

RINGO

2 RAR		
ROLL OF HONOUR		
KOREA		
CPL	ASHE J. B. (MIA)	
PTE	BOURKE E. G. (MIA)	
CPL	COOPER K. J.	
PTE	DAWES L. J.	
SGT	FORAN K.	
PTE	GREEN P.	
CPL	HANLEY G. J.	
PTE	HAWORTH B. F.	
PTE	HOWARTH T. G.	
PTE	JAMIESON J. R.	
LCPL	MORGAN H. G.	
PTE	MCCOY R. J.	
PTE	MCDONNELL F. C.	
PTE	RUSSELL J. W.	
PTE	RACKLEY R. C.	
PTE	SANSOM D.	
PTE	SHAW A. H.	
PTE	SHEAH C. B.	
CPL	SMITH A. G.	
CPL	WELLS A. J.	
PTE	WELSH B. J.	
PTE	YORK G. W.	
CPL	LEDDIN P.	
EAST TIMOR		
PTE	BAKER A. A.	
MALAYA		
CPL	ALLAN J. N.	
SGT	ANDERSON C. C.	
PTE	DECENT J. I.	
SGT	EWALD A. H.	
PTE	FRITZ G. C.	
PTE	HALLARD T. B.	
PTE	INGRA C. C.	
PTE	JAY C. A.	
PTE	JEPHSON H. M.	
PTE	KEEN A. M.	
PTE	MAC VICAR D.	
PTE	METCALF J. N.	
PTE	POTTS J. F.	
PTE	WILSON J.	
AFGHANISTAN		
LCPL	GAVIN L. N.	
PTE	LAMBERT M. C.	
VIETNAM		
PTE	ADAMS L. W. H.	
PTE	BELL R. J.	
PTE	BINNING R. P.	
SGT	BIRNIE T.	
PTE	BRETT W. J.	
PTE	CHAPMAN R.	
PTE	CUTCLIFFE T.	
PTE	FEWQUAND	
CPL	GROSE T.	
PTE	HARALD	
PTE	HYLAND	
PTE	KOWALL	
PTE	LYONS P.	
LCPL	MCDUFF P. E.	
PTE	MCGARRY P. S.	
PTE	MORRISON D. V.	
PTE	NEAL D. W.	
PTE	NELSON D. E.	
CPL	NORLEY G. L.	
PTE	PETTITT N.	
PTE	RADOMI S.	
PTE	RIVETT J. C.	
PTE	ROGERS J.	
WO2	SMITH R. J.	
PTE	THOMPSON	
PTE	TULLY D. J.	
SGT	TWOOMEY	
PTE	WESTON I.	
PTE	WILLOUGH	
LCPL	WILSON	
LCPL	WOOLFORD	

ANZAC EDITION
2021

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RINGO

April 2021

RINGO is the official Newsletter of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment Association, Inc. All correspondence is to be addressed to The Secretary 2rarsecretary@gmail.com

Cover Image: The 2nd Battalion Honour Roll was the centrepiece for the dawn service. Photo courtesy of Linda Bone Photography.

Inside this Issue

President's Way Forward	3 - 4
Life Membership Award	5
Battalion Command Team 2021	6
Warriors who have Marched Out	7
Cambodia Special Part 1	8 - 11
Cambodia Special Part 2	12 - 13
Colours of Yesterday	14
Commonwealth Monitoring Force - Southern Rhodesia	15 - 18
Curators Corner	19
Battalion News	20 - 22
Veterans Supporting Veterans	23

Disclaimer: The Objectives of our Association are clearly outlined on our website, or available from the Committee on request. In keeping with those objectives the Committee and the Editor of RINGO will not publish any correspondence or article, which is Defamatory, Insulting, Lewd, Political, Religious, Discriminatory, or in the opinion the Committee or the Editor is otherwise in conflict with the Objectives or Community Standards.



2 RAR ASSOCIATION – STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2021-2025

2 RAR was one of the three original units formed in 1945 for the raising of Australia's Regular Army and has been at the forefront of Australia's military commitments since 1945.

The 2nd Battalion has a long history for tough hard soldering forged through service in The Dutch East Indies, Japan, Korea, Malaya, South Vietnam, Malaysia, Rhodesia, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, East Timor, The

Solomon Islands, Iraq, Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Operations.

Aim:

This document is intended to identify opportunities to modernise the association and to reaffirm the role and approach to be taken by the association moving forward. The 2 RAR Association has a duty to remain abreast of veterans' issues, whilst also acknowledging and supporting our foundation members. Membership of our Association will be focused on encouraging our members to stay connected and maintaining their sense of self-worth.

Purpose:

The Association's purpose is to foster camaraderie among the serving and ex-serving members of the Battalion. The Association exists for ALL members who have served in the 2nd Battalion or the 2nd/4th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, regardless of where that service occurred. By building on the bonds formed in service and our shared identity we encourage our membership to become self-reliant and independent members of the community.

Objectives: The Association and the Committee exists to:

- To provide opportunities for Association members to come together for camaraderie and mutual support with their fellow Association members under national, state and local arrangements.
- To maintain a close relationship between the Association and 2 RAR.
- To provide opportunities for regular communication with, from and among the members of the Association.
- To maintain an ongoing program to increase the membership base of the Association.
- To provide timely advice of relevant support agencies to both Association members and the immediate family of deceased members requiring individual support in areas including health, relationships and personal welfare.
- To ensure the sacrifice of those who died whilst serving on duty with 2 RAR is acknowledged during all collective Association activities.
- To develop a systematic program of updating and maintaining the history of 2 RAR and the Association.
- To participate as a collective group on relevant occasions of national or regimental significance including ANZAC Day.
- To acknowledge the support given by non- members to the Association.

Membership eligibility: The Association is available to:

Ex-members of 66 Bn AMF, 2 RAR, 2/4RAR and serving members of 2 RAR. Membership may include those of Corps, other than the Royal Australian Infantry Corps, eligible by Service with 2 RAR and includes all or any 'members of supporting arms or philanthropic organisations attached to 2 RAR from time to time' (including 2 RAR MTF-3).

Ex-service persons who have served with "Sister Battalions" of The Royal Australian Regiment, or persons currently serving, or will in future serve, with "Sister Battalions", in any theatre of operations including Korea, Malaya, Borneo, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Rwanda, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq, Timor Leste, Afghanistan or any future theatre of operations.

Any direct relative of a person killed in action, died of wounds, or died from illness, in any theatre of operations while serving with 2 RAR, and who would have been eligible for membership of the Association; such relatives to include spouse/partner, mother, father, brother, sister, children or grandchildren of such deceased person.

Values:

We respect each member's contribution. We respect each member's experiences and our shared oath of service, regardless of the number of years served, our corps, or our rank. We respect the sacrifice and commitment of every member.

We become members of the Association not for what we can get, but for what we may give back, and for what we can contribute to the culture and heritage of the 2nd Battalion. We encourage each member to be a productive, independent and self-reliant member of their community and a responsible member of the Association.

Way Forward:

The committee will look to improve the association in the following areas in order to reconnect with past members of the unit, be more functional in its operations and also making it relevant, respected and connected to the Battalion.

Network –improve our electronic presence as well as enhance our physical presence in major urban areas so as to engage as many members and draw in those who have drifted away.

Welfare –seek to provide welfare support to Operational/Non-Operational Battalion deaths as they occur, as well as putting members in touch when there is a death or illness within the association.

MEMBERSHIP

your membership matters

Membership fees are due as at 1st November each year. The fees are \$20.00 per year and you can pay up to 5 years in advance. You can renew membership on the website at:

www.2rar-association.net.au/merchandise and you can pay through PayPal, direct debit or by cheque.

Please advise us if you have changed any of your contact details, particularly your email address.

Management Committee:

Several sub-committees, headed by members of the executive, will be formed to assist with the management of the association. Any major decision will be ratified by the executive at a general meetings.

Positions will be allocated to financial members of the association from the Battalion, but not a part of the committee. The 2 RAR XO will become a permanent liaison between the unit and the association providing insight into Bn affairs and assisting the association into becoming closely involved in the unit. These positions are provided with an eye to the future and the closer integration of the Association into Battalion life. This will show all soldiers that the Association has strong links to the 2 RAR family, now and into the future.

Connection with our history:

A strong connection will be established and maintained with the 2 RAR Historian and the Historical collection. The Historical collection is primarily for the Unit to preserve and display its history so that unit members, especially newer members, will understand the history of the Unit and the Regiment. Members will be encouraged to contribute to the collection via personal donations of memorabilia or monetary.

Financially viable Association:

The Association aim is to remain financially viable and investigate other options to generate passive income via the sale of 2 RAR branded merchandise. The intent is that all money raised goes back to all our service/ ex-service men and women of the Battalion.

Conclusion:

Despite the differences between our founding members and the new generation of 2 RAR soldiers we will continue to honour the moral contract the Association has given us. Elected State branch members will continue to arrange gatherings and commemorative efforts such as Anzac Day marches in the capitals, so that the Association is represented across all states of Australia. This generational change will need to be embraced by both generations in order to ensure that our Association continues to thrive into the coming decades.

SECOND TO NONE.



We need your stories & your contributions to RINGO.

Let us have them to share with everyone.

Communications with the Association

All matters are to be communicated through the Secretary. Contact details are:

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Gordon Hurford, AM was the most recent, and long serving, association secretary. He handed over his duties at the 2020 AGM with the association in a great position. Below is the citation for Life Membership of the 2 RAR Association, which is a just award for recognition of his service. Congratulations Gordon, on a well deserved honour.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Gordon Warrington Hurford, AM

In 2011 Gordon agreed to lead the 2RAR Vietnam Veterans' Reunion Sub-committee, resulting in an exceptionally successful event in Townsville in July 2012. For his outstanding leadership, Gordon was awarded the Silver Soldier. In 2013, he joined the committee as Project Officer and took on the task to redesign, redevelop and manage the website.

The position of Secretary became vacant in late 2013 and Gordon agreed to fill this important post. Because of his vast experience and remarkable management skills, he has ensured that the committee has continued to function unencumbered. His attention to detail in the preparation of all documentation, including that for all committee meetings and AGMs, his investigative abilities and his total dedication, have been instrumental in the effective functioning of the 2 RAR Association Committee.








As Secretary, Gordon has been responsible for seeking various grants and donations, the results of which have been of enormous financial benefit to the Association. His ability to make the difficult look easy has been the hallmark of his exceptional service.

In 2014, when Tom Young unexpectedly passed away, Gordon immediately stepped forward and took over the helm of the Adelaide Reunion. The result of this reunion was excellent. He again agreed to chair the 2017 Brisbane Reunion committee and the unqualified success of this event was an absolute tribute to his organisational skills.

This year Gordon has redesigned the Association Newsletter to improve the layout as well as to better reflect current activities within the Battalion.

As a result of his considerable skills, his enthusiastic approach and his dedication and limitless contribution, the Association is pleased to recognise the services of Gordon Hurford and appoint him to Life Membership.



 <h1>The 2 RAR Historical Collection</h1>				
Mailing Address The 2 RAR Historical Collection 2 RAR (Amphib) Samichon Lines Lavarack Barracks Queensland 4814 The curator can be contacted on MB - 0419749198 2RAR.Museum@gmail.com	The 2 RAR historical Collection exists to collect, preserve, display and research all items from 66 BN, 2 AR, 2 RAR, 2/4 RAR, 2 RAR (Amphib). Ex-members and their family are permanently invited to visit. Please think about donating your photos, slides, objects, uniforms, maps, trinkets from your time in the Battalion to the Collection  Like us and follow us on Facebook See 'The 2 RAR Historical Collection' Objects in the collection can be viewed by visiting www.thecollectingbug.com/2rarmuseum/		Donations (Bank transfer) Acc Name—Historical Collection BSB - 833205 Acc Number - 20419234 # All money is spent directly on the 2 RAR Historical Collection <i>The Collection is staffed by volunteers who have all served in the Battalion at some time or another</i>	
				



BATTALION COMMAND TEAM 2021

Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Tutton, RAINF

LTCOL Tutton has served in the Australian Army since 2009. Originally enlisting into the British Army in 1996 as a soldier, he commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst into the Cheshire Regiment in 2005 (1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment from 2007 onwards).

During his service with the British Army, LTCOL Tutton completed operational tours in the Former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, and Iraq; and, training deployments in North America, Central America, Africa, and throughout Europe. He was responsible for the training and mentoring of an Iraqi Infantry Company as part of operation *Charge of the Knights* OP TELIC 11; and, the conduct of combat team live-fire amphibious training and a battlefield study tour in the Falkland Islands as a Mortar Platoon Commander.

Upon joining the Australian Army, LTCOL Tutton immediately deployed to Afghanistan with 6 RAR as part of Mentoring Task Force 1. He was the lead mentor for the 3rd Kandak, responsible for its training in Kabul, deployment by road to Tarin Kot, and its conduct of security and stability operations in Regional Command South. He regards this as one of the most demanding and rewarding experiences of his military career to date.

LTCOL Tutton has served in a diverse range of appointments within the Australian Army, which include: Adjutant of the Army Helicopter School; Military Instructor at the Royal Military College – Duntroon; Company Commander and Operations Officer at 6 RAR; and, the embedded exchange officer to the United States Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory responsible for design and coordination of SEA DRAGON – the Marine Corps' service experimentation plan. Prior to his current appointment LTCOL Tutton led Operations Research & Analysis – Army within Future Land Warfare Branch Army Headquarters, he and his team were heavily involved in the analysis and generation of contestable evidence that underpins the Force Structure Plan 2020, the Land Operational Concept Document, and the Army Objective Force.

LTCOL Tutton was awarded a Commander Forces Command, Silver Commendation in 2016 for his leadership and performance in 6 RAR as the Officer Commanding Delta Company and Ready Battle Group Operations Officer. He was awarded the United States Navy Meritorious Service Medal in 2019 for his efforts in transforming SEA DRAGON into a service level plan to develop the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concept, and his contribution to United States Marine Corps future force design.

LTCOL Tutton completed his schooling at Oswestry School in the United Kingdom. He graduated from the Australian Command and Staff Course in 2016 with a distinction grade, he holds a Master of Military and Defence Studies from the Australian National University. He is an avid proponent of continuous learning and adaptation in all its forms; and, strongly believes subject matter expertise and innovative thought do not wear rank.

LTCOL Tutton and his wife Samantha have two children, Ella 14, and Archie 12.

REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR

Warrant Officer Class One Ben Lipman, RAINF



Warrant Officer Ben Lipman was born on 20 June 1974 in Lismore, New South Wales. He enlisted into the Army on 03 October 1993 as a rifleman within the Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

On completion of his initial employment training, Warrant Officer Lipman was posted to the 5th/7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment where he served as a rifleman up to the rank of corporal. During this posting, he served as a section commander in East Timor on Operation WARDEN and was selected for secondment to the 1st Battalion, The Coldstream Guards in Canada. In 2001, he was posted to Depot Company, School of Infantry (SOI) as a section commander instructor. He was then posted back to the 5th/7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment as a platoon sergeant where he deployed to East Timor again on Operation CITADEL.

In 2006, Warrant Officer Lipman was posted to Platoon Team, Tactics Wing at the School of Infantry. During this posting, he deployed to Iraq on Operation CATALYST with the Australian Army Training Team – Iraq. He was promoted to warrant officer class two on return to Platoon Team in 2008 and filled the position of the Reconnaissance Warrant Officer in 2009. During this time he was selected to take a small team to Cambodia to instruct the Cambodian National Counter Terrorism Special Forces in reconnaissance techniques.

Warrant Officer Lipman was posted to the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment in 2010 as the Battalion Mechanised Warrant Officer and the Company Sergeant Major of Charlie Company. During this time, he was deployed as the Company Sergeant Major of Rifle Company Butterworth in 2011 and on Operation SLIPPER as the Company Sergeant Major of the Brigade Advisory Team in Afghanistan in 2012.

In 2014, Warrant Officer Lipman was posted to the Royal Military College – Duntroon where he fulfilled the positions of a small group instructor in I Class, Company Sergeant Major of III Class, and Small Arms Training Warrant Officer. In 2017, Warrant Officer Lipman was appointed the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 10th/27th Battalion, the Royal South Australia Regiment.

In February 2018, he deployed to the Philippines with Joint Task Group 629 for eight months before returning to complete a third year at the 10th/27th Battalion, the Royal South Australia Regiment. In 2020, Warrant Officer Lipman was appointed the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

Warrant Officer Lipman is married to Kim. They have two sons, Odin who is 17 and Hunter who is 13. Warrant Officer Lipman has a passion for motorsports and engineering, building and competing in his own race car at a local level of competition. He is also actively involved in supporting his sons in soccer and BMX racing.

WARRIORS WHO HAVE MARCHED OUT

235041 MAJGEN David Drabsch, AO, MBE

35847 PTE Ronald Alexander Coleman

34039 WO2 Edwin Bruce Hoare

6709618 PTE Brian "Tassie" Shields

5714954 PTE Glen Moore

32424 PTE Alan F. Dorling

201018 Major Ambrose "Sam" Farmer

29733 WO2 Donald Dhu Frew

43791 PTE Fraser Williamson (RNZIR)

PTE Shane Graham Sheppard



*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon him.
March out with pride digger
Your duty done
May he rest in peace.
Amen. God bless*

*Rev Graeme Davis, OAM, CSM
Hon Padre 2RAR Association*

PASSING OF A MATE

If you become aware of anyone who has served in 2 RAR at any time, pass away, please advise the Secretary ASAP so that all members of the Association may be made aware of the situation. Funeral details are appreciated if known or the Funeral Directors who are handling the funeral. In this way we can keep up the information flow to the membership.





United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia Force Communication Unit 1992 - 94

Personal recollection by Colin Mosch

I got lucky, is the only way to describe how I was selected to be part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Every soldier in the Battalion would have wanted a chance, this was not lost on me; I was grateful to get an opportunity. In 1992 2 RAR was granted 14 positions for soldiers to become part of the UNTAC mission. As I understand it the Commanding Officer allocated six positions to Support Company and two for each Rifle Company. My company (A Coy) asked for a nomination from each platoon and, as luck would have it, my Platoon's Signaller had just moved to Recon/Sniper's, therefore I got the nod and so began the adventure - just not straight away.

Every country's UN contingent had different roles and the Australian contingent was the Force Communications Unit (FCU). It was a Defence Force wide contingent, drawn from the Army, Navy and Air Force; within the Army almost all Corp's were represented. Soldiers from 2/4 RAR handled themselves well in Cambodia as part of the FCU. A great example was Kelvin Richards who was awarded a Land Commanders Commendation for his actions under fire. Richo would unfortunately pass away a few years later, much too young. Additionally Delta Company's 12 Platoon would deploy with Australian Army Blackhawk helicopters, during the intense election period. They too would have an eventful and exciting three months in country.

We, the original 14 members (many more would follow) of 2/4 RAR, embarked on several weeks of pre-deployment training in Brisbane at Enoggera Barracks. Unfortunately I was parked in a reserve position and at the end of training - I wasn't required. I returned to the Battalion with the hope of a potential future call up. Months later my chance had not come and I left for Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) in Malaysia. Almost four months later and now 1993, I returned from RCB and was called to the RSM's office. Nervously trying to figure out why I was on the RSM's radar, he asked, 'mate do you want to go on this Cambodia trip or not'. It was an affirmative from me.

In record time I marched out of the Battalion and was doing my second round of pre-deployment training, in Sydney at Randwick Barracks. This included an extensive mine awareness package with controlled explosions of several mines to drive home their effects. That training saw myself and many others deploy with an intimidating respect of land mines and rightly so, I would see their effects on several occasions. After three weeks of training we deployed, one of the last contingents to do so. Arriving in country we received extensive briefings and spent every spare moment touring Phnom Penh's sights, before we would be dispersed around the country.

The FCU had a main barracks in Phnom Penh and Signals Troops spread all over the country. Each of those Troops had small Detachments (Dets) spread even wider. The entire country needed to be covered by communications of varying natures. The larger locations would have established camps, air conditioning, fresh food and fax machines. The Troop Headquarters (HQ) would also be well equipped, but importantly link the extensive VHF and HF radio networks covering the entire country. Troop HQs would sometimes be the only and vital link to the small Dets. Some were only accessible by helicopter due to the extensive mine threat and constant fighting amongst the factions. Some soldiers did up to 12 months in a one man Det, in primitive living conditions. Armed with a rifle and a HF radio pack, living in small villages strewn all around the country. It's not hard to guess where most of the diggers from the Battalion were employed; I doubt most would have wanted it any other way.

During my time in Cambodia I spent five months in a two man Det, in a small village called Sre Ambel - it was also an active smuggling port. We would spend our days on task with Land and Naval Military Observers (MO's). The MO's were not armed, so they were always keen on having an Aussie signaller by their side. I once had an American Colonel on his first day in Sre Ambel hand me a carton of beer, he was advised to do that in his MO training. It was not uncommon to be on foot, mounted in vehicles or moving up and down waterways in a fast-moving, rigid hull inflatable boat. I got to be part of a MO team that traveled by landing craft to islands and meet some hard core Khmer Rouge. We would also maintain and operate a base radio station and send the MO's daily Situation Reports via HF radio.

Operating in small teams and moving amongst Cambodia's fighting factions would result in regular incidents. Gunfire, shelling and clashes between factions were commonplace around the country. Cambodian soldiers or policeman with a gutful of alcohol were unpredictable, as I soon found out. Whilst on a vehicle move we stopped for a break. Leaning on the bonnet I had a three round burst crack over my head, pretty bloody close. Now down behind the front wheel, I observed through my rifle scope. Four very drunk Cambodian soldiers, had downed their weapons and were happily laughing at the two Aussies on their guts. It was sheer luck, not good marksmanship that got those rounds so close to my head - the joys of Cambodia. I recall one of the MO's furiously downing beers, explaining to me how a round passed between his legs, way too close to his crotch, during a heated standoff.

The Sre Ambel Detachment was located in the corner of a French Foreign Legion company position. The Legion were tough and crazy like their reputation, a very dedicated brotherhood, their discipline was brutal. Early on in Cambodia I exited a helicopter in a Legion camp to see a Legionnaire chained to a flag pole by his neck; he had attempted to go AWOL with a local girl. The space the French allocated us was an upstairs old timber building, the bottom was their First Aid Post; doubling as the local infirmary. Cambodia was still a violent place and anyone locally who had trod on a mine, been shot, involved in a vehicle accident, was brought in and treated downstairs. On many occasions from our balcony, we would get an eyeful of the brutality of land mines and terminal ballistics. If the causality passed away, the body would be stored next door to the infirmary, in an abandoned school room, until collected. Less than ideal was this room being directly below where we both slept - the gaps in the floor boards were large. It was mutually agreed our building was haunted and strange things did occur in the night; I spent many a lonely night by myself in that building.



Test Firing weapons at makeshift range.

Those gaps in the floorboards and basic living conditions caught up with me. The mosquitoes were horrific and came through under my mozzie net, I'd been sweating and shivering for days. I conversed with the French Foreign Legion Medic; his English was limited. He decided I had Dengue Fever and should come good after seven days. A punishing week later I wasn't improving and the French medic and cook decided to drag me to their kitchen, I'd barely eaten. The medic handed me a beer, I pushed it away, he then made his best diagnoses yet, 'Australian no beer, Australian Hospital', I'd told him I was crook. By the time I got to the Australian hospital ward in Phnom Penh my urine had started turning black and I was diagnosed with a cracking case of Malaria. I left the hospital two weeks later at 64kg, I had lost over 10kgs and had to borrow a belt to hold my trousers up. Where did they send me - straight back to the Dets.

One incident that I was part of truly highlighted all the varied elements of a UN mission working together. The Naval MO's halted a very large importation of stolen cars, being craned from larger vessels at sea, onto fishing boats; then cleverly unloaded onto makeshift shanty docks in Sre Ambel. Local commanders were behind the scheme and stood to make many a dollar. Threats were made and things very quickly escalated, bringing the whole town to a flashpoint. Myself and another 2/4 RAR soldier, Wayne 'Roo' Skinner, were with the Naval MO's at the time. A French Platoon arrived to secure the area - unfortunately the Legion had left and were replaced by regular French Army. Once briefed the French Platoon Commander updated his Company Commander, who felt it was all a little hostile and they should return to base and strengthen their own Position, so they left - and left us behind... I had witnessed the French Army in retreat, without a shot being fired!



Patrolling in rural Cambodia

I updated our Troop HQ on the situation, the Troop Commander ordered us to leave with the French, for our safety. I explained if we left, the MO's would be completely defenceless. He reminded me we were not employed as Infantry (this happened a bit) and to leave. I tried further to explain the situation and that if we left, harm would almost certainly come to the MO's - again we were directed to abandon them. One of the most Australian things I've witnessed occurred next, if you know Roo Skinner, you know he's a character. He snatched the radio handset from me and said, 'these blokes are our mates, you can get f*cked - out'. We would stay the rest of the day and through the night with the MO's and the situation continued to escalate. Two Australian Blackhawk helicopters full of Philippine Marines would be called in to secure the town and help de-escalate the situation. Having a close call whilst trying to land, the Blackhawks aborted to an alternate landing zone out of town. One of the MO officers in charge, who is still a great friend of mine, had to make a call. He tasked me to go off into the night and guide the Philippine Marines in, they didn't know I would be coming. To this day we still joke about a British officer, sending an Aussie digger off into the night, alone.

I didn't find the Marines but I did meet the Land Based Military Observers, they were wide eyed after having bursts of machine gunfire near miss their vehicle on a recce. The fact I stopped their vehicle at gun point on a dark night didn't help either. They were headed for safety and I hitched a lift back. The helicopters and Marines (who had found their own way), had the desired effect and things calmed down over the following days. To be part of an event that had soldiers, sailors and aircraft from around 10 different nations all work together was amazing. The calm heads and outstanding leadership; particularly from the two experienced British (Dusty Miller and Paul Leader), was something I will never forget. I'm still impressed at how an 'unarmed' MO produced an AK47 and a handful of magazines from under his mattress.

For my final months in Cambodia, I was re-employed into an Infantry style platoon, odd given my previous Troop Commander wasn't keen on us being employed as Infantry. We would stay until the very end and be the last Australian FCU soldiers to leave Cambodia. We had two sections both commanded by Infantry Corporals and a small HQ. I was lucky to have a very capable 2/4 RAR section commander, Craig Batty. Amongst many boring guard and security details, we also occasionally flew out and rode convoy security for Dets that were closing down, in dangerous areas.

We finished on a high, relocating to the beautiful seaside town of Sihanoukville, once a playground for rich Europeans, with a fantastic beach. There we secured all the Australian contingent stores at the port, until the decision was made, to leave the country. We handed over the stores, locked our rifles in a shipping container, threw our ammunition off the dock and drove to a disused Vietnam War airfield. We the last 23 Australian soldiers of the FCU, boarded a Hercules aircraft to Bangkok, Thailand, just before sunset.

We flew from Thailand to Sydney overnight and were quickly transported to Randwick Barracks. A hasty morning tea followed a Senior Officer presenting us service medals, then we quickly dispersed to the airport and to wherever was home and on leave. There was no debriefing or psych interviews; in 36-hours I went from being on operations in Cambodia, to being home on leave. I learnt so much that would stick with me for the rest of my career and help me make decisions on future deployments. It was kind of ironic I could have been on the first contingent in country, but instead was in the last handful of soldiers out. Either way it was one of the best adventures of my life!

Colin Mosch served in the Australian Army for 15 years, primarily in 2/4 RAR and 2 RAR, completing his service in 1 RAR as a Platoon Sergeant. Colin deployed to Cambodia (1993) as part of the FCU; Rwanda (1994/95) as a Rifleman in the advance party and East Timor twice (1999 and 2001) as a Recon Patrol Commander on both tours. He is also proud of serving (and surviving) two and a half years in 2 RAR's infamous Mortar Platoon, aka the 'Maggots'. Colin is married to wife Gina and together they have a daughter Hannah, who has only missed one Dawn Service in her 11 years. Since leaving the Army Colin is active within the firearms industry and shooting sports.



Sre Ambel Detachment house and First Aid post

Personal recollection by Wayne "Roo" Skinner

I arrived in Cambodia in April 1993, we were to be farmed out to Signal Squadrons, in my case 3 Squadron, to provide signal support and security to mobile teams of UN Observers. To my surprise the first job the chooks (Signallers) had us do was build a couple of bunkers for them at the troop headquarters. It was the build up to the wet season and 40 degrees and 90 percent plus humidity. The sigs would poke their heads out of their air conditioning a couple of times a day and mumble something about how hot it was and so glad they weren't building bunkers out of 8 inch by 8 inch beams (shit they were heavy) and sandbags. As you can guess not a good start and that pretty much settled all the gun-slingers opinions of sigs for the rest of the deployment, in my and I am sure most people for the rest of their careers.

Anyhow after a couple of weeks of light engineering work the elections rolled around and all hell was expected. We got deployed to polling stations, the chooks bunkered down and we expected all sorts of trouble. As it turned out it was probably the quietest couple of days of the deployment. I was then sent out to replace a Kiwi L/CPL and join up with Colin Mosch (A Coy) who had been in location at Sre Amble for a couple of weeks and missed most of the bunker building. The next five months settled in to a steady routine of patrols, mostly in Zodiacs and RHIBS as our location was along a large river and this was the best and safest method to cover the AO, much more territory was available by boat than any other means. We worked mostly with the Naval Observers and our team consisted of Philippine, British, New Zealand and Canadian Naval personnel. Our Military (Army) Observers consisted of Russian, Argentine, Pakistan and American personnel. We would supply a HF radio rear link with our headquarters as well as small hand-held VHF working on repeaters. All communications were insecure.

For those who had an interest in history the deployment was very interesting, in the Eastern part of the province from the air the line where Agent Orange had been sprayed was still very clear more than twenty years later. There was an old B-52 capable air field within a few kilometres of the troop and UN Province HQ and the array of small arms was mind boggling. From all Soviet Bloc small arms to Thompson sub-machine guns that had been supplied to the Chinese during World War 2 and everything in between, you name it, it was there. Mines were always a worry and the AO was littered with them, we generally witnessed or saw the fresh results of mine incidents every week.

Military operations in the AO generally consisted of small scale patrols by the Khmer Rouge and only rarely did they operate in anything over company strength. The CPAF, later CAF (Cambodian Armed Forces) after the election, operated in platoon strength as a minimum, and if they operated on the Eastern side of the river company plus as this was a Khmer Rouge stronghold as where the mountains in the Northern part of our AO. During August 1993 the CAF launched a major nation-wide offensive designed to break the back militarily of the Khmer Rouge, it was a great success and by late September the Khmer Rouge sued for peace.



Aus Blackhawk lands post incident

The mission came to an end very abruptly and I had less than twelve hours to pack all the gear and head back to Phnom Phen, Col had departed a couple of weeks before and I was on my own. I said goodbye to all our mates in the Naval Observers and our Russian Major team leader ("I am so glad we never had to fight the West, you are all good guys"). We had an epic last night at the Naval house and when we disposed of all the boat flares by firing them over the outskirts of the town we witnessed the local garrisons counter attack drill, very interesting. Back in Phnom Phen it was a quick pack up and back to Aus via Thailand, none of the drawn-out psych screening and quarantine that happens now. All up it was a very interesting six months and one of the highlights of my career. Things were very different back then as this and Somalia were the first major ADF deployments since Vietnam. For example, we had a daily beer ration, two cans per man per day, and I had to acquit the money and show it had been spent on beer every month, imagine that now. Resupply was dodgy and it was a case of look after yourself because the Sigs sure wouldn't. (trying to get a resup of smoke grenades was like asking for thermo nuclear devices, and we did go through a few as the Russian chopper pilots grasp of English and navigation was questionable, but they still could neck straight vodka from the bottle whilst flying. It was a different time.

Prior to the Army Wayne worked on the land as a jackaroo and station overseer. He joined the ARA in 1987, after Kapooka and Singleton he was posted to the 2nd/4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2/4 RAR). His other Regimental postings include 3 RAR and 2 RAR. His training postings include Jungle Training Wing, Tully, Combat Traing Centre Live, 31/42 RQR and Sydney University Regiment, RMC. He retired in September 2016.

He has now returned to his roots and is running his own cattle property in the Snowy Mountains of NSW with his wife, Monika.



Casualty arriving at Sre Ambel

The UNTAC mission was to restore peace and facilitate a free and fair election, allowing the transition to a functioning civil government after decades of civil war and foreign interference. This mammoth task involved 46 countries providing over 15,000 troops to demobilise Cambodia's fighting factions, confiscate caches of weapons, protect human rights, establish and maintain security, law and order, and assist in extensive landmine clearance. If that wasn't enough there was also a need to provide extensive humanitarian relief to vast amounts of displaced and returning people. No Cambodian faction was more feared than the infamous Khmer Rouge who had won the [Cambodian Civil War](#). The Khmer Rouge led by [Pol Pot](#) commenced a brutal regime embarking on mass killings of anyone not aligned with their ideology. Ultimately the [genocide](#) led to the death of approximately 1.5 to 2 million people - around 25% of Cambodia's population.

Every country's UN contingent had different roles and the Australian contingent was the Force Communications Unit (FCU). It was a Defence Force wide contingent, drawn from the Army, Navy and Air Force; within the Army almost all Corp's were represented. Soldiers from 2/4 RAR handled themselves well in Cambodia as part of the FCU. A great example was Kelvin Richards who was awarded a Land Commanders Commendation for his actions under fire. Richo would unfortunately pass away a few years later, much too young. Additionally Delta Company's 12 Platoon would deploy with Australian Army Blackhawk helicopters, during the intense election period. They too would have an eventful and exciting three months in country.

Colours of Yesterday

Private George E. Richards, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), of Mildura, Victoria (Australia), sorting rations - in this case, tins of Carnation milk, Korea, 4 March 1954.

The scene was captured by British Commonwealth Forces Korea (BCFK) Public Relations photographer Phillip Hobson (1922-2006), whose original caption to the image provides invaluable insight into Richards, who would celebrate his 22nd birthday the week the photograph was taken.

George Richards was from Riverlea, Yannathan, near Lang Lang in Gippsland, Victoria, where his brothers were share farming on a dairy property.

Born at Mildura, he went to Melbourne at an early age and did his schooling at Canterbury and Balwyn. When he left school he joined the Postal Department and was stationed at Tallangatta in north-east Victoria for three years before moving to Yannathan and working with his brothers.

In 1952 he joined the Army and went to Japan in January 1953 before subsequently being posted to Korea. He was still there in July when the cease fire was announced, which, for Richards, would become the one of the most outstanding memories of his time in Korea.

At the time he was a regimental stretcher bearer with D company on "The Hook" feature, scene of some of the fiercest fighting in the closing stages of the hostilities.

"It seems hard to believe that it was all over at first", Richards recounted, "most of all the sudden quietness, no guns firing, and no need to keep under cover. That was something I will always remember."

He had no regrets joining the Army or serving in Korea. In fact, Hobson noted in 1954, he was prepared to serve a further term in Korea.

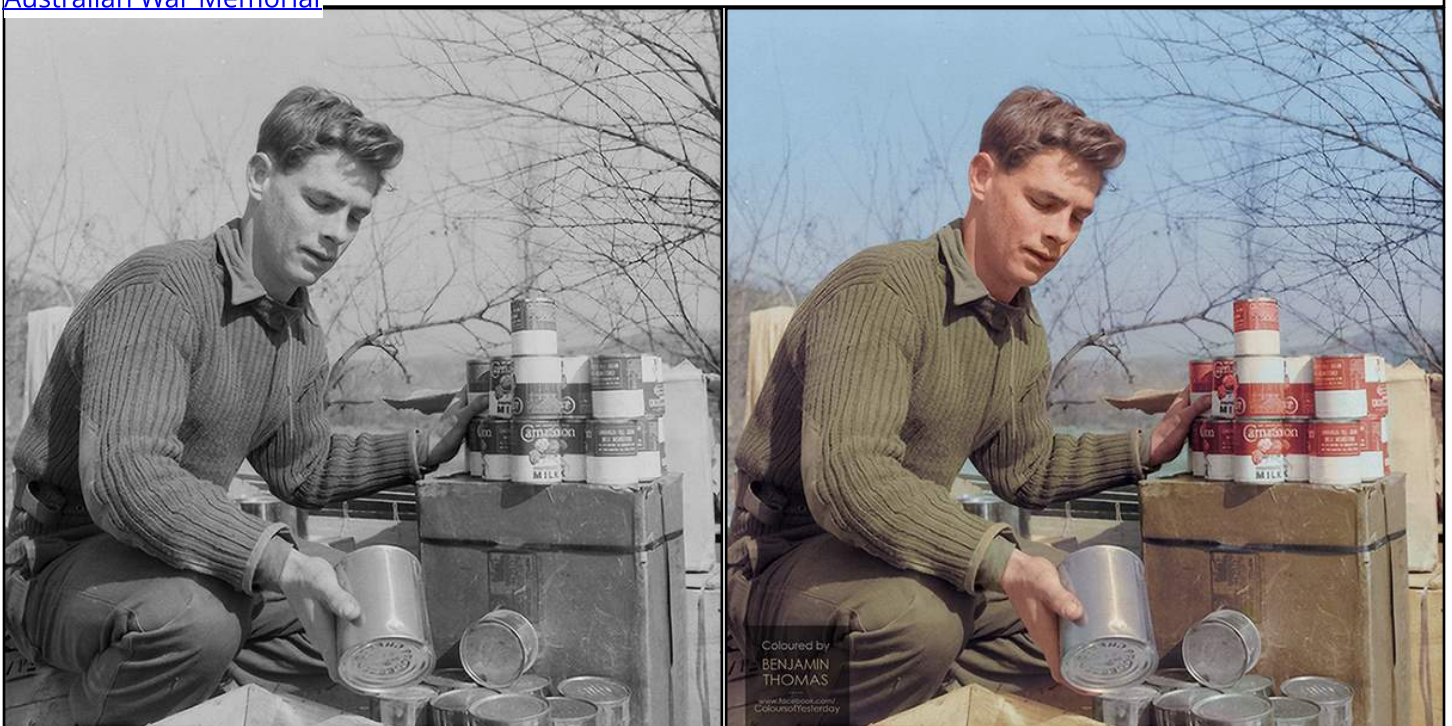
"It has been a wonderful experience", Richards acknowledged, "and I've met some marvellous mates. There's something about Army life that's really worthwhile".

George E. Richards would turn 89 this year; does anyone know if he's still with us or has family?

Photographer: Phillip Hobson (1922-2006)

Image courtesy of the

[Australian War Memorial](#)



COMMONWEALTH MONITORING FORCE SOUTHERN RHODESIA (OP DAMON)

24 DECEMBER 1979 - 20 MARCH 1980

In response to talks between the British Government and the Government of Southern Rhodesia, an agreement was reached which proposed the Commonwealth provide monitors tasked to act as impartial observers to oversee the cessation of hostilities and facilitate the conduct of free and democratic elections. Rhodesia had been embroiled in a race based civil war for over a decade. The white minority ruled the country in an undemocratic, apartheid fashion which had become an anathema to the international community. The British government sought assistance from the various members of the Commonwealth, Australia's response was to provide a contingent of approximately 150 military personnel, of which Lieutenants Donald Thompson, Paul Martin and Corporal Ian Brady were chosen to be part of the contingent from the Battalion. A series of briefings were held, providing background to the conflict, current political situation and status of the insurgency. Media reports provided balanced and well researched information on the situation in Rhodesia. The usual pre-deployment activities were undertaken, medical checks and inoculations, kit checks, and briefing on the organisational overview; a headquarters element, Liaison officers, medical elements and Assembly Place personnel. Importantly, meeting the officers and NCO's to become team members. I was assigned to Assembly Place Delta team, commanded by CAPT Greg Pike of 1RAR. The team comprised of Infantry, Signal and Engineer personnel. Little time was spent familiarising ourselves with the team members, getting to know each other would be shaped by the presence of some 1,750 ZANLA forces, being hemmed in by a dam and a minefield and a single road for extraction.



The contingent was finally assembled at RAAF Base Pearce, Western Australia, the last of our staging areas. Deployment was delayed by a cyclone in the Indian Ocean, it struck the island of Mauritius, the scheduled refuelling location for our aircraft. After several days waiting, the deployment began in earnest. The conditions in Mauritius were poor, the accommodation was the best it could be given the damage caused by the cyclone, all the floors were wet, we were forced to share our beds as many of the beds were soaked from the rain. We were fortunate in that we had a roof over our heads and a meal was served to us before we slept.

The flight into Salisbury was mainly uneventful, however due to the threat of anti-aircraft missiles being deployed, our approach to the international airport was a descending spiral to the runway. We were quickly and quietly transported to a Rhodesian Light Infantry barracks in preparation for deployment to our assigned sectors. The Rhodesian military was tasked to provide transport and security for the duration of our insertion. We arrived at the British South African Police (BSAP) base at Mtoko, here we overnighted and awaited transportation to Dendera.



Australian's assemble after arrival

While being briefed by the BSAP commander, he stated that he was tasked to provide a relief force should our position in Denderra become untenable, all we had to do was hold out for 30 minutes! Fortunately, such a situation did not arise. Assembly Place Delta was to be located in the north eastern area of the AO, the set location was Denderra, a burnt-out mission building which was central to a number of small villages located to the west of Denderra. Topographic briefings were of little significance, importantly, they illustrated our isolation and inability to relocate if necessary. It was known that the major highways were subject to land mines and ambush, secondary roads were mined with sufficient regularity that mine clearing precautions were employed to safely deliver the team to Denderra. Our arrival Assembly Place Delta was underwhelming, a partially destroyed cinder block mission building at the end of a dirt track, a cleared area which may have been cultivated when the mission was occupied, a dam which was to become the source of the camp's water supply and gently undulating savanna with generous tree cover. This was to be our home for the next few months.

We began a quick reconnaissance of the immediate area, sited the signals tent, the aid post and vehicle park and storage areas. During this reconnaissance an improvised anti helicopter device was discovered; consisting of 4 stick grenades, 3 of which were laid above the remaining grenade. The 3 grenades were designed to be blown into the air as the down wash of the rotors triggered the 4th grenade. A simple but cleverly designed weapon. A number of spent cartridges and some discarded clothing were also noticed. For protection, shell scrapes were dug, a roughly crescent shaped defensive area was occupied focussed on the track leading to our position and providing cover to the flanks. The question became "how to defend a position when every direction is an approach?" Sentries were posted to provide early warning, as the task of setting up a functional headquarters began. The Signallers were intent upon establishing communications with both the Contingent HQ and the Mtoko BSAP. An aid post was established outside the perimeter. The cleared area adjacent to the dam proved to be an adequate drop zone for the delivery of stores and doubled as a helipad. No intelligence was provided regarding the size, structure, or possible needs of the group/s we were to administer. The only material available was a reference guide provided to the missionaries on reception and welcoming of local inhabitants, needless to say, this was absolutely useless material.

Our first night in location was uneventful, the Signallers worked diligently to establish communications while the HF sets whined and screeched according to the dictates of the ionosphere. The Engineers had been busy looking at sites for establishing the ZANLA encampment, how to get water to the camp and whatever wizardry they could conjure in the meantime. Piping for the water, filtration and water quality testing were all discussed. The Engineers knew their job, they were able to procure piping for the carriage of water, filtration and pumping equipment, all with sufficient pressure to meet the needs of the Popular Front soldiers. The following day the sentry to the East of our position started pulling on the communication cord, the rapid and persistent signalling continued as the lead elements of what was to be assessed as a regiment swept through our position. The assault elements displayed good discipline, maintained even spacing and did not move their weapons in an aggressive manner. This was the protection party for the overall commander of the ZANLA troops occupying Assembly Place Delta, Comrade Edwin, his second in command, Comrade Justice, the Popular Front Liaison Officer (PFLO) Comrade Takawera and the political commissar. CAPT Pike did a commendable job of maintaining good humour and military courtesy, as the message was rather clear from the PF commander. Food, tents, cigarettes and sundry supplies were delivered by RAF C130 aircraft by means of LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System). Each 1 Ton bundle posed a significant hazard if the aircraft missed the DZ (Drop Zone), as did a 1 Ton bundle of tent poles which became untied and proceeded to straddle the hospital with 2.8m long, metal spiked tipped, javelins from the heavens! Helicopters recovered the cargo parachutes.



CPL Ian "Bones" Brady at the site of a contact



Brassard worn by contingent members

A daily routine was established, which included taking a head count of all combatants in the Assembly Place, total count was to be established at 1,772 personnel, weapons, by type to include rifles, side arms and crew served weapons and shoulder fired rocket propelled grenade launchers. Weapons appeared to be well maintained, reflecting a degree of discipline within the ranks. These soldiers were not some ragtag group of ill-disciplined individuals pulled from the bush, these were well structured unit entities, fit, well dressed and well-armed, disciplined troops! Not the scurrilous insurgents we were briefed on! The level of distrust for ourselves, the rations being delivered, even the cigarettes being provided was extreme. We had to share the rations, smoke the cigarettes, demonstrate that we had no ulterior motive for being there, other than our stated mission. Over time a level of trust was established, we had a job to do, to monitor the combatants in the Assembly Place, to feed, provide medical assistance as required and house them. The Assembly Place was 4 square kilometres, ringing this was a 1 km deep free fire zone which was closely monitored by both the BSAP and the ready reaction force of the Rhodesian Light Infantry. We had sworn enemies within a click of each other with 17 Australians trying their best to keep a lid on this pressure cooker.

One of the terms of the cease fire and guaranteed safety of the Assembly Places was that no combat training was to be conducted within the confines of the Assembly Place. One incident occurred when moving to conduct a head count, 2 hand carved mock stick grenades were observed. This was brought to the attention of the senior PF officer present, who proceeded to have the Political Officer (political commissar) explain what was the purpose of the dummy grenades. In a moment of pure farce, he proceeded to demonstrate a 'dance' in which the dummy grenades were props. No such dummy weapons were later to be discovered.

Assembly Place Delta was reinforced with a detachment from the Durham Light Infantry, good soldiers but terribly sunburnt. Their contribution to the total effort was greatly appreciated as the isolation and stress of the situation we found ourselves in was starting to take its toll, boredom was the enemy. We took advantage of an invitation to play a friendly cricket match against the farmers at the Mtoko cricket ground, a typical cricket ground, boundary fence marking the 4-run boundary. What was unusual to the Australian troops was that the oval was surrounded by 'plow shear' directional mines set on trip wire and command detonation circuits, the hitting of Sixers was definitely frowned upon. For celebration of Australia Day, we held the Denderra Bug Race. Preparation for the races included capture of the 'speediest' bugs available, the Signallers had a distinct advantage as the comms tent was manned day and night, thereby giving them a greater selection of bugs. A rotation of troops back to Salisbury on a 48-hour leave was implemented. All these measures, while appearing petty in hindsight, had a profoundly positive effect upon morale.



Our Engineer group were busy with the provision of water and maintaining good potable water, found time and local resources to build a swimming pool adjacent to the mission building. Shade was provided by a pink cargo parachute, blocks were used to help keep dirt and sand out of the pool, a sand pool filter was 'found' and put to good use. The pool itself was a 12,000-gallon water tank with the top removed.

We did the best we could, given the resources available to maintain morale. When Major-General Sir John Acland, KCB, CBE, DL commander of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force Southern Rhodesia, visited 'Delta' he was "delighted by the ingenuity and fortitude" of the personnel assembled there. As the election drew closer, the rumours of foul play, abduction and threats abounded. The Monitors at Delta were accused for holding the son of a political candidate prisoner, a false accusation. Tensions mounted on the shoulders of these rumours, the mood in the Assembly Place had changed, from benign indifference to open hostility, gone were the relaxed conversations, replaced with the drawing up of contingency plans if attacked. CAPT Pike spoke with the PFLO on a regular basis, their relationship was critical to the running of the camp and the maintenance of order. This relationship was becoming frayed as the days progressed. We joked/not joked about the prevalence of the misfires of the 12.7mm Heavy Machine gun passing over the tents of the Monitors! We did have two Mag 58's smuggled in for protection of VIP's, this set up a ridiculous situation of concentric rings of protection parties; PF ring, Monitor ring, PF ring.

The election was won, Mugabe elected. We, the monitors, once seen by the white minority as those who would help maintain the status quo, were now cursed as traitors. A mood of apprehension had descended upon the white population, there was no doubt as to the likely outcome for the whites. Our job was done, we were called back into Salisbury, washed, cleaned up, restricted to barracks then moved to the aircraft, farewell Zimbabwe.

These words of his story were provided to the 2 RAR Historical Collection by Paul Martin. The pictures were donated to the 2 RAR Historical Collection by Don Thompson. A replica Set of medals was donated to the 2 RAR Historical Collection by Ian Brady





The 2 RAR Historical Collection

'CURATOR'S CORNER'



G'day! From Sunny Townsville, North Queensland.

The 2 RAR Historical Collection over the last few years has evolved significantly. An Art Room has been created that features some of the best Post-1945 Art outside of the AWM. Artists featured include Ivor Hele (Korea), Ken McFadyen (South Vietnam), George Gittoes (Rwanda), Maurice Conly (South Vietnam), Dianne Wickenden (2/4 RAR) and more. The room also features a Library that has sections on all the Battalion's Operational Areas or service, plus military Magazines and Journals, and sections on such areas as Amphibious, Tracking and Survival, Combat Shooting, Sniping, etc. The Room also features a 65 Inch TV connected to a Laptop, with civilian internet, which has access to the Collection's Digital Collection. You are able to sit and view with your family photos, documents and movies from your time in the Battalion. If you visit and say 'I served in A Coy in the Second Tour of Malaya, and there is nothing', that may be because no one has donated photos or slides from that sub-unit or we may not have yet digitised our collection from that period. So please think about donating your photos and slides before they get thrown out or destroyed. The Historical Collection has an expensive digital Scanner that can digitise slides and photos up to 9600 dpi optically.



Colin Beahan working on a presentation



Colin Beahan as a part of 2 RAR prior to Korea

The Collection relies on volunteers, they have all served in the Battalion at some stage. Pictured, is Colin Beahan, who drives 1hr 40min, back and forth from Charters Towers to help in the Collection. Colin is 89 years old and served in 2 RAR during Korea and the 1st Tour of Malaya.

The Collection has a vast array of mannequins (over 30) depicting uniforms from 66 BN's time in the BCOF in Japan, till the current field equipment used by soldiers today in the Battalion.

Please think about visiting and supporting us, we wish you good health and safe travels.

Talk again Soon!.....The Curator

2nd Battalion News



2 RAR (Amphibious)

The Australian Amphibious Force (AAF) is central to the ADF's ability to *shape, deter* and *respond* to threats in our region. 2 RAR is now specialised in amphibious reconnaissance, and is charged with preparing the Joint Pre-Landing Forces' (JPLF) that enable the AAF to conduct the full range of amphibious operations that support the ADF's achievement of the nation's strategic objectives.

The Joint Pre-Landing Force (JPLF)

A JPLF is a scalable, agile organisation, which varies in size from Combat Team to Battlegroup dependent upon the size of the AAF deployed. The JPLF is equipped and trained to conduct three main tasks: littoral reconnaissance, landing site preparation, and battlespace shaping. The JPLF works directly to the Commander Landing Forces (CLF) to answer AAF priority information requirements regarding environment, terrain and threat; to prepare the landing site by clearing, marking and securing boat and back of beach lanes for landing forces; and to shape the battlespace through deception actions, the application of joint fires, and limited scale raiding to set the conditions for a successful lodgement.

A JPLF Company consists of a Company Headquarters, a Small Boat Platoon, and two amphibious Reconnaissance Platoons. It is augmented with Support Company attachments, including a Joint Fires Team, Snipers, a Signals detachment, and an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle team from 20 Regiment, RAA who reside with 2 RAR. External support attachments to a JPLF can include an Electronic Warfare Team, an Engineer Reconnaissance element, Medics, and Royal Australian Navy Expeditionary Reconnaissance and Clearance diver teams and Deployable Geospatial and Survey Teams. The JPLF can be scaled to the Battlegroup level in support of a large scale amphibious operation.





The *Ready Now* JPLF

2021 will see Alpha Company undergo demanding collective, joint training to become Australia's *ready now* JPLF, able to respond in support of the AAF at short notice. Alpha Company will begin with individual skills progression typical of most infantry companies, with specialised role requirements added, such as the amphibious forces swimming test, helicopter underwater escape training and helo-casting (entering the water from helicopters). They will subsequently progress to small team training, allowing small boat operators time on the water to refresh insertion and operating skills by day and night, and reconnaissance patrols to practice low signature insertion and long-range image capture and transfer.

Alpha Company will then participate in Exercise Black Axe, a Combat Training Centre (CTC) facilitated exercise designed to enable them to develop and evolve their ability to conduct littoral reconnaissance, landing site preparation, and battlefield shaping before entering the Sea Series and Joint Warfare Series of exercises. CTC excels at coaching and mentoring Army's forces through their tailored and challenging exercises; such training, supported by professional coaches, supports commanders and soldiers in identifying their strengths and weakness while also allowing new procedures and techniques to be analysed against modern threats.

The Sea Series and Joint Warfare Series will concentrate and integrate all the aforementioned joint attachments and includes opportunities to train with similar allied units, including the UK's 40 Commando, Royal Marines, the USMC's 1st and 3rd Reconnaissance Battalions, and Japan's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade. These exercises allow the JPLF to train to the highest standard possible and share learning experiences with our allies to ensure a world's best practice JPLF capability.

The *Future Ready* JPLF

Concurrently, the remainder of the Battalion will continue to conduct force development and modernisation activities to ensure the JPLF capability remains *future-ready* against emerging threats, the ever-changing geopolitical environment and maintains pace with cutting-edge technological developments.

In 2021 this means exploring ways to extend the JPLF's operating range and viability period. This will see the JPLF deploy from non-amphibious shipping, including patrol boats, mine hunters and frigates, to enable the projection of the JPLF ahead of the AAF and ensure maximum time is available for reconnaissance and shaping before the amphibious ships arriving. New long-range low-signature systems and techniques will support this to provide imagery, video and other information to the AAF.

The Battalion is also trialling a range of vehicles to inform future acquisition and capability, designed to insert reconnaissance patrols via air or surface means with longer endurance and range. This will enable the JPLF to answer information requirements for the Joint Force Commander and the AAF and continue to provide service post-landing operations. In pursuing this objective, 2 RAR has benefited from working closely with important stakeholders across our Corps, including the Regional Force Surveillance Group, the RAR, and Special Operations Command.

These force development and modernisation efforts are key to ensuring 2 RAR is *future-ready* and postured to support the Army Objective Force's realisation, which promises to be a major step forward for the Army and the Defence Force. As part of the Army Objective Force Structure Implementation Plan, 2 RAR will lead the delivery of amphibious training for 5 RAR and 16 RWAR in preparation for delivering a whole new suite of Army littoral manoeuvre watercraft later in the decade. These new large Army watercraft will significantly increase Army's ability to conduct inter and intra-theatre manoeuvre within our archipelagic region. 2 RAR's days as the only specialised amphibious combat unit are numbered, and rightly so. Regardless, the Battalion will always remain 'Second to None'.





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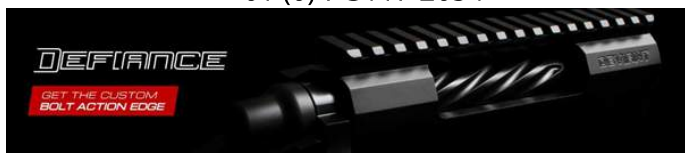
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CONGRATULATIONS to Marco "Kiwi" Gibbons



Marco "Kiwi" Gibbons, OAM is an adopted Aussie from across the ditch. He enlisted originally in New Zealand K-Force in 1953 during the Korean War. He moved to Australia in 1954 and transferred to the Australian Army in 1956.

Kiwi served with 2 RAR on both tours of Vietnam and was Mentioned in Despatches on each deployment. He has served in 1, 2 and 3 RAR. Kiwi Gibbons retired from the Army as an RSM.

He has a long history of voluntary involvement with associations, particularly 2 RAR, 3 RAR, RSL Queensland, RAR Association Queensland, and the RAR National Memorial Walk, where he was curator from its inception. In 2012, both Kiwi and his wife Margaret were honoured with the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to veterans and their families.

Over a long period of time, he and his wife were the principal organisers of all aspects of the 2 RAR Association national reunion. In 2005, on the imminent collapse of the 2 RAR Association, he stepped forward taking on the responsibilities of Secretary and Treasurer until replacements could be found. In 2012 Kiwi was awarded a "Silver Soldier" in recognition of his long service to the Association and so was Margaret in 2017.

Kiwi celebrated his 90th birthday on 22 March 2021.

