



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)

OCTOBER 2018

THE SECRETARY'S SUMMARY

The Association annual reunion will be held in Tweed Heads from 26-28 October. It is expected that around 150 members and guests will attend. The reunion includes an informal get together evening 26 October followed by the AGM on the morning of 27 October. The official notice for the AGM is enclosed with RINGO

A commemorative service will follow the AGM after which there will be an informal social gathering at the Visions Room, MANTRA resort. Sunday 28 October there will a mystery bus tour, which will include lunch. There is a cost of \$50.00 per person for the bus trip including lunch. There will be a cash bar. Please let Aub Terry know if you want to attend this bus tour, as numbers are limited.

The Annual RAR National Council meeting is being held in Townsville in the period 6-9 October. In the absence of Leo, the Secretary will be representing.

Centenary of the Armistice 11th November 1918. To commemorate this occasion and to honour the spirit of those who served, the Australian War Memorial has issued a general invitation to a display of 62,000 red poppies in the gardens of the Memorial. Details are:

Date: Friday 5 October - Sunday 11 November 2018

Time: 9am - 10pm

Location: Australian War Memorial

A display of 62,000 handcrafted, red poppies on the Memorial's grounds is the centrepiece of commemorations, symbolically representing Australian lives lost in the First World War.

This is a free event. Night-time lighting will allow visitors to access the display through to 10pm each day.

Visitors can walk around the Sculpture Garden on the Memorial's western grounds to view this spectacular and moving display. Complementing the handcrafted poppies display is a musical program assembled by Memorial artist in residence Chris Latham.

Each handcrafted poppy has been created by a volunteer and represents an Australian life lost in the First World War. The names of those lost are individually listed on the Memorial's Roll of Honour.

Lest we forget

Gordon Hurford, AM
Secretary

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2ND BATTALION, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT

The 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR) is an amphibious light infantry battalion of the Australian Army part of the 1st Division Amphibious Task Group based at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville.

2RAR was first formed as the Australian 66th Battalion in 1945 and since then it has seen active service during the Korean War, Malayan Emergency and Vietnam War.

In addition, the battalion has participated in peacekeeping operations in Japan, Rwanda, East Timor and the Solomon Islands and has contributed rifle companies to the security force protecting the Australian embassy in Baghdad following the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In May 2006, 2RAR's headquarters, support company and a rifle company deployed to Iraq as part of the third rotation of the Al Muthanna Task Group. In June 2011, the battalion deployed to Urozgan Province, Afghanistan as Mentoring Task Force Three (MTF3).

In 2011, 2RAR was selected to be the Army's Amphibious Ready Element Landing Force embarked on the Navy's new Canberra-class amphibious assault ships.

The conversion process was completed in October 2017.

Second to None!

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; 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC); 2RAR MTF-3; 2/4RAR; and all ranks serving in 2RAR (AMPHIB).

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

PROUDLY PRINTED BY PETER DUTTON MP

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

This is the eleventh edition of RINGO printed for free.

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VICE PRESIDENT / EDITOR
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Website: <http://www.2rar-association.net.au>

07 5444 0889
07 3285 4197
0407 926 270
07 3203 0254
0410 058 257
0419 798 991
0430 940 737
0412 396 103
0417 241 564
vandekampleo@gmail.com
rjhollingdrake@gmail.com
2rarsecretary@gmail.com
normdev12@bigpond.com
maba2783@optusnet.com.au
daphne.bimrose@bigpond.com
dave.hatton@cpagroup.com.au
kbterry45@gmail.com
graemedavis@bigpond.com
<https://www.facebook.com/2RAR-Association-Inc-1183231068415223/>

HONORARY PADRE
Postal Address: PO Box 1097 Toombul Qld 4012

WARRIORS WHO HAVE MARCHED OUT

- 1400140, QX49711, 1982 Warrant Officer Class One James GEEDRICK, 63 Inf Bn WW2 (LCpl) formed at Morotai in 1945, BCOF Japan, Korea 3RAR 1951-52 (Sgt), 2RAR Malaya 1955-57 (WO2), Vietnam AATTV 1968-69 (WIA). Jim was born into a large family of Ceylonese at Yeppoon, Qld. Jim passed away peacefully on 22 July 2018. Age: 94 years. A Service was held on 24 July.
- VX96919, 13029 Lance-Corporal Stephen Lawrence SIMMONS, WW2 1945-47, 1RAR Korea 1954-55, 2RAR Malaya 1955-57, 3RAR, 4RAR. Sad news of the passing of Stephen on 27 June 2018. Age: 92 years. His funeral was at Albany Creek, Qld. Thanks Allan Simmons (Son)
- 52843 Sergeant Derrick EVANS, 2RAR Malaya 1955-57 (Pte), 6RAR (Sgt) Vietnam 1966-67. POB: Wrexham North Wales. Age: 82+ years. Derrick's funeral was held on 13 July at Bunbury, WA. Derrick and Don were both 96-day National Servicemen in 1954. Thanks Don Cruden
- 235411 Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Robert Adriaan DE HAAS 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1970-71, BHQ (Lt), C Coy. Robert passed away unexpectedly on 15 August from a heart attack. Age: 71 years. The funeral was held on 28 August at Burpengary, Qld; the Wake at Bribie Island RSL. Thanks John Ison, Paul Asbury
- 732094 Private Frederick James KENT, 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1967-68. B Coy. Catering Pl. Fred passed away 30 June 2018 after a battle with Melanoma. Age: 72+ years. Thanks Carol Kent, Wally Musgrave
- 8297112 Geoffrey Steven PRICE, 2RAR. Geoffrey passed away on 7 July 2018. Funeral held at Rockhampton, Qld on 16 July. Age: 34 years. Partner to Kelly, Father to Axel, Jack, and Charlie. Donations to Black Dog Institute, and Beyond Blue. Rest in Peace Pricey. Thanks Mary Scully
- 2412580 Private Stuart Murray Wright BURNET, 1ARU 1967, 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1967-68. Passed away at Bellingen Hospital, NSW on 8 July 2018. Age: 70+ years. Funeral held 13 July at Coffs Harbour. Thanks Ken Blade, Neville Mooney
- 214831 Major Barry Stewart SILK, 1RAR, 2RAR, 3RAR, AATTV Vietnam (WO2) 1967-68. Sad news on the passing of Barry on 9 June 2018. Age: 76 years. Funeral was held on 18 June at Carbrook, Qld. Barry was the Dinf Careers Advisor in Canberra. Thanks Joan Silk, Graham Cruick
- 5714193 Private Brian Harry SKIPWORTH, 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1967. Transport Pl, Admin Coy, C Coy. Brian passed away peacefully on 2 September 2018 at Geraldton, WA. Age: 72+ years. Brian suffered a battle with cancer. Thanks, Kevin (Aub) Terry, Bob Pink
- 714167 Private Terence Michael PINTER 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 19 May-18 Oct 1967 (B Coy). Terry was born at Birmingham, England. Terry passed away in Mandurah, W.A. on 7 March 2018. Age: 73+ years. Terry was in the 3rd NS intake at Puckapunyal, Vic., and completed Corp training with 2RAR at Enoggera. Thanks Selma Pinter, Geoff Brewer
- 3796570 Lance Corporal Graeme John 'Shorty' BLYTHMAN, 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1970-71, B Coy. Sad news on the passing of John after a short illness. Age: 69+ years. Shorty's funeral was held on 20 August at Bairnsdale, Vic. Thanks John (Jock) Cassidy

+

*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

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 2018 committee meetings will be held as follows:

- Wed 16 Feb 18 ✓
- Wed 6 Jun 18 ✓
- Wed 3 Oct 18 ✓
- Wed 4 Apr 18 ✓
- Wed 1 Aug 18 ✓
- Wed 5 Dec 18

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 2018

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of 2RAR Association, Inc is to be held at 0830 hours Saturday 27 October 2018 in the 'ANZAC Room', Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch, Level 1 Mantra Resort.

Apologies for those unable to attend the meeting should be addressed to: The Secretary: 2rarsecretary@gmail.com; or PO Box 1097 Toombul Qld 4012.

DONATIONS

We appreciate financial donations 'big and small', and we thank this member for his recent support.

<i>Rod Newham</i>		
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NEW MEMBERSHIPS

We welcome new members: (10)

<i>Michael Rice</i>	<i>Kirwan, Qld</i>	<i>Rwanda, East Timor, Afghanistan</i>
<i>Stephen Harris</i>	<i>Mount Louisa, Qld</i>	<i>Rwanda, East Timor, Afghanistan</i>
<i>Brian West</i>	<i>Heatley, Qld</i>	<i>2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1967-68</i>
<i>Justin Zahner</i>	<i>Kirwan, Qld</i>	<i>East Timor</i>
<i>Joseph Vella</i>	<i>Bluewater, Qld</i>	<i>East Timor, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste</i>
<i>John Voznaks</i>	<i>Jimboomba, Qld</i>	<i>4RAR Malaysia, Borneo, 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1967-68</i>
<i>Ronald Hicks</i>	<i>Hamersley, WA</i>	<i>2RAR Malaysia 1962-63</i>
<i>Larry John McDonald</i>	<i>Jerrabomberra, NSW</i>	<i>Malaya 1961-63, 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1967-68</i>
<i>Blake Kirkham</i>	<i>West Wodonga, NSW</i>	<i>Timor Leste, Afghanistan</i>
<i>Jens Schroeder</i>	<i>Beerwah, Qld</i>	<i>2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn Vietnam 1970</i>

MEMBERS' DRAW

Congratulations to Donald FREW, Ferny Hills, Qld winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 1 August who received the book: Afghanistan: Australia's War by Gary Ramage & Ian McPhedran © 2014. Don served in Vietnam 2RAR 1967-68.

Congratulations also to Geoff BREWER, Ashburton, Vic winner of the financial Members' Draw held on 3 October who received the book: Trackers: The Untold Story of the Australian Dogs of War, by Peter Haran © 2000. Geoff served in Vietnam 2RAR 1967.

Updated: This is the 13th year! of the draw.

RINGO NEWSLETTER

RINGO will continue to be sent to you via Australia Post. Alternatively, do you wish to receive RINGO by Email? At last count we have 54 names of those who prefer to receive the newsletter by email.

Details here: 0407 926 270; 2rarsecretary@gmail.com

2RRR ANNUAL REUNION 2018

Tue 16 Oct	2RRR Birthday 1945 (73 rd Anniversary)	Labuan, North Borneo
Fri 26 Oct	2RRR Annual National Reunion "Meet, Greet & Dine" (4.00pm Harbour Lounge)	Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads, NSW
Sat 27 Oct	8.30 – 9.30 am: Annual General Meeting: ANZAC Room	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta RSL
	09.45 – 10.20 am: Commemoration Service	Chris Cunningham Park
	10.30am: Annual Reunion "Mates, Memories, Camaraderie"	Level 1: Visions Room, MANTRA resort
Sun 28 Oct	Mystery Tour & Luncheon	SE Queensland

MYSTERY TOUR & LUNCHEON

Sunday 28 October 2018

The Committee has arranged a Mystery Tour & Luncheon to complete an excellent Annual Reunion 2018 weekend.

Buses will take us to our mystery venue (minimal cost). If you wish to participate, please advise Aub:

Email: kbterry45@gmail.com/Mob: 0412 396 103

COMMEMORATING THE KOREAN ARMISTICE

On 27 July I was invited by Peter Heeney, State President of RAR Association (WA) to lay a wreath commemorating the 65th Anniversary of the Korean Armistice at the Kings Park War Memorial on behalf of 2RRR Association. Peter is also an ex-member of 2RRR.

Unfortunately, it was a wet day however everything went smoothly. 2RRR was mentioned in the address by Brigadier Duncan Warren for their meritorious actions during this war.

The wreath was of Yellow and White Roses, with Black ribbons. There was an address in Korean and English made by the President of the Korean Association.

The surviving members of the Korean War were presented with walking sticks as a token of respect for their service.

Alex Nie
WA Rep
2RRR Assoc.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

Grahame EDWARDS (NSW)	(02) 9520 7262 gk_edwards8@bigpond.com
Simon WHITEHEAD (ACT)	(02) 6288 8403 keenedgesharp@hotmail.com
Jim COOPER (VIC)	(03) 9548 0016 jimwend1@gmail.com
Russ Lowes (TAS)	0488 111 025 russ.lowes60@gmail.com
Malcolm ALLEN (SA)	0451 374 133 mal@aladdco.com.au
Alexander NIE (WA)	(08) 9256 4423/0417 993 751 alexander.nie@bigpond.com
Vacant (NT)	VACANT
Vacant (NQ)	VACANT
Bill MARTIN (NZ)	(0011649) 267 7545 rwmartin@bigpond.com

2RRR ASSOC. EMAIL LIST

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Email: 2rrrsecretary@gmail.com

REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR - ARMY

RSM-A: Warrant Officer Grant McFarlane, OAM, grew up in country Victoria. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in February 1980 and on completion of Basic Recruit Training he was assigned to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps.



On completion of Initial Employment Training he was posted to 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. As a Warrant Officer Class One he was appointed as Wing Sergeant Major at the School of Infantry and as the Career Manager for Infantry Sergeants.

On completion of his Regimental Sergeant Majors Course, in 2001, he was appointed as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 10th/27th Battalion, Royal South

Australia Regiment. In his career he has also been appointed as the Regimental Sergeant Major of 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division and Career Management – Army.

Warrant Officer McFarlane has been deployed on a number of operational and non-operational tours including Malaysia, East Timor with INTERFET (1999 – 2000), and again in 2006 Operation Astute. Following this he was the Regimental Sergeant Major the Combined Team in Uruzgan (October 2011 – February 2012).

In 2007 he was awarded the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. His other honours and awards include, Australian Active Service Medal for service in East Timor and Afghanistan, INTERFET Medal, Australian Service Medal for service in South East Asia and East Timor, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Defence Long Service Medal (with clasps), Timor-Leste Solidarity Medal and NATO Non-Article five Medal (ISAF clasp).

Warrant Officer McFarlane is married to Tracey and has two sons, and a grandson who he loves spending time with. He has many interests including bike riding, kayaking and paddle boarding. He is an avid AFL (Essendon Football Club) and Rugby League (Newcastle Knights) supporter. Warrant Officer McFarlane was officially appointed as the 11th Regimental Sergeant Major – Army in July 2018.

THE LAST VIETNAM VETERAN

The last remaining Vietnam veteran to serve in the ADF has retired after 50 years' service. Maj Lester Mengel (Retd) enlisted as a Private soldier when he was 17 and spent 14 months in Vietnam as a Forward Scout in 2RRR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn 1970-71.

Then, when we came back from Vietnam, we marched through Townsville at our welcome home parade and had rotten eggs and tomatoes thrown at us. We were called baby killers, that was the kind of treatment we got back then and I'm glad now that is no longer the case.

Maj Mengel said he experienced Post-Traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after his return from Vietnam and praised the on-going support his family provided. He said the Defence Force had come a long way dealing with the mental health stress on soldiers.

In recent years, Maj Mengel has served as a Senior Australian Defence Officer in the role of Safety Manager for 3rd Brigade Commander Brigadier Scott Winter. Well done Lester!

DVA WEBSITE: NOMINAL ROLLS

This website combines Nominal Rolls: WW2, Korea, Vietnam, and First Gulf War. NB: Malaya/Malaysia: due June 2019.

View the website here: <http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/home>

GEORGE EDWARD COLVIN, (1903–1975)

CO 66th Battalion Japan February 1946 - June 1947



George Edward Colvin (1903-1975), army officer, company manager and community worker, was born on 22 April 1903 in Melbourne, son of native-born parents George Edward Colvin, labourer, and his wife Hannah Victoria, née Sweetingham.

Educated at Victoria Park State School, at the age of 12 George junior joined the cadets. The family moved to Sydney in 1919 where he served part time with the 1st

Cavalry Division Signals from 1921. Commissioned lieutenant on 1 July 1925 and promoted captain in 1930, he transferred to the Reserve of Officers in November 1931.

Resuming his Militia service in 1939, Colvin was appointed to the Australian Imperial Force on 3 March 1940 and posted to the 2/13th Battalion in May. The unit arrived at Suez in November. While engaged in the defence of Tobruk, Libya, he was promoted major in September 1941. After Lieutenant Colonel F. A. Burrows was wounded at Ed Duda on 1 December, Colvin took temporary command of the battalion. He was second-in-command to Lieutenant Colonel R. W. N. Turner when the battle of El Alamein, Egypt, began on 23 October 1942. The following day Turner was mortally wounded and the battalion, which had suffered heavy losses, was disorganized and pinned down. Colvin took over, advanced with his soldiers and held firm against a counter-attack.

Promoted lieutenant colonel and confirmed in command, on 28 October he conducted a successful assault across unknown, booby-trapped ground to the Fig Orchard and beyond. Next morning he was concussed by a shell-blast and evacuated. For his deeds he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Back in Australia, from February to July 1943 the battalion trained in New South Wales and North Queensland before moving to Milne Bay, Papua. On 4 September it landed at Yellow Beach for the offensive against nearby Lae, New Guinea, and eighteen days later took part in the amphibious assault on Finschhafen.

Always well forward when his troops were in action, Colvin directed the decisive attack at Kakakog on 1 October which led to the fall of Finschhafen. His enthusiasm ensured a high esprit de corps in his unit. Following engagements on the Sattelberg Road and in the advance up the Huon Peninsula, the battalion returned home in March 1944. Colvin was awarded a Bar to his D.S.O.

Having left Queensland in April 1945, he and his men embarked from Morotai and landed in Brunei on 10 June. They were deployed north of the Broketon-Brunei Road, then in the Lutong-Miri region until hostilities ceased in August.

From elements of the 9th Division, Colvin formed the 66th Battalion which he commanded in Japan between February 1946 and June 1947. He transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 16 December in Sydney and was active in the Citizen Military Forces in the 1950s.

In 1968 Colvin was appointed C.M.G. for his community services. He died on 6 December 1975 in the Repatriation General Hospital, Concord, and was cremated; his wife survived him, as did the son of his first marriage.³

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT – 70TH ANNIVERSARY

The Royal Australian Regiment will be a focus of activities in Canberra 22-23 Nov 18 to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Regiment. Past and serving members of the regiment, together with supporters of the regiment are invited to a number of events:

Thu 22 Nov 18

Regimental style dinner at the Canberra Institute of Technology restaurant.

Guided tours of the AWM with a Regimental focus.

Battalion or State/Territory Associations may wish to hold functions in Canberra – AGM's, lunches etc

Fri 23 Nov 18

Primary activity is a parade on the Australian War Memorial (AWM) Parade Ground from 1530hr, involving all the colours of the battalions of the regiment, a guard from 8/9 RAR and a 'massed band' of regimental pipes and drums of 8/9 RAR and the RMC band. It is anticipated that all of the battalion colours will have 'new' battle honours emblazoned on them.

This will be followed by the Last Post ceremony, where a soldier of the regiment will be remembered.

A reception in Anzac hall will be held from 1830-2030hr. A separate invitation list will be advised shortly.

It will be a great opportunity for former and current serving members of the Regiment, together with family and friends, to celebrate this important milestone and remember the sacrifice of those who have gone before them.

PASSWORD OR DEATH: KOREA

One very dark night we were on patrol, following along the barbed wire checking there were no enemy around – sometimes nicknamed as 'Chinks'.



Standing to, despite a cease fire: Pte Peter Couch of Clifton Hill, Vic (Bren gun), & Cpl Bill Laws of Kalgoorlie, WA, (Owen gun). C Coy 2RAR Korea.

Ours was probably a 'fighting patrol' which consisted of an officer and thirteen. I was at the tail end with my Bren, following the line of men who were about eight feet apart. With just the light from the bright stars all I could see was shadowy outlines.

In the darkness I started to fall back and couldn't see the others up front. I decided to crawl on my hands and knees, keeping the wire on the right. After a while a challenge came out of the darkness from the other side of the wire.

Someone whispered "PASSWORD?" but I was so scared I forgot the password and stayed motionless and silent. "PASSWORD?" was softly but urgently said again. I stayed silent and the men in the darkness could only see my outline on the other side of the wire.

They thought I was possibly a Chinese enemy and I heard all the safety catches coming off, as the patrol members readied their weapons. Maury Sharp came to my rescue and I heard him say, "Who's there?" I replied nervously, "It's only Ernie!" They lowered their weapons and I lived another day – err – night.⁴

QUOTATION

"On Anzac eve we dug in among friends. At last I felt like an Anzac, and I imagine there were 600 others like me," Captain Reg Saunders, said following the withdrawal during the Battle of Kapyong.

³ George Edward Colvin: goo.gl/QKRuko

⁴ Mates, Mortars and Minefields, by Ernie R. Holden with 2RAR, 1953. Page 165

VALE: 235411 LT COL ROBERT ADRIAAN DE HAAS

By Paul Asbury: I first met Bob in January 1967 at the Officer Cadet School, Portsea. Bob had an unusual start to life, being born in 1947 to Dutch parents in Ambon, Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). The family emigrated to Australia in the early 1950s and Bob called Sydney home.

Like most of us who survived and graduated as second lieutenants from OCS Portsea, his year there became one of his best years. Within a few months of graduating as a second lieutenant, Bob ended up in the Royal Australian Infantry Corps, as he had always wanted. He joined the Brisbane element of 2RAR as the battalion was returning from a year in South Vietnam. Bob then moved to Townsville when the battalion was relocated to Lavarack Barracks in late 1968. The battalion then received many new troops into it and then began training for a return to Vietnam. Shortly before deploying to Vietnam in April 1970, Bob married Cherie.

The Battalion '2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion' had a tough year in Vietnam in 1970-71. Bob never spoke much about his 13 months there – that in itself said much about that time.

As a lieutenant, he was posted on to the Directing Staff at the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville. It was a captain's position, but there was no mention of his promotion on the posting order. Bob was not much older than the officer cadets he was about to help train. One story that Bob often told was about reporting in to the new Adjutant, Win Flowles. Win immediately told him to put up his captain's badges of rank before any of the cadets saw him. Win then went on to confirm that initiative with the Military Secretary in Canberra. Bob was always grateful to Win for that. Bob later went to the RAAF School of Languages at Point Cook for 12 months to study Bahasa Indonesian, at which he excelled.

In 1978 as the OC of Support Company in 2/4RAR, Bob was given a major task following the Hilton terrorist bombing in Sydney. Bob raised a Counter Terrorist group with his enlarged company. After 11 months of intense training and being at 3 hours' notice to move for the entire time, the role was then handed over to the SAS Regiment in Perth.

Selected to attend the Army Staff College in 1981, Bob had to ask for a deferment in an attempt to rescue a strained marriage. The deferment was not granted, so Bob resigned from the Army in a vain final attempt at reconciliation. Unfortunately, the damage had been done. Not an uncommon result for many trying to serve the Army faithfully.

Bob was then recruited back into the Army on contract, with Mike Downey. The posting as SO2 Armaments with EDE was most rewarding for Bob, but all good postings come to an end, and he was then posted to HQ Logistic Command. By now he had married Linda and was happy once again.

As a member of the Army Reserve, he had postings at the Army Command & Staff College in Queenscliff and an exchange posting at the Indonesian Staff College in Bandung in 1998. Bob felt like he had come full circle after 50 years.

Again, Bob was enticed to come back into the Regular Army in 2000 on another contract for 15 months working on these new-fangled computer systems. Bob now had accumulated sufficient years to qualify for his meagre military superannuation. Over the years Bob managed a computer graphics company and a web development company. He was also a funeral director in Melbourne – which played havoc with his war neurosis PTSD.

In early 2002, Bob co-opted me to help him start up a web site for our OCS Class of December 1967. This quickly morphed into a much larger web site encompassing all sixty-seven classes from 1952-1985.

He led his life by the old Portsea motto of *"Loyalty and Service"*.

MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY: RICHARD HAWKINS MG

John Schroeder to 2RAR Association Inc

Richard Kenneth Hawkins was born on 26 September 1948 and conscripted under the National Service Act 1964, entering the Australian Army on 22 April 1969. Following training at the 3 Training Battalion, Singleton, NSW he was posted to 2RAR at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville, Queensland.

On 15 May 1970, 2RAR deployed to Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, where it relieved 6RAR and commenced the Battalion's second tour of duty. On arrival it was joined by two infantry companies from the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (RNZIR) and resumed the title ANZAC Battalion. Private Hawkins was at this time a machine gunner with 9 Sec, 6 Pl, B Coy.

On 3 December 1970 B Company under Major Graham Hoffman deployed north of Nui Dat where its mission was to conduct reconnaissance patrols, ambushes and security operations within its allocated area of operations. On 14 December 1970 B Company was moved further north where on 15 December 1970 the action that is the subject of this review took place.

On 23 December 1970 B Company returned to Nui Dat and commenced local defensive tasks. Private Hawkins continued to serve with B Company until 23 March 1971 when he returned to Australia in preparation for discharge from his national service obligations on 21 April 1971.

Mention in Despatches Citation

The citation supporting Private Hawkins' nomination of 1 February 1971 for MID states:

'... On 15th December 1970, Private Hawkins was the machine gunner of an ambush patrol in the vicinity of the Courtenay Rubber Estate, Phuoc Tuy Province. At 2100 hours the machine-gun group heard the movement of a group of approximately 20 enemy approaching the ambush position. The ambush was initiated when the machine gun group fired claymore mines and Private Hawkins fired a long burst of accurate fire.

During the ensuing fire-fight, which lasted 45 minutes, Private Hawkins continued to engage, with short bursts, enemy movement in the contact area. His accuracy of fire caused heavy casualties to the enemy; it was later established that 10 enemy dead lay in an area from 15 metres to 120 metres from Private Hawkins' position and most of these were attributed to his effective fire. His calm response and reactions under the heavy enemy return fire, which wounded two Australians, were a steadying influence on the remainder of his patrol and reflect great credit on himself, his Regiment and the Australian Army.

On 21 December 2016 the Tribunal recommended to the Minister that a decision by the parliamentary Secretary for Defence of 6 February 2012 to refuse to recommend action to upgrade Private Richard Kenneth Hawkins' award for his actions on 15 December 1970 at the Courtenay Rubber Plantation, Phuoc Tuy Province South Vietnam be set aside; and Richard Kenneth Hawkins be awarded the Medal for Gallantry for acts of gallantry in action in hazardous circumstances on 15 December 1970 at the Courtenay Rubber Plantation, Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam.

The award will be formally notified in the Commonwealth Gazette.

I am pleased to advise, on Dick's behalf, that he will finally be presented with the insignia of the Medal of Gallantry by Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC at a ceremony starting at 10.30am on Friday 7 September 2018 at Government House, Yarralumla, in Canberra.

Peter Gibson MC
Platoon Commander

Honours Associated with 15 December 1970 Action

Three other members of 2RAR were awarded honours arising out of their involvement in the action on 15 December 1970.

They were: Lt Col John CHURCH, Commanding Officer 2RAR, awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his total deployment in Vietnam which included the 15 December 1970 operation;

2Lt Peter GIBSON, Commander 6 Platoon, awarded the Military Cross for his role during the 15 December 1970 operation;

and Cpl Kenneth JOHNSON, Section Commander in charge of the machine gun group, awarded the Military Medal for his roles in an earlier operation in August 1970 and during the 15 December 1970 action.

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION

Of the 340 Australians killed during the Korean War, 43 were classified as 'missing in action' (MIA) and presumed dead. The MIAs belonged to all three services and are listed below.

The Army MIAs, who came from the three infantry battalions that formed the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) at the time, resulted from the withdrawal of United Nations forces from North Korea at the end of 1950 and the set-piece battles of 1951, and from the intensive patrolling and raiding of the static warfare that set in from 1951 on.

3RAR (17), 1RAR (3), 2RAR (2)
Reinforcement Holding Unit (Army) (1)
77 Sqn (18), 805 Sqn (2)

Total: 43

Most of the engagements that ended in MIAs took place in either North Korea or what is now the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea.

MILITARY FUNERALS AND HEADSTONE CEREMONIES

Every serviceman or woman who is killed whilst on active service is given a military funeral, even those who are located and buried decades later.

The history of military funerals can be traced back to the 18th century, where coffins were borne by bearer parties consisting of officers or soldiers, depending on the rank of the deceased.

Australian service personnel killed during World War I and World War II were buried in the closest Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery in the country in which they died.

Those killed during the Korean War were buried in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea. The human remains of Australian servicemen subsequently recovered are buried in a cemetery appropriate to the date of their death.

In January 1966, during the Vietnam War, the policy was changed to burial in the closest war cemetery or repatriation to Australia at family request. In some cases, soldiers may not be able to be identified by name and they may be buried as unidentified soldiers who are "Known only to God". These soldiers are still given a full military funeral.

When soldiers are buried as unidentified soldiers their case remains open so that any additional evidence can be investigated in the hope of identifying them at a later date.

When an identity can be confirmed, a replacement headstone will be installed bearing his name and a family inscription.⁸

QUOTATION

Without any inhibitions of any kind I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

*Prime Minister John Curtin,
27 December 1941*

2RAR: MISSING IN ACTION IN KOREA

3/3706 Corporal John Berkley ASHE 2/401173 Private Edmund George BOURKE

A long-awaited agreement with the US to identify Australian war dead from the Korean conflict has finally been signed, boosting Canberra's case to join the Americans in recovering the remains of missing soldiers and airmen.

Families of 43 Australian servicemen listed as missing in action in North Korea applauded the memorandum of understanding, as South Korean President Moon Jae-in -arrived in Pyongyang for crucial talks with Kim Jong-un.

The MOU between the Australian Defence Department and the Pentagon was first mooted in 2011 to establish a framework to share DNA and other identifying information in case a repository of remains held by the US military in Hawaii contained those of Australians killed in the 1950-53 war.

Progress stalled 11 months ago after a draft of the agreement was settled, frustrating relatives of the Australian MIAs as the final text bounced back and forth between Canberra and Washington.

Ian Saunders, the point man for the families whose father is among the missing, said the agreement could provide a basis for Australian investigators to gain access to suspected burial sites should the North Koreans honour their word and let Americans in.

"There have been breakthroughs before, but this is the ultimate to date in terms of getting identification of the remains," said Mr Saunders, 70. His father, Private John Saunders, was reported missing, presumed killed, in January 1953 in a fierce clash between Australian troops and Chinese regulars on the North Korean side of what's now the demilitarised zone that divides the peninsula.

Mr Saunders, who turned five the day after his dad went missing, said: "The MOU is a big step forward for us. It's the green light to pursue things more actively."

Korean Veterans Association of Australia president Tom Parkinson, who was in the line to the left of John Saunders's battalion at the time he went missing, insisted the families of the MIAs deserved to bring them home.

"It's long overdue that there is some sort of ... finality," he said. "And none of us are getting any younger."

The Australian MIA families were advised by the Army's Unrecovered War Casualties Unit this week that the MOU had been signed by the US Defence POW/MIA Accounting Agency, cementing a close relationship over Korean War dead.

Mr Parkinson, 85, still has raw memories of the night Mr Saunders' father went missing at the foot of Maryang San, the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting involving Australians.

He was a young machine gunner in 1RAR, dug in alongside John Saunders's battalion, 3RAR, when the 25-year-old private was killed on January 25, 1953. He was one of six who died when a 31-man patrol led by Lieutenant Geoff Smith ran into a concentration of Chinese troops. The officer was among the presumed dead; another seven Australians were taken prisoner.

Mr Parkinson lost friends at Maryang San, a bitter battle for a hill about 2km inside the North Korean DMZ. In July 1952, Lieutenant Laurie Ryan of 3RAR was reported killed alongside two his men, but Mr Parkinson heard conflicting accounts of what had actually happened.

Mr Saunders said he was confident his father's grave would be found if investigators were allowed into North Korea.

⁸ <https://bit.ly/2xSVBWD>

REST IN PEACE: WO1 JAMES GEEDRICK, WIA

Warrant Officer Class 1 James Geedrick, adviser to 1st Bn 2nd ARVN Regiment, after an operation in northern Quang Tri in March 1969 reported:



ANZAC Day 1969: Jim was stuck at this South Vietnamese outpost near Hue. Every time he raised the flag, the enemy shot holes through it."

All the VC killed were very young. Clothes khaki, weapons well kept. Some kids probably 14-16, fought bravely. Very fair complexion and features more regular than our ARVN soldiers. There is not a hill west of Con Thien and in particular approaching the DMZ that is not occupied by the VC. They can be seen in the hundreds everywhere. His assaults and counter assaults have been early morning, firing B40 (rockets) and firing AK (Russian automatic rifle).

The hills in the DMZ are well fortified and bunkers and personnel are easily seen. Much Russian

material in the area. NVA food consists of rice, baked hard with granulated sugar, not bad eating. Tinned meat, fish. Rucksacks in good condition. Clothing on bodies poor, some in shorts, sandals.

Geedrick himself had been very fortunate during the same operation when he stood on a mine which detonated, blowing his left foot off the ground. Only slightly bruised, he was able to continue.¹⁰ More about: Jim Geedrick an extraordinary soldier¹¹

THE FUNNY FARM!

One of the funniest things that ever happened was with the urinals that were placed around the tent lines in Nui Dat. They were 44-gallon drums with the top cut off, sunk into the ground and covered with fly-wire mesh.

One night when we were back in, we had a combined officers' and sergeants' mess and the mortar fire controller, whose name was Richie, was a real character. He was the sort of guy who would jokingly throw one of the sergeants out of the mess because he had dust on his boots or something like that.

Well, one night he went out to have a leak, he was gone a while and when he came back in he was up to his ears in urine. He had stepped into this drum and gone to the bottom. And he just walked straight back into the mess dripping like nothing had happened.

2Lt Gordon Hurford
PI Comd 11 PI

MEMORIES OF MY GENERATION

In the last days before the ceasefire came into effect (in Korea), the Chinese put massive pressure on a fairly high hill called "the Hook" which it seemed was their gateway to Seoul and re-occupation of South Korea. I had been transferred to 2nd Battalion when 1st Bn. went home in April.

We were moved to a forward position on the Hook; we knew it was going to be lively because the Black Watch and another British battalion had been beaten up pretty badly just before us.

There was consistent artillery and mortar fire from both sides which eliminated any chance we had of getting any sleep.

SNIPPETS

- 6RAR won the 2018 Duke of Gloucester Cup competition held recently at Lone Pine Barracks, Singleton, NSW. In second place was 2RAR, and third 3RAR. Seven battalions took part: 1RAR: motorised infantry (Townsville), 2RAR: amphibious light infantry (Townsville), 3RAR: mechanised infantry (Townsville), 5RAR: motorised infantry (Darwin), 6RAR: mechanised infantry (Enoggera), 7RAR: mechanised infantry (Adelaide), 8/9RAR: motorised infantry (Enoggera). Well done all!
- Terry Pinter (dec.) and I met up in 2014 at the B Coy 2RAR Reunion in Melbourne. Nothing had changed after 48 years. He was a true gentleman and kept his prostate illness to himself. Following his diagnosis, he spent the next 17 years travelling around Australia and overseas with his wife Selma. They were married for 51 years; they were not blessed with children. Thanks Geoff Brewer

POETRY

The Oath

A soldier swears an oath to God and Crown
Doesn't mean fame, comfort or living in town
It's about duty, no matter what ever your fate
Sharing the last of water and food with mates
Feeling a swollen tongue in the terrible heat
Thinking you're lucky to have two hours sleep
Shivering and huddled together with frozen feet
Precious the dawn you did not expect to meet
Scared witless and having no choice but to kill
That's what the oath's about, you bloody dills

You can't go home to Mum if it's all too rough
To survive, a soldier must learn to be tough
Soon or late you'll hear the battle close by
That's when you have to be prepared to die
Life sometimes depend on choice of a straw
In peace or war you do as your told and more
If volunteers are needed; can you guess who?
Your sergeant decides on what you can or can't do
He's certainly not interested in your personal life
Otherwise he would have issued you a wife

One thing more, at home or away from our shores
Politicians rattling drums will feed bullshit galore
Whatever they promise there's one thing for sure
You've got what you've got and nothing more
So line up here you miserable scrawny recruits
Very soon you will be rid of those civilian suits
But first you must take the bible in your hand
Repeat the oath after me, right where you stand
Let me hear you swear it very clear and loud
Then go wear the uniform and do our nation proud

George Mansford
© January 2010

All though the nights masses of flares lit the night sky like it was daytime. Hundreds of Chinese kept swarming up the hill to our trenches along the peak. They never got there.

Mick the radio operator, on Len Hayden's orders directed mortar and enfiladed machine gun fire on the Chinese coming up the hill line after line. Mick was shrapnel wounded in the groin and flown to hospital in Japan.

Mick was awarded with a Military Medal. Len was "mentioned in despatches". *I'm sure he'd like to swap the medal back for the testicle which I heard he had lost...*¹⁵

¹⁰ The Team: Australian Army Advisers in Vietnam 1962-1972. By Ian McNeill © Pg 156

¹¹ More About: Jim Geedrick <https://bit.ly/2D2FZ8Z>

¹⁵ The Best Generation: By Jack Matthews © 2013

DROP SHORTS

Honouring our bravest heroes ¹⁶



THERE is no more prized Commonwealth military decoration than the Victoria Cross.

Established by Queen Victoria in 1856, just 1358 VCs have been awarded for conspicuous gallantry in the face of the enemy, including three which were second awards to existing recipients.

The medals have always been individually struck by Hancocks jewellers of London from bronze taken from two cannons captured during the Crimean War. Queen Victoria specified the award should not discriminate by rank and early awards were often decided by a ballot within units.

Although not included in the original Royal Warrant, from the Boer War until recently it was one of only two awards to be made posthumously, the other being a Mention in Dispatches. Approximately one quarter of all VCs have been awarded posthumously, including the last Australian award to Corporal Cameron Baird for actions in Afghanistan in 2013.

The most VCs awarded in a single day was 24 for actions on November 16, 1857 during the Indian Mutiny.

The most awarded to a single unit was seven to the 2/24th Regiment for the Defence of Rorke's Drift in January 1879 during the Zulu Wars.

Nine were awarded to Australians who fought at Lone Pine on August 6, 1915, four of them to a single unit.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand have included the VC as the highest decoration in their own indigenous honours systems, slightly differentiating them from British awards, though in no way lessening their prestige.

The medal is not "won" as is occasionally suggested, it is awarded after a rigorous nomination and verification process, which adds to its rarity and prestige.

Being awarded a VC can come at considerable personal cost to even living recipients.

There was once a provision for the award to be rescinded for infamous conduct.

Eight VCs were thus forfeited between 1861 and 1908.

In 1920 King George V insisted no recipient should forfeit his medal no matter how grievous his subsequent actions.

There are just four living Australian VC recipients, one from Vietnam and three from Afghanistan. Each understands the responsibility of being a recipient and the scrutiny which their post-award experience brings.

Keith Payne experienced the jealousy, if not outright hostility, from some of his contemporaries who felt their service was more deserving than the actions which attracted his award. This was arrant nonsense of course, but professional jealousy in any military organisation can be intense...

Of the four awards for Afghanistan two were made for aggressive leadership in extremely hostile circumstances, one for rescuing an Afghan soldier and one for drawing fire at extreme personal risk.

It has been revealed one recipient, Ben Roberts-Smith, who holds multiple gallantry decorations, has been mentioned in inquiries being conducted into allegations of irregular behaviour by Australian troops. That is ironic given troops are sent into combat to kill their enemy and capture ground usually at great personal risk.

Armchair warriors may pontificate on the morality of war, but the reality is quite different.

THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY: 1948 - 1960

A Brief History of Australian Involvement in a Jungle War

Author: Ray Alcorn © 1990 ¹⁷

During the 1950s, the deep jungles of Malaya echoed to the sounds of Lincoln bombers, Artillery and the life and death struggles of the average soldier and field policeman. The war dragged on for twelve long years.



The communists appeared to have the upper hand for the first three years of the conflict, until the Security Forces could go on the offensive. Then, ever so slowly, the tide of combat turned to the advantage of the British, Gurkha, Malay and Commonwealth troops.

The Malayan campaign was a small one, averaging around ten or twelve allied battalions, pitched against an elusive enemy in the unfriendly,

thick jungles of the Malayan hinterland. The communist forces consisted of fifteen fighting regiments, and these were the main core, uniformed army. The Min Yuen or Peoples Movement was the underground "masses organisation". The Min Yuen provided food, funds, clothing, medical supplies, recruit and intelligence to the fighting regiments.

The Min Yuen had special agents, couriers, and "killer Squads". A real cloak and dagger force that dabbled in everything needed to support the fighting regiments. The killer squads carried out assassinations from the "elimination lists" drawn up by the communist political committees. In all, a total force somewhere near the size of 70,000 strong. A formidable army, which had fought the Japanese, and was well experienced in combat techniques, particularly in jungle warfare.

Malaya was a guerilla war, consisting of small patrolling units hunting their quarry in the thick jungle, rubber plantations or on jungle fringes. It was a war like the tiger's quest for survival; hunting its prey by long, arduous periods of searching and ambushing, then the quick strike. The kill generally being the anti-climax, of long wearisome periods of intense concentration during the search, which sapped one's mental and physical strength.

The Malayan war became the most expensive and difficult small war in the history of the British Commonwealth. It should not be forgotten because it taught the Western World that communism can be defeated. Particularly when communists decide that the only way to achieve their goals is by murder and terror, with force of arms.

Many historians have said that the Security Forces in the Malayan Campaign went through far worse ordeals than their predecessors did in the jungles of Burma during the Second World War. To give some comparison of the size of the Malayan campaign, the Japanese forces on the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea during World War 2, totalled about 12,000 fighting troops. This is approximately one fifth the size of the communist's total force in Malaya, at the height of the Emergency.

The communists fielded a fighting army of 12,000 men and women but were actively supported by the Min Yuen with activities of terror, assassinations and intelligence of Security Forces movements. The Min Yuen also maintained a steady supply of reinforcements to the main army in the field.

¹⁶ RAR National <https://bit.ly/2uO6IEj>

¹⁷ Author: 2/9106 Gnr R.F. Alcorn 100 (A) Fd Bty

The campaign started on 16 June 1948 with the murder of three English rubber planters. This incident heralded the start of a string of very brutal atrocities; and the beginning of twelve years of jungle war. It lasted until the Emergency conditions were lifted on 1 July 1960.

The British Forces took the brunt of the war and did not go on the offensive until late 1950. By 1955 the British forces had the communist army well and truly on the defensive, and from 1955 to 1960, operations were clearly aimed at destroying the remnants of their jungle army.

Australian Forces

During the years after World War 2, Australia was disbanding its army and looking forward to a well-earned peace. A special force was kept on a voluntary basis to occupy Japan. This force was called "K" Force, and although in Japan, was probably the only trained troops Australia had in uniform after demobilisation in 1946.

When the campaign started in Malaya in 1948, the Australian Labour Government decided against sending troops to assist the British forces. Then in 1950, the Korean War started, and Australia was hard pressed to maintain its forces there; let alone commit troops to the Malayan Emergency.

In 1949 the Government changed in Australia, and Menzies decided that some assistance should be given to the hard-pressed British forces in Malaya. Even though our small defence force was committed to Korea, it was decided that the RAAF could send a bomber squadron to help. On 16 July 1950, 1 Squadron RAAF consisting of eight (8) Lincoln B30A Bombers, began operations from Tengah Airfield, SINGAPORE. In addition, Australian army observers began to watch and note operations from October 1952.

It was not until the Korean War ceased hostilities, that Australia could commit ground combat troops. The 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, and the 105th Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery; a force of approximately 1,000 men, arrived in Malaya in October 1955.

In October 1957, this force was relieved by the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, and the 100th Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery, which served on operations until relieved in October 1959. Six months later the Emergency had ended.

Conclusion

The Malayan jungle is very thick, and extremely difficult to penetrate. However, it was not impenetrable, nor did it totally conceal a communist army. The jungle did make the going tough and coupled with the other aspects peculiar to this campaign, led many British historians to describe the Malayan campaign, as the most difficult small war, that any government had to fight in British Colonial history.

The Emergency was officially declared over on the 31st of July 1960. At the end of the campaign, approximately 5,000 Australians had taken part. The vast majority of the Australian force were combatants. Logistics for this force was provided from the British logistic services already in residence.

By the end of 1960, most of the communist army had come down from the jungle clad hills or had been previously destroyed. However, many more had crossed the border into Thailand. The Min Yuen continued with their normal occupations and began a long wait for a more appropriate time to continue the battle. The exception was approximately 2,000 hard line communist soldiers who decided to fight on from their jungle hideouts across the Malay/Thailand border. These hard liners kept the Malaysian Army occupied for many years after the lifting of Emergency restrictions.

In 1987, some 27 years after the Emergency officially ended, the Thai's offered a peace package to the remaining communists and their supporters. This package included resettlement within Thailand, and no forcible return across the

border to Malaysia. The package was accepted by the communist leaders and the Malayan Campaign was over.

Coming close on the heels of the communist victory in China, the loss of Malaya must have been a severe embarrassment to the socialist revolutionary aims. However, it did teach them a hard lesson. A lesson that was put to good use in Vietnam. To win, you must fight on all fronts; on the battle front and the home front. The propaganda machine must operate on a world-wide basis, to not only win the hearts and minds of those resident to the battlefield, but also in other influential countries to bring political pressure on one's enemies.

On the battlefield, all the resources one can muster must be put behind the fighting machine. The price to be paid by the enemies of the revolution must be made to appear more than any civilised country can bear. This was not achieved by the communists in Malaya, but a decade later it proved to be a winning combination in Vietnam. In Malaya, the British and their allies, fought hard against anyone wanting to fight, and treated fairly but firmly, all others whose loyalties were uncertain. In the long term, this strategy was to achieve victory for the British. The winning of the hearts and minds of those not in the battle, are every bit as important to the soldier, as the destruction of the enemy on the battlefield.

Casualties ¹⁸

In the short time the Australians were part of the campaign, 36 were killed or died of injuries, and 57 were wounded or injured. The Australians operated in a very small part of the Country.

To give some idea of what was happening over the whole country of Malaya, the following took place during one year of operations alone, at the height of the Emergency:

1.	6,082 Recorded terrorist incidents.
2.	1,911 Contacts with the enemy, culminating in:
	533 civilians murdered.
	354 Field police killed.
	124 Soldiers killed.
	1,078 CTs killed.
	121 CTs captured.
	201 CTs surrendered.

The above figures do not include the wounded for either side.

Commemorating the Service of Malaya & Borneo Veterans

Known as Malaya and Borneo Veterans' Day, recognises Australian military personnel who served in two historical campaigns — the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), and the Indonesian Confrontation, or Konfrontasi, (1962–1966). The Malayan Emergency was declared on 18 June 1948, following the Malayan Communist Party launching an insurgency against British colonial rule.

Australia's military became involved in 1950 and served in the Emergency until its official end in 1960, however, some units remained in Malaya until 1963. The Indonesian Confrontation began in 1962 when Indonesian forces launched attacks on the newly federated state of Malaysia. Australian forces became involved two years later.

28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group

In October 1965, 4RAR relieved 3RAR as the Australian infantry battalion in the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group located at Terendak Barracks in Malacca, West Malaysia. The other two infantry battalions in the Brigade were the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards and the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment.

The various combat support & administrative units of the Brigade were integrated units with Australian, British and New Zealand personnel.

¹⁸ The Malayan Emergency Appendix A: CASUALTIES

The 28th Commonwealth Brigade was the main Army component of the British Far East Strategic Reserve. It was an air portable formation whose main function was to deploy to Thailand if the war in Vietnam War spilled over into Thailand or if China became openly involved in the conflict.

Deployment to Sarawak

Soon after arrival in the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, 4RAR was warned for deployment to Borneo where Indonesia was conducting regular cross-border raids as part of its "Confrontation" (Konfrontasi) activities. Training intensified while at the same time the Battalion remained alert to counter any Indonesian incursions across the Malacca Strait from Sumatra into West Malaysia. 3RAR had previously been deployed to the Muir River area south of Malacca (this was the place of a large battle by Australians against the Japanese during the Second World War) and had captured 59 of the 60 Indonesians that landed there. The remaining soldier gave up some time later.

The Battalion deployed to Borneo in April 1966 and occupied positions in the Bau District which covered the main Indonesian invasion route towards Kuching, the capital of Sarawak. 4RAR was responsible for about 60 kilometres of the border with Indonesia. Three rifle companies were deployed forward in company forts near the border with Indonesia and one rifle company was held in reserve near Battalion Headquarters located near the town of Bau.

There were a number of contacts during the time in Sarawak with two significant contacts with Indonesian raiding parties during that time. The country was extremely rugged mountainous jungle or swamp and operations demanded a high standard of Infantry patrolling and provided excellent operational experience for the subsequent tour of Vietnam in 1968-69. Documents captured by C Company in a contact in June 1966 with an Indonesian Special Forces infiltration group proved of great importance to operations in Sarawak and to the political manoeuvring during the closing stages of the Indonesian Confrontation.

The highlight for the rifle platoons were the "Top Secret" CLARET patrols that were mounted across the border into Indonesian territory. These cross-border CLARET patrols allowed the British forces to take and retain the initiative by keeping the Indonesians off balance, striking in pre-emptive raids at their base camps and lines of communication and retaliating if the Indonesians launched a raid into Malaysia. Essentially, British security forces "sanitised" a strip of land on the Indonesian side of the border.

The CLARET Operations

The incursions into mainland Malaysia in the latter half of 1964 brought Indonesia and Malaysia (with its British and Australian allies) close to war, and in September some British planners talking of conducting sea and air strikes against Indonesian bases instead. Major General Walker (British Commander – Director of Operations Borneo) (DOBOPS) was authorised to conduct operations up to 5000 yards (4570 metres) across the Indonesian border. The strictest secrecy was observed and the 'Claret' operations, as they were known, were aimed at ambushing Indonesian troops and supply parties as they moved towards the border.

By the end of the year Walker had eighteen British battalions (including eight Gurkha and two Royal Marine Commandos) and three Malay battalions in Borneo.

Also, at the end of the year he was given permission to extend his operations up to 10,000 yards (9140 metres) across the border.

At one stage of the operations 4RAR had under command three (3) Rifle Companies of 2/7th Gurkha Rifles. June, July 1966 was very busy with Operation Double Cross, which was to counter Indonesian incursions into our area of operations in Sarawak.

VICTOR WINKLER'S MILITARY INTERLUDE

Canungra: Jungle Training Centre (JTC)

Every soldier being sent to South Vietnam was required to undergo a period of training at JTC. The centre was established in the mid 50's when Australian troops were committed to Malaya. Located in the hinterland from the Gold Coast, JTC made use of the rain forested mountainous regions in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales as training areas.

Over the following decade the training facilities at JTC were further developed and purpose built to cater for preparing troops for active service. Students were introduced to the muscle toughening course and assault/obstacle course known as the Confidence Course in the early periods and the water obstacles and tactical river crossing procedures as their confidence grew. There were a variety of close-quarter small arms battle shooting ranges which developed the reflexes and improved target detection and instinctive marksmanship skills to a high degree.

The close and rugged country adjacent to Battle Ridge provided all types of country needed to practice and test map reading and navigation skills both by day and night regardless of the weather. The early months of the year in that area is the rainy season so for troops for the troops being wet was normal.

The subjects covered at JTC were not all new to soldiers, but the syllabus had been designed to achieve a high intensity in the training activities and the continuous physical and mental activity which thoroughly tested both the individual and the teamwork of the organisation at each level of section, platoon and company.

There were fully trained Infantrymen posted to the Establishment of JTC as demonstration troops who also acted as the enemy on two sided exercises. Many of the instructional staff had recently returned from active service overseas and were familiar with the conditions that their students were being trained for.

In the early part of the course there were lectures after the evening meal on such subjects as South Vietnam, its history and people and then leading on to the Viet-cong. Mine warfare was a new subject to many and included the use by the enemy of booby traps and mines.

The 'piece de resistance' of training aids at JTC during the mid to late sixties was 'the village'. It was meant to replicate a typical Vietnamese village which had been infiltrated by the VC. It came complete with tunnels which tested the placement of the cordon and false walls to test the thoroughness of the search. Members of the Demonstration Platoon became the peasants and the wives of married instructors and some WRAAC staff were also employed as female villagers. It was a 'must see' for VIP visitors and gave the troops an indication on how cunning our enemy could be.

Accommodation was in tents on Battle Ridge and physical training commenced at first light when in camp and except for a short make and mend period here and there to do laundry there was little opportunity for relaxation and there was no leave. Nor was there any argument from the troops when 'lights out' was sounded.

The final exercise was a little under a week in duration, it was conducted in the state forest in northern New South Wales and in very rugged, thick rainforest. There was to be no re-supply so rations and batteries for the radios for the whole period were to be carried. Water re-supply was to be obtained locally from any running creeks encountered or from run off from 'hutchies' during downpours and water purification procedures were to apply. Although the water was pristine, the purification procedures were to be practiced against the day the water would not be.

The Exercise comprised patrolling by day and ambushing by

night, so little rest was assured. Communications were difficult due to the thick vegetation and deep ravines being transversed. The Directing Staff (DS) were in constant contact with 'the enemy' and could instigate additional incidents quickly to emphasise any weaknesses they observed. Casualties were awarded when contacts with the enemy occurred and had to be carried on makeshift stretchers and protected ... when DS were satisfied that this was being done properly the casualty was 'resurrected' to fight another day.

At the conclusion of the exercise the troops had to climb to the top of the range on the border and walk out for several hours to their waiting transport which took them back to Battle Ridge. It is probable that most have no recollection of their return trip to Battle Ridge, as they were sound asleep.

To say that the atmosphere in the transport as the troops left Canungra for Enoggera was euphoric is probably an understatement. For most, if not all of them the past weeks of training were the most demanding both physically and mentally that many of them had undertaken. They left JTC confident in themselves and confident in their mates and in the organisation, they were part of, but most importantly they were confident in their own ability to cope with any challenge that they could foresee and were likely to face in South Vietnam.

OPERATION MAGNUS: 'A' COMPANY AMBUSH 1962

By 15345 Donald Godley: 6 PI B Coy 2RAR

After the episode with the Tiger, we did a couple more nights there and following that, got word of the A Company ambush shooting up some C.T.'s. It seems we were the closest back-up Platoon for the A. Coy fellas. We were ordered to move out towards the ambush site immediately. We didn't have to foot slog too far before we were in position behind them. We used the track most of the way. We didn't know how many of them were about, therefore the position we set up was one of close defence until further notice.

The contact had occurred the previous afternoon. The facts about the ambush itself have been told in the official history and General Stretton's book, "Soldier in a Storm". The platoon had discovered a fresh campsite and there was a Sten gun and ammo stashed up in a large tree about the centre of the site. Of course, it was right on the border, but inside Malaya. The ambush was set and sprung the next afternoon when three C.T.'s walked into it. They say someone was spotted by the C.T.'s, who opened fire, turned and fled into the surrounding bamboo/jungle. At least one was hit by our blokes. Vince Roberts, who recently passed away in Rockhampton, was the Bren-Gunner. He said he would have got them but the stupid orders we were operating under. The Malays didn't want any smugglers accidentally shot, though it was a 'Black' area. We were not allowed to have the magazine fitted to our Bren guns in any ambush site. The magazine was to sit in the open aperture as a safety idea. This was to stop the gunner firing immediately upon anyone just walking in. Supporting this instruction was the fact that there had been no contact with C.T.'s for over two years or more, so it wasn't expected that we would suddenly encounter any, but we did. Anyway, when the lead C.T. opened fire, Vince had to fit the mag into place and fire. He lost a few vital seconds doing so, hence, in the thick bamboo, they got away.

On 3 August a report was received from 'A' Company that they had found an unoccupied communist camp concealed in thick bamboo. Half-eaten fruit, fresh cuttings, maggots in refuse pits and cigarette butts unaffected by jungle dampness showed that the camp had been occupied a few days previously. A batch of documents was found giving identifications and accounts with local shopkeepers and political papers proved to be of considerable intelligence value. The camp had accommodations for forty or fifty communists and ridge poles for sleeping accommodation were still intact.

The kitchen had three clay fireplaces under an 'atap' roof that had been lowered to the ground. As expected, the camp was on a small stream. It also had an alarm system of tin cans. There seemed every reason to believe that the occupants would return to the company were instructed to set up an ambush and wait.

By 3pm on 4 August a platoon of 'A' Company had been maintaining an ambush on the camp for nearly thirty hours when the ambush party saw a communist terrorist approaching through the thick bamboo. He was wearing black webbing and carrying a carbine. The Australian machine-gunner actually had the terrorist in his sights when he saw him beckon to someone in his rear. The gunner held his fire but then a third terrorist approached from another direction and saw an Australian soldier in the ambush position. Both the Australians and terrorists opened fire together at a range of about forty yards in bad visibility and the exchange continued until the enemy party broke contact and disappeared into the jungle. The Australian platoon gave chase in an endeavour to regain contact and soon found a blood trail which they followed until it petered out in a watercourse. During the night a police tracker dog was flown into the area and although it picked up a scent next morning, leading north to the border, the scent was lost because of a heavy tropical downpour. Later intelligence reports from southern Thailand confirmed that one communist terrorist had died and the other was recovering from his wounds.

This action, which was the first contact with terrorists in Malaya for over two years, was of political significance that bands of terrorists were still operating on Malayan soil and showed that they were still receiving food supplies from Malayan villages. The Battalion was justifiably proud of having had this early success and the resultant vigour of all troops resulted in the discovery of camps and caches of which the Malayan authorities had had no previous knowledge.

MEMORIES OF MY GENERATION 2

In July '53 my time in Korea was nearly up but the opportunity was there to sign on for another eight months. I could have been bomb happy any way, but I signed on for eight months.

Scared sometimes of course, but now in my later years, I can well understand the young diggers returning from Afghanistan, who after returning from their first tour, return again and again for another adrenalin shot, which may be hard to understand for those who haven't experienced it.

In the last days before the ceasefire came into effect, the Chinese put massive pressure on a fairly high hill called "the Hook" which it seemed was their gateway to Seoul and re-occupation of South Korea.

Didn't happen!

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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II

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Full details on page 11