in normal voices until the end of the operations in the area. All communications would be by signs or whisper. There would be no washing, shaving or mozzie repellent from here on in. Even dry shaving could not be attempted because any cut may allow leptospirosis to enter our bodies. Soaps and all other odours could be detected by old C.T.'s over great distances. They had been in the jungle environment since the jap's during the second world war.

Shortly after first light, we moved off in patrol formation towards the unknown west and made for the area we had orders to patrol for four or five days. The going was tough, not hills, but thick jungle that soon gave way to bamboo country of the worst kind. Bamboo like that is frightening. Nothing else grows in it. The ground is covered with a thick layer of rotting leaves, that in some places can be a foot thick. Great clumps of it grows, possibly a hundred feet high in places. To move through this sort of country, one must crawl under masses of dead wood and in other places squeeze between or roll over it. It is most exhausting work. Usually it's the cursed mud slipping, sliding and Wait-a-While vines hanging down tearing at your uniform and ripping at arms and necks. We came across a small creek...
(More about Op MANGUS from Donald Godley in April)

VICTOR WINKLER'S MILITARY INTERLUDE

The articles which follow are not meant to be about Vic Winkler. Instead it is a series of essays about the training undertaken by soldiers in 2RAR before they went to Vietnam in 1967, and some of the operations and events in which they participated over there. Vic was present and participated in the events described herein.



Moments before...

Friends and family of veterans have often said that the veterans did not talk much about their time in the military or when they were overseas particularly on operations, and they, the families did not know very much about what 'dad' did in the war.

I anticipate the real value of such a compilation being for further generations who may be curious enough to spend a little time and read something about what some of us did getting ready to go to war and what happened when we got there. The families already know and are aware of the effect it had on their loved ones.

Introduction

The following few words are an endeavour to put the articles herein into some sort of context and make it easier for the reader to understand Vic's short career in the military.

Vic was called-up with the third intake of National Servicemen (NSM) and commenced his recruit training at Puckapunyal in the beginning of 1966. The 2nd Recruit Training Battalion was located there for that purpose. There were two other locations where Recruit Training was conducted, Kapooka near Wagga Wagga catered for the regular soldier although some NSM were trained there as well. The 3rd Training Battalion (3TB) was at Singleton NSW. 3TB had two Coys of recruits and three Coys which trained Infantry Corps trainees. Regular Infantry Corps trainees normally were trained at Ingleburn west of Sydney, but that facility could not accommodate the large number of NSM which required training when the Royal Australian Regiment was suddenly expanded from three Battalions to nine to cope with the Vietnam War and the commitment to Malaysia and Borneo.

3TB was not fully functional in early 1966 so 2 and 6 Battalions at Enoggera were given the task of Corps Training 200 NSM each firstly in the last quarter of 1965 and then 2RAR again Corps trained some 3rd intake to keep and take with them to South Vietnam.

When Corps Training was completed in mid-1966 the Battalion conducted several exercises at a higher level before being declared 'fit to fight'. This training also included the obligatory course at the Jungle Training Centre (JTC) at Canungra which everyone being sent to South Vietnam was required to complete.

So, the Recruit Training and Infantry Corps training no matter where it was conducted was the same syllabus and achieved the same knowledge and standard of training. JTC

was a giant sausage machine which tested and put a final polish on an already fully trained Infantryman.

The Recruit Training syllabus and the Infantry Corps Training syllabus were each about 10 weeks duration. Add one or two weeks' duties and some travelling time and generally they each took about a quarter or 3 months. The period at JTC was three weeks and was not undertaken by the soldier before both recruit and Infantry Corps training was complete.

Recruit Training

No matter how much an aspiring soldier thinks he has prepared himself for military training his training as a recruit comes as somewhat of a culture shock.

The first weeks concentrate on drill without arms, i.e. no rifles. It combines introductory physical training with some initial lectures on life in the military and lots of instruction on how to live and dress as a soldier. To the recruit it appears that the only peace obtained was between 'lights out' and 'reveille', because for the rest of the time he was run off his feet.

Several weeks into his training the recruit is issued with his rifle. Now he has to learn to drill and march with the rifle while also learning to look after it and how to use it for its purpose. Stripping, assembly and cleaning precedes the drill lessons which then proceed in parallel with aiming, holding and firing practices.

Physical training intensifies, and the subjects of lectures take on a broader spectrum of the responsibilities of being a soldier. Subjects such as Military Law, First Aid, Hygiene, Geneva Conventions, Map Reading, and Character Guidance start to impact on each individual's outlook and behaviour.

About a third of the way through his training some short local leave is granted and the recruit shows himself to the public in uniform for the first time. This event helps him to feel a sense of achievement and pride. Some might even start to feel that graduation could become a reality. The recruit is now fitter than he has ever been, but not as fit as he is going to be.

About half way through the course he is introduced to mundane and essential housekeeping duties. These comprise the inevitable in the kitchen and mess, guard duties and sometimes grounds maintenance. The guard or sentry duty goes on throughout the night and introduces a pattern of broken sleep to the training of the soldier. In Vietnam it was rare to have an unbroken night's sleep as there were both radios and machineguns to be manned continuously.

Two attributes required by all soldiers are determination and aggression. The obstacle course probably contributed most to the development of determination required of a soldier while bayonet fighting drills and exercises concentrated on aggression. Bit by bit the recruit was being turned into a soldier in mind and body.

Most recruits are unaware of the totality of the administration procedures that are conducted and put in place during this period of initial training. These procedures including the raising of his Q Record, i.e. a record of his clothing and equipment issues. He sees and signs his pay book every second Thursday. His personal details are recorded in his AAB83, i.e. his name, date of birth, next of kin, education qualifications both civilian and military and leave entitlements and accruals and other information. He is photographed and copies of these are placed into his pay book, AAB83 and used on an ID card which is required for service overseas.

He visits the dentist for a detailed check of his teeth. Any urgent work is done immediately but most of the routine work such as fillings would wait until he joined his unit where

over time his dental fitness would have been improved to Draft Priority (DP1) standard. Also, there were education and psychiatry tests to complete which impact on his Corps allocation which occur towards the end of his training. The recruit's medical documentation is raised. This aspect the recruit would have been aware of as he was immunised against a multitude of diseases which to most was an unforgettable experience. All these documents would stay with him for his entire time in the Army and would eventually make up an important part of his Service Record.

In the latter half of his training the recruit is required to throw two live grenades after the appropriate instruction. The grenades were the same type that were used in both World Wars and Korea. The recruit was required to prepare and arm his two grenades before throwing them. The grenade weight is such that it could only be thrown about the length of a cricket pitch so the noise of it exploding was resounding and could be clearly felt in the throwing bay and in adjacent waiting bays. Most soldiers can still recall this particular moment of alertness and awareness as they held the grenade in their hand without the pin inserted while they identified the target before throwing it and taking cover. Another milestone in their long journey to become a trained soldier. It took only a short period of time for each recruit to prepare and throw his two grenades but the progress he achieved in controlling his anxiety by the application of self-discipline resulted in a huge boost to his self-confidence and a subsequent increase in confidence in those instructors responsible for his training.

In the final weeks he is introduced to route marches carrying full equipment and rifle. He will have to qualify with the rifle in the live firing practices and pass the physical training tests. Other subjects taught will also be tested. He will have mounted one or two and drill on the parade ground as a platoon once again commences to dominate his training as rehearsals for graduation parade become more frequent.

To some recruits the intensity of the earlier training seems to slacken off somewhat in the final weeks. Many do not realise that they are almost fully trained soldiers and are now performing as such as a matter of routine and no longer need to be harassed as they were in the beginning of their training to get on parade, on time, properly dressed leaving their barrack rooms in inspection order.

A few weeks before graduation a final, longer leave period is granted which enables most recruits to return home for a few days and then it's back to camp for Corps allocation, final tests, and graduation. Some families and friends are able to attend the Graduation Parade and beam with pride and sometimes amazement when they see the results of nearly three months of intensive training which has transformed a civilian into a soldier.

On show on the March Out Parade are the dress and steadiness and precision and timing of the drill participants which is a demonstration of the discipline of both the individual and the group, which has been strived for by the instructional staff since day one when their training commenced. This self-discipline then enables all the newly acquired and associated military skills and knowledge of the now trained soldiers to be applied as maybe required in the military environment.

Living in close proximity, sharing the same goals, depending on one another to complete the training creates a bond and develops a mateship which often lasts a lifetime. Sometimes if they remain together this mateship is re-enforced with further military in subsequent postings and particularly so if the posting is overseas on active service.

Another 2RAR Moment

In mid-1965 the Battalion split and 6RAR was born. About the fourth quarter of that year the Battalion received about 200 new march-ins who had just completed their recruit training at Puckapunyal. The first intake of the NS was to be Corps trained in the Battalion at Enoggera. Ditto 6RAR same location.

On the first Saturday morning they were assembled in the Theatre, now a gymnasium, for a welcome to the battalion and a briefing on the Battalion's history by our then adjutant, Bryan Pannell. Even then we had a history to be proud of and live up to, Korea and two tours of Malaya, and these fellas were paying attention.

The final phase was a viewing of the Colours. After an appropriate explanation of their history and significance the black curtains on the stage were parted to reveal the Colours (black) draped over the Unit's drums, also black against a background of the white movie screen.

We were all sitting to attention getting a good close-up of the colours which is never available when you are on a parade with them, so it was a unique moment, even for the old hands. But what made it more so was the noise of the mechanism that opened the stage curtains and after several minutes closed them. It was the only sound in the Theatre and sounded like a soft drum roll. How appropriate? As well when the curtains were fully opened there was a faint but nevertheless audible sound of the intake of breath from the troops as they realised that for the previous 45 minutes there were two armed sentries with fixed bayonets standing at ease on either flank of the colours behind the curtain. That 2RAR moment has stayed with me for over four decades.

We did not get to keep that intake. It was dispersed over the other Battalions about to head off to SVN. We had to do it all again with the third intake of NS who went with us on the first tour (1967-68) and now they are part of the battalion's proud history.

Next edition: RA Inf Corps Training

ABOUT: DAVID ANTHONY HATTON, OAM

2RAR Association Committee Member

David Hatton is a highly decorated individual who has served his country with distinction, specifically the Australian Regular Army for a period of 28 years, reaching the appointment of Regimental Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class One); including as RSM 2RAR 2006-08.

Awards & Commendations

Order of Australia Medal (OAM), Bronze Star Medal (BSM United States), Meritorious Service Medal (MSM United States), Member of the Order of Saint Maurice (US Infantry), Australian Active Service Medal, Australian Service Medal: (South East Asia, Timor, Sinai, Iraq), Iraq Campaign Medal, Defence Force Service Medal (3 x clasps), Australian Defence Medal, Sinai Medal, Timor Presidential Medal, National Emergency Medal, Land Commanders Commendation, Infantry Combat Badge, Returned from Active Service Badge.

Welcome aboard Dave.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM PAGE 2!

1. A nervous wreck
2. Shellfish
3. Tinseltitis
4. A stick
5. A Merry Christmas to ewe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**2ND BATTALION
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT
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II

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