



# Porky Seven News



Edition 52 August, 2019 ~ Newsletter of the 7th Bn, The Royal Australian Regiment Association



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I was pleased to attend the RAR National Council meeting here in Canberra along with representatives of the other Battalion Associations and the State RAR Associations. Some of you would be aware that we became affiliated with RAR National some years ago, and while their focus includes camaraderie, their main body of work is in ex-service welfare and veterans' advocacy. This is the second national meeting that I have attended on your behalf and I am pleased to advise that they are representing us very effectively and the largest representative body within the Ex-Service Organisation scene.

They are involved some of our most challenging matters such as veterans' mental health and suicide, and they have had significant input to the reform effort underway in the Dept of Veterans' Affairs, and are representing us in a very calm and deliberate manner. Minutes of the meeting will be

posted on our website soon. It is not the role of our Association to become involved in matters of advocacy directly, but if you wish to offer suggestions or constructive criticism on the matters listed in the minutes then I will be pleased receive your thoughts.

I am also pleased to note the plans by various Company groups to conduct small scale reunions in Adelaide on ANZAC Day in 2020. After much discussion, the executive has agreed that due to the average age of our membership the larger scale all-inclusive reunions which we have historically conducted will not attract sufficient attendance. therefore encourage the more informal gatherings on a smaller scale as described in our strategic plan.

7 RAR has adopted a routine of marching with the colours on ANZAC Day in Adelaide city, and providing representation in nearby towns in South Australia. Additionally, the RAR community is well represented in the march in Adelaide, so for those who are fit and able, we would encourage you to use this as an opportunity to gather



with old comrades. If you are unable to march, then you can just as easily be a spectator at what is a large parade through a picturesque part of the city.

The only matter I would raise in regard to informal reunions of this nature is the desire to visit the Battalion at Edinburgh. Unfortunately the security arrangements at Edinburgh are very stringent; this is due to the defence platforms and capabilities at Edinburgh and because of the increased threat to our bases from extremist and issue motivated groups. The current requirement is for every visitor to have prior approval and be individually escorted while on base. Additionally, Edinburgh is a major defence establishment with thousands of servicemen and women and contracted staff entering and departing the base throughout the day.

Therefore group visits to the Battalion are extremely difficult for the Battalion to arrange and are a very serious stuff around for the soldiers. For these reasons I would discourage you from requesting the visit the base. The open

bases that many of you would recall do not exist in our post September 11

Mike Garraway, AM PRESIDENT

environment. As an alternative to visiting the Battalion, I would encourage you to visit the RAR South Australia club rooms in Burnside. They have a bar and can cater for functions. You can contact Rod Graham on Facebook (search for "RAR SA").

Finally, I am pleased to advise the following appointments for 2020. COL David McCammon to become Commandant of the Combat Arms Training Centre. LTCOL Paul Graham to become Director of the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Replacement Program in Army Headquarters on promotion to Colonel.

WO1 Paul Dehnert to become RSM 7 RAR. WO1 Ben Lipman to become RSM 2 RAR. WO1 Adam West to become RSM 3 RAR. Majors Chris Gilmore and Von Lambert to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. All of these men served in 7 RAR in recent years and on your behalf I wish them the best of luck in their upcoming appointments.



## **BG BOAR update**

As the Ready Battle Group Designate for the 2019/20 period, the 7th Battalion has enjoyed a professionally challenging and developmental training year. This training has recently peaked with participation on the Joint Warfar

e Series (JWS) 19 as the Ground Combat Element (GCE) and Exercise Talisman Sabre (Ex TS) as a Mechanised Battle Group.

The JWS provided a challenging and unique training continuum for the Battle Group, comprising of various bespoke capabilities and split across two LHDs, the HMAS Canberra and Adelaide. The Battle Group deployed in a unique configuration, with one Mechanised Rifle Company, one Air Mobile Rifle Company, one Engineer Squadron, one Cavalry Troop, one Artillery Platoon with two M-777s in the Air Mobility role and other attachments from 1MP Battalion, 1 Int Battalion, 6 Engineer Support Regiment and 1 Combat Signals Regiment.

During the activity the Battle Group was able to further enhance the capability of amphibious operations and showcase the LHDs as fit for purpose for a Mechanised BG. Some of the key areas of development included advancements on the previous GCE rotations in the area of employment of

simultaneous multi-platform Ship To Objective Manoeuvre (STOM) from two LHDs, personnel tracking, integration with other government agencies and the conduct of Humanitarian Assistance, Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations and Security and Stability Operations in a semi-permissive environment.

Of particular note was the capability which the M113AS4 platform brought to the Amphibious Task Group (ATG). Unlike previous experience for the ATG, predominantly seeing GCE deploy in wheeled vehicles, the M113AS4 proved to be a vehicle with superior mobility. This was both during more mundane tasks, such as movement on the LHD and during the conduct of tactical actions in the littoral environment where the vehicle's mobility could not be matched.

The JWS continued into Exercise TS 19 after a short port visit in Brisbane and Cairns for HMAS Adelaide and Canberra respectively. This activity saw the successful amphibious lodgement of BG Boar as part of the ATG in Stanage Bay, prior to returning to 1 Brigade. The return to 1 Brigade saw the BG re-grouped and importantly reintegrating with C Coy, who had been attached to 1 Armed Regiment during



the JWS for a CTC led BG Warfighter Exercise.

Exercise TS 19 provided BG Boar with the opportunity to conduct training for high end warfighting operations against a near peer. This training activity presented many opportunities for the Battalion to work closely with other 1 Brigade units and other Force Elements from across Army. Working

in a highly contested environment with a myriad of assets and attached forces has set the 7th Battalion in good order to assume the duties of the Ready Battle Group later this year.



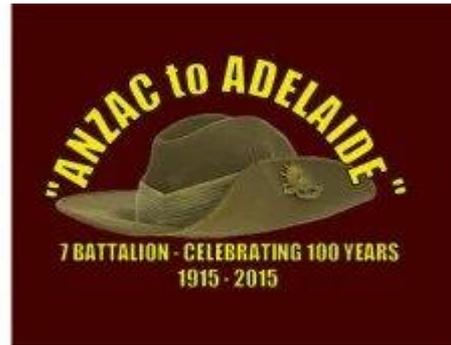












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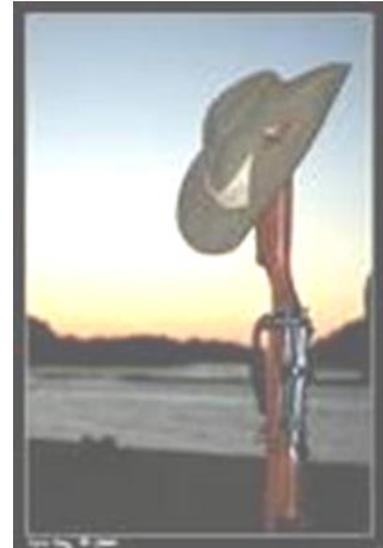
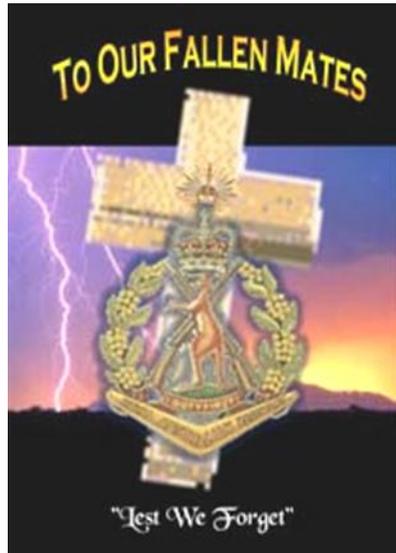
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## CALENDAR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2019

01 Sep 2019 7RAR 54th Birthday.

11 Nov 2019 Remembrance Day All States.

22 Nov 2019 Cut-off date for articles for 3/2019 Seven News.



**Rest ye oh Warrior, You will battle no more,  
No longer to live the horrors of war,  
Your duty was done with honor and pride,  
Farewell oh brother, until we march by your side.**

**It is with deep and sincere sympathy that I report the death of former friends and comrades in arms.**

**2793082 John "Bunda" Walker, B4 2nd tour, passed away, Sat 13 April 2019.**

**5714060 Robert Ronald, (Bob) Dare, BHQ 1st tour, passed away, Sat 4 May 2019.**

**John E Bell, (NOK Alec Bell, KIA 1st tour ) passed away Sunday 17 March 2019.**

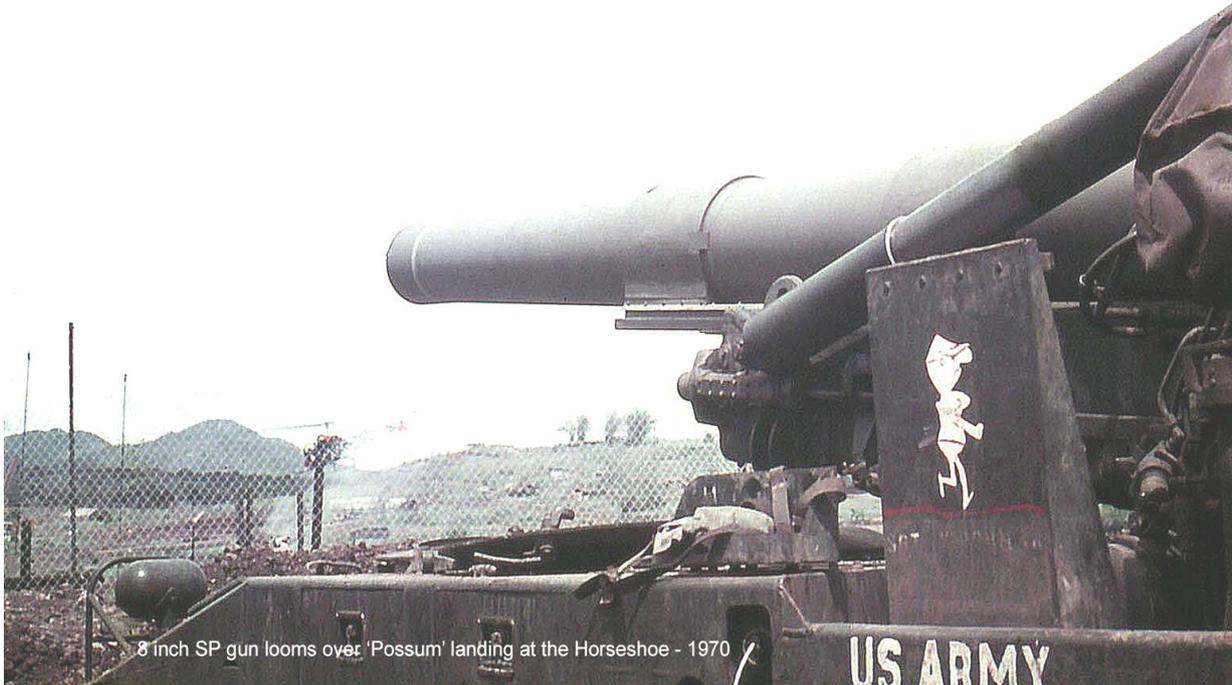
**3789567 Kenneth John Wood, C8 1st tour, passed away Wednesday 29 May 2019.**

**3789568 Ronald Wall, D Coy 2nd tour, passed away Wednesday 18 June 2019.**

**3789569 David Willis, BEM, C/TPT Both tours, passed away Wed 3 July 2019.**

**2793399 John William Catton, A3 2nd tour, passed away Thur 15 August 2019**

## Memories of NDP Brigid Vietnam 1971



8 inch SP gun looms over 'Possum' landing at the Horseshoe - 1970



H13 Sioux helicopter forced down by VC ground fire  
Recovered by Iroquois 'Huey' helicopter -- NDP Brigid - 1971



To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Second Tour of Vietnam both B and C Companies 7RAR are meeting at Adelaide for the Week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> April including the Association AGM on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April and culminating by joining the ANZAC Day March on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

**B COMPANY 7 RAR VIETNAM 1970 - 1971 REUNION  
ADELAIDE APRIL 2020**

**Draft Program of Events**

**Tuesday 21 April. Arrive in Adelaide. Evening meet and greet at the Tea Tree Gully Hotel (The Gully Public House and Gardens)**

**Wednesday 22 April. Visit 7 RAR Horseshoe Lines at Edinburgh and lay wreaths in the Rose Garden for all members of B Company who died in Vietnam. This date has special significance as it will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day that Bob Hughes was killed.**

**Thursday 23 April. Visit the Ex Military Rehabilitation Centre Inc (XMRC) located opposite 7 RAR Horseshoe Lines. Our host will be Peter Sochacki, former member of 4 Platoon. Planned activities are:**

- An introduction to the XMRC
- Book launch for Adrian's Book Two - the book will be available for purchase
- Slide show presentation of B Company's tour of duty 1970 - 1971
- Light refreshments will be available

**Friday 24 April. Attend 7 RAR Association AGM 3:30 pm at the Avoca Hotel, 893 South Road, Clarence Gardens, SA 5039**

**Saturday 25 April. Attend the ANZAC Day Dawn Service and March in Adelaide**

**Sunday 26 April. Disperse**

**All arrangements for transport, accommodation, meals and drinks will be your choice. There is no requirement for any upfront payment to attend the reunion. Much closer to the event we will call for names of those who will be attending.**

**Contact: Adrian Taylor [adrian01@iprimus.com.au](mailto:adrian01@iprimus.com.au),**

**Website: <http://www.7rar.asn.au> ~ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/7thBattalionRAR/>**



**Bernie Cox [berniecox@bigpond.com](mailto:berniecox@bigpond.com)**

**C Company 7RAR V50 Years Reunion (1970-2020), Adelaide, South Australia, 2020**

**7 R.A.R.-C Company 2nd Tour Reunion Plans-21st April to 25th April 2020**

**Dates-Tuesday 21st April-Meet and Greet-Watermark Hotel-4.30 p.m.**

**-Wednesday 22nd April-Visit 7 R.A.R. Horseshoe Lines-Edinburgh-join B  
Company laying wreaths for lost comrades.**

**-Thursday 23rd April-Free Day with option to Tour Adelaide Oval or Winery Tour**

**-Friday 24th April-Battalion A.G.M.-Meet and Greet others meals and drinks  
optional-Avoca Hotel Mid-afternoon.**

**-Saturday 25th April-Anzac Day March-March with ALL 7 R.A.R. meet at place to be  
confirmed after March.**

**-Sunday 26th April-Reunion Guests return home.**

**We will provide many accommodation options from Hotels/Motels Caravan Parks  
and or Backpackers.**

**Wives and or partners welcome to ALL events.**

**Costs for any and all events will be determined once numbers are confirmed-payment  
will be on the day of the event.**

**Hope we see lots of old 7 R.A.R. Diggers attend.**

**Looking for State Coordinators to help gather the Troops.**

**Contact Greg (Shep) [Shepley-0417881630-email-shep7rar@iinet.net.au](mailto:Shepley-0417881630-email-shep7rar@iinet.net.au)**

**Or Rob [Gillies-0408819500-rmnominees@gmail.com](mailto:Gillies-0408819500-rmnominees@gmail.com)  
(O.S. from 12th August until 4th September)**



## Michael Berrigan

Posted on [October 24, 2011](#) by [Kev](#) Posted in [ROs Pt 3](#), [Vale](#)

Michael was with 5 Pn, B Coy 7RAR in Vietnam 1967; he was severely wounded in the head by artillery shrapnel on 30th November 1967. He spent most of the last 44 years in hospital or nursing homes.

In recent years we gave him the honour of leading 7RAR in the ANZAC Day parade.

I will advise you of funeral details when they come to hand.

*We were also joined also by two of our members in wheelchairs, one of them being Michael Berrigan who was so badly wounded in 1967.*

(2004)

### Michael John Berrigan

BERRIGAN Michael John 3788600 Died peacefully on Sunday Oct. 23, 2011. Dearly loved son of Rosemary (dec.) and Gerald (dec.). Beloved brother of Stephen, Geraldine, Peter (dec.), Angela, Timothy (dec.), Christopher and Andrew. Brother-in-law of Denise, Tony, Rosemary, Cliff, Jan and Belinda and loved uncle of their families. Casualty of War, finally released from his injuries after 44 years of courage and fortitude. Vale to the Wounded Soldier Rest In Peace

Michael John Berrigan was born on September 1945 and died at his home on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2010. His death is a direct result of the wounds he received on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1967 as an Australian soldier in the Vietnam War. He may well be the last Australian to die as a direct result of the Vietnam War.

Michael was a promising law student at Melbourne University when he received the news of his call-up. Though he could have

deferred, he chose to enter National Service, and, after his training joined the Seventh Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment for its first tour of Vietnam in 1967. He joined 5 Platoon, B Company which was commanded by Lieutenant Wal Harris. Members of this platoon have become famous as the soldiers pictured in Sergeant Michael Coleridge's iconic photograph of the platoon waiting to board US Army helicopters that year -the photo is frequently used and is the centerpiece of the Vietnam Memorial in Anzac Parade in Canberra. Michael does not appear in it, but all the soldiers in it were his mates.

Michael was a trusted and reliable member of this platoon and was known to be a good shot, an important attribute for an infantryman.

On 30<sup>th</sup> November 1967, 5 Platoon was part of the B Company force preparing to assault a Viet Cong bunker system in Phuoc Tuy Province. The artillery forward observer with the company arranged and adjusted a preliminary bombardment of the camp. When

he called for fire-for-effect, one round detonated hit a tree 50 metres from the company forming-up-place and the resultant shrapnel wounded two Australian soldiers, one of them Michael Berrigan. Shrapnel entered his right temple and went to the left side of his skull, without breaking out of the skin. The company medic gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation after he had stopped breathing.

Berrigan was evacuated by a Dustoff helicopter. It took three months for him to

regain consciousness. He was hospitalised on his return to Australia for many years, later moving to special accommodation in Highett where he died.

We should always remember Michael Berrigan. Many of those with the mental wounds from the Vietnam war are still with us. Sometimes those with the physical wounds are forgotten by the Army and the nation. He paid a great price for his country.

Lived And Died A Proud Wounded Soldier In October 2011



Left: A look back in history with some of our outside Nui Dat living quarters on the beach at Brigid.





### The Battle of Suối Châu Pha - 1967 (Vietnamese Interpretation)

(Translator's Note: The photograph above is of 5 Platoon/Bravo Company 7RAR troops taken on 26 August 1967 on Route 44 north of Hoi My at the conclusion Operation Ulmarra - a cordon and search of Phuoc Hai village (with 2RAR)

22 January 2018

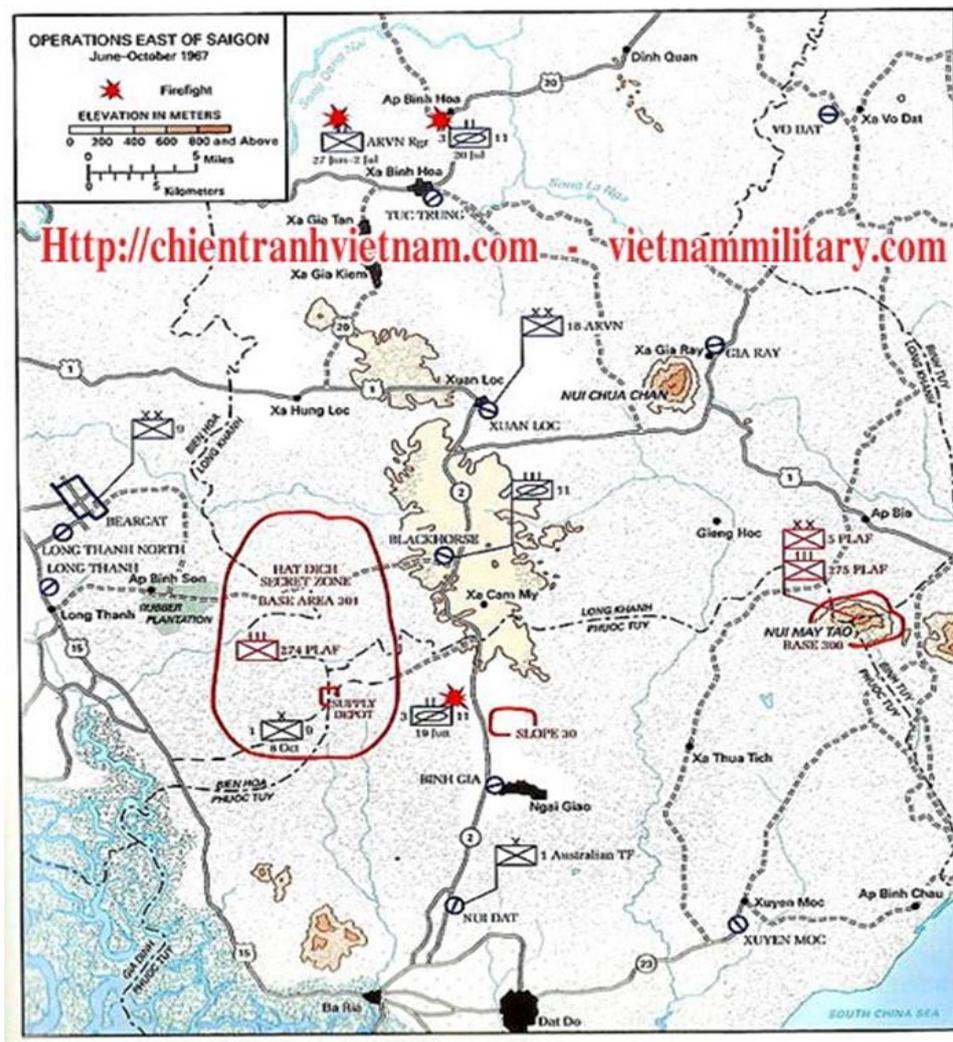
The Battle of the Suối Châu Pha Stream in 1967 took place between Australian forces and Liberation Army in the eastern Hắc Dịch - Hát Dịch region to the north-west of Núi Đất in Phước Tuy Province which nowadays is Bà Rịa Vũng Tàu Province.

The Battle of the Suối Châu Pha that occurred on 6 August 1967, was an engagement during the Ballarat sweeping operation towards the end (sic) of 1967. The Battle of Long Tan in 1966 and the Bribie campaign had weakened Liberation Forces in the region. Brigadier Stuart Graham - the commander of 1 ATF, believed that 275 VC Regiment had been weakened and, accordingly, focused on wiping out 274 VC Regiment.

During July 1967, 274 VC Regiment had moved to the north-east into the Hát Dịch Secret Zone in order to avoid sweeping operations during Operation Paddington and Australian intelligence elements that had

been tracing their radio communications. The Australians launched Operation Ballarat in an area east of Hắc Dịch town (sic). 7RAR - under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Eric Smith established several military positions and set many ambushes. This battalion-level campaign began on 4 August with a move by foot that was planned to surprise the

Liberation Forces. The Australian troops brought enough rations to last five days and swept the area nine kilometres north-west of Núi Đất. The Australian plan remained secret, and the camps and bunkers ... of the Liberation Forces - although discovered, were not to be destroyed until the main force Viet Cong could be destroyed in their rear areas.



Sketch map of the area of the Suối Châu Pha Battle and the RAR Campaign in 1967 during the Vietnam War (this sketch map is from the Wikipedia website.)

The Australian troops also established FSPB Giraffe that was occupied by 105mm M2A2 artillery of 106 Battery. Additionally, US

155mm M109 artillery pieces of the US 2nd Artillery Battalion/35 Artillery Regiment were deployed -and 200mm and long-range 175mm

artillery was also available for support if needed.

An Australian engineer detachment was deployed to clear Route 2 north of Núi Đất, and Delta Company of 2RAR also reinforced the operation – together with A Squadron of 3 Cavalry Regiment (M113s).

### The Conduct of the Battle of Suối Châu Pha and Operation Ballarat

Alpha Company 7RAR – under the command of Major Ewart O'Donnell deployed and swept the Hát Dịch region from 3 August. At 10.40hrs on 6 August, they were 10 kilometres to the east of Phú Mỹ and within the Suối Châu Pha area without having been discovered. The Australian troops found a track and laid an ambush. A few minutes later, two Liberation Force soldiers moving along the track were killed – and the Australian troops moved to wipe out the following Liberation Force troops who returned fire fiercely. Alpha Company was in a dangerous situation.

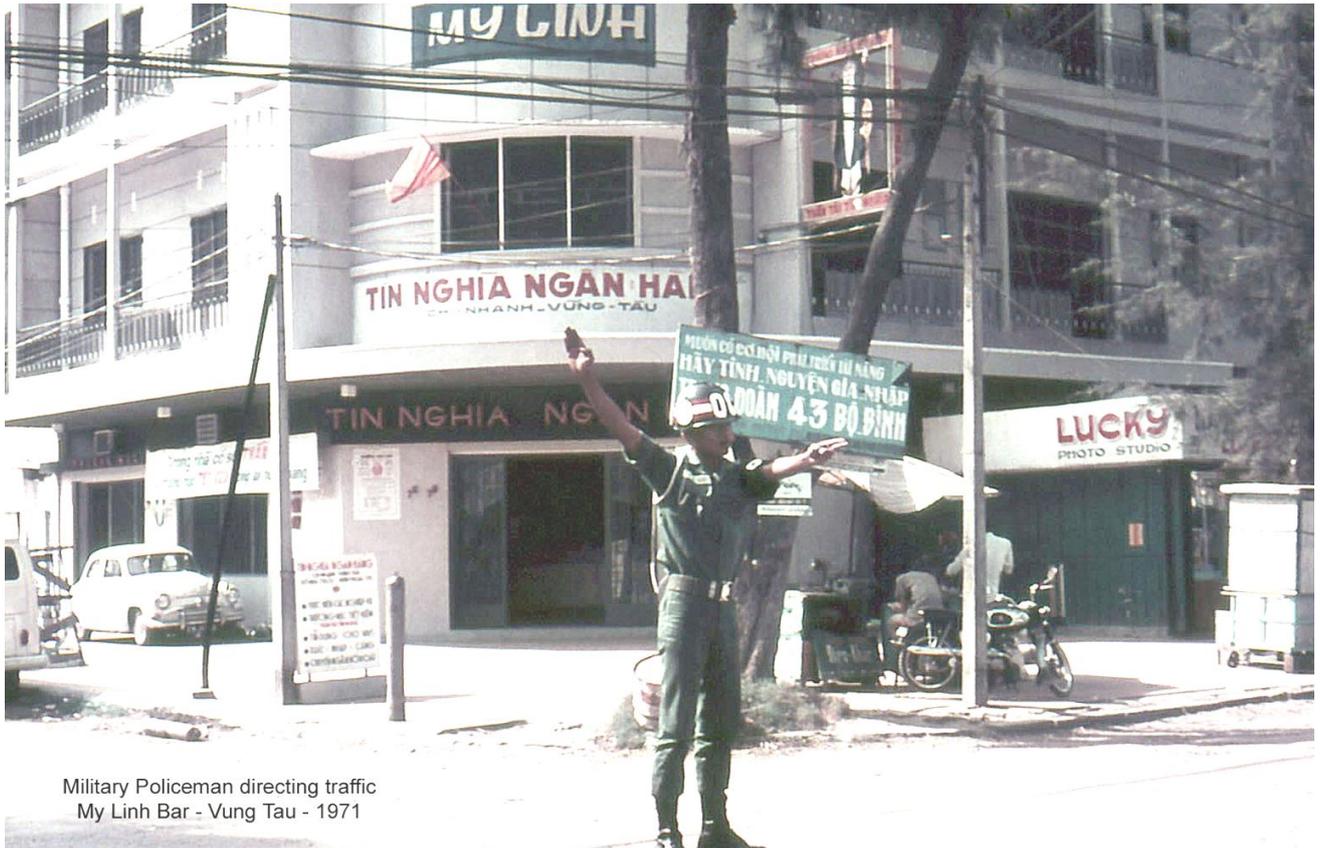
O'Donnell asked Lieutenant Rod Smith – commanding 1 Platoon, to attack the Liberation Forces from the flank, but they struck fierce resistance. Heavy rain began to fall. The Liberation Forces employed “close-in” tactics to lessen the effectiveness of the

American fire support. Lieutenant Neville Clark – the artillery forward observer, had to call for artillery support to within 50 metres of the Australian troops to relieve the pressure on Alpha Company. As a result, that fire support allowed the Australian to seize the advantage.

At 14.30hrs, the Liberation Forces withdrew. Documents seized by the Australians showed that the Liberation Forces belonged to C12 Company of the 274 Regiment's 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion – together with a reconnaissance platoon and a number of local troops.

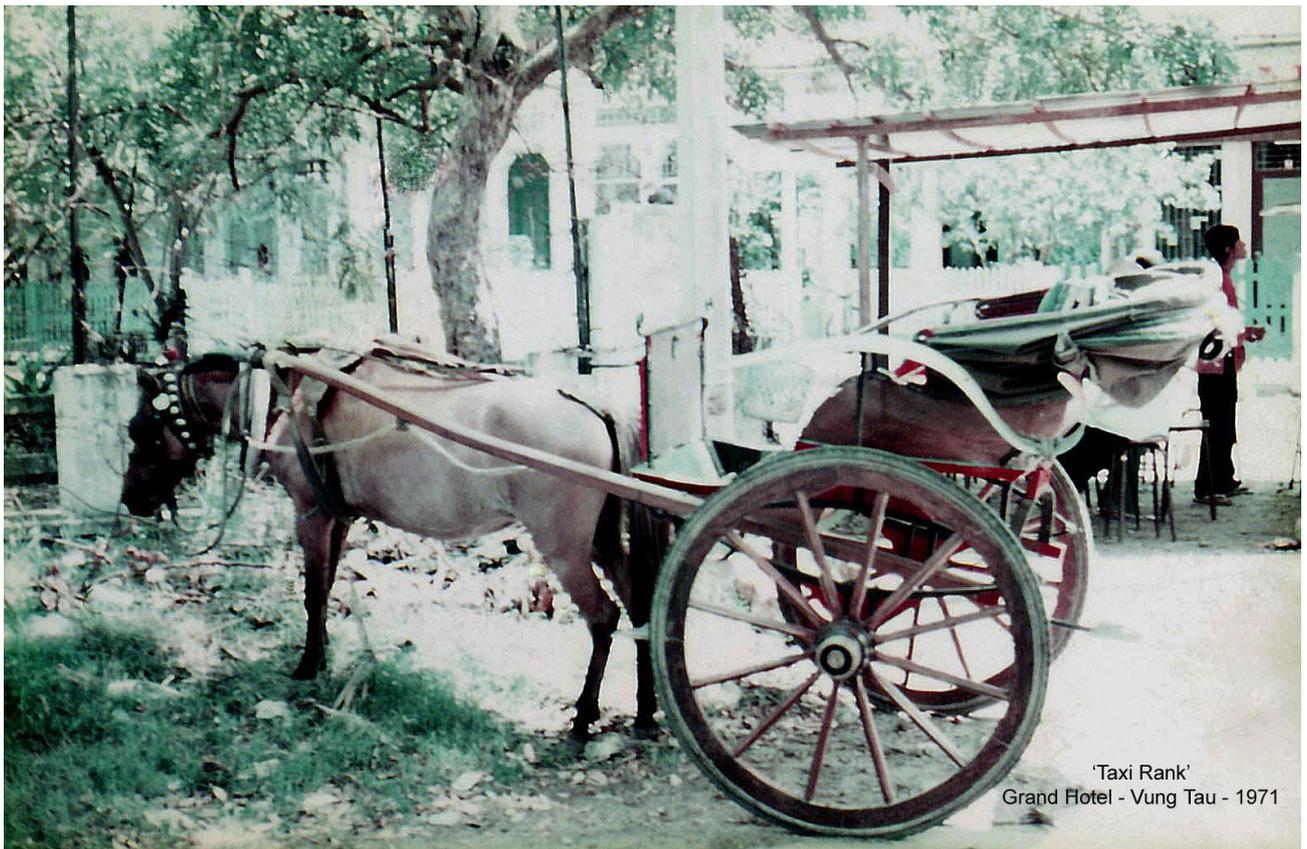
The next day, the Australian forces discovered a Liberation Forces camp about 900 metres from that engagement – and they guessed that C12 Company and a number of other elements that had fought so bravely in order to block the Australians and allow the other units in the camp to escape their assault.

Five Australian soldiers were killed in the Battle of the Suối Châu Pha and one was wounded seriously and also died. 20 others were wounded. Liberation Force casualties are not clear – but five were killed at the site, including a platoon commander, and the Australians seized a machine-gun, a 40mm grenade launcher, and three AK-47s. The following day, the Australian troops destroyed a battalion-sized camp and bunker system – with a large quantity of rice and medical supplies.



Military Policeman directing traffic  
My Linh Bar - Vung Tau - 1971

A look back at Vung Tau with some of its more recognizable features during our stay in Vietnam.



'Taxi Rank'  
Grand Hotel - Vung Tau - 1971

As discussed briefly on the phone, The Maitland Vietnam Veterans and Services Legion recently approached the NSW Roads and Maritime Services for assistance to replace some shabby Vietnam ribbon stickers on the Private P. Z Trzecinski Bridge in Maitland. To our utter surprise, the RMS agreed to our request. I have since had larger and more durable stickers manufactured, and these will soon be used to replace the existing ones. See attached Image.

As Ziggy was one of yours, I thought you might like to know about this activity by the MVV&SL. The RMS are not keen for us to publicise the fact that they are replacing unauthorized stickers on a highway bridge sign, so an article in the local paper is unlikely, but I will send you a photo of the new stickers when they are fitted.

Regards, Tom Grieves

Vice President MVV&SL

0423191445



We had new larger solar tolerant stickers made, and these were attached to completely new bridge signs just before Vietnam Veterans Day by the RMS.

BELOW LEFT THE OLD

RIGHT THE NEW



## From the EDITOR'S DESK

Hi to all in this very dry area of the country, I am well aware that not all the country is dry but let me tell you it very dry where most of our land based industries keep us well fed from day to day, all our farmers in the driest parts of our wonderful country are doing it very tough. So all of our leaders are putting out the word if you are planning a holiday then go to one of our country communities that maybe close to you or your family are spend the odd dollar in that location because it is very tough for our farmers and produce workers.

As you can see our Vale page is full and it is with the greatest sympathies I offer my condolences to all those families and friends of all our passing members. You will note on pages 4 and 5 of this issue there are notices covering 2020 reunions for a couple of our companies remembering their 50th Anniversary service in Vietnam planned to be held in Adelaide over the ANZAC 2020 period. I am sure anyone who would like to attend those coordinating these activities would welcome your interest so please contact those members as shown on those two pages.

### Some more memorabilia from Don Cruden



## THE BEST FROM THE WEST

G'Day from WA.

### ANZAC DAY PERTH

Our Anzac Day parade seemed to be a bit quieter than usual, although 7RAR still had a good roll-up for the march, with Albert Jacob carrying his flag for his uncle Paul Navarre, kia 2<sup>nd</sup> Tour. John Bell not in attendance but his son Ben carried the flag for uncle Alec Bell, kia 1<sup>st</sup> Tour and Val O'Brien carried a flag for her brother Noel Crouch, kia 2<sup>nd</sup> Tour. Attendees too many to mention but a notable attendee was Betty Baty, widow of our late member Jim, ex 3 RAR Malaya/Borneo & 7 RAR 1<sup>st</sup> Tour. Betty also had her two sons marching with us. After the march, back to Rigby's for drinks, only to find the Navy had invaded our spot, so we called on "the big gun" to sort it out (Spunky of course). Another guy we don't see much of these days was Tony "Silver" Martin, great to see you mate. Don had his usual "large" family gathering along and a great day was had by all.

### VIETNAM VETERANS DAY MARCH PERTH

Numbers have been waning of late so Don decided not to take the big banner along for the march, however a few hardy PIGS decided to represent us, well done guys.





**VETERANS PARADE at the LEN HALL GAME, OPTUS OVAL,**

**SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019 (by Allan West)**

I had the honour and pleasure of representing Vietnam Veterans at Optus Oval in Perth for the Len Hall Memorial Game between the Fremantle Dockers and the Western Bulldogs. Len Hall was aged 101 and was the last living link with the ANZACS and the Dockers have taken him on as their own. The parade consisted of approximately 50 brass buglers and wind instruments with representatives on parade from the Army, Navy, Air Force & CMF personnel, with Veterans from each conflict; Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, Somalia, Rwanda, Cambodia, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq & Afghanistan.

We formed up before the game and marched out onto the oval with both football teams, the ODE was recited by Bill Grayden (WW11 digger with the 2/16th Infantry Battalion), followed by a minute's silence then the National Anthem. After the toss of the coin we then marched from the oval to enjoy some hospitality and were able to watch the match in comfort in a Dockers corporate box.

The Dockers won the toss and went on to win the game by 19 points.

Hopefully someone else from 7RAR will be given the honour to put their hand up next year and represent our great battalion.

#### **MERCHANDISE**

Don has:

2 Adelaide to Anzac Polo Shirts brand new "L" @ \$15 each

2 7RAR Scarves (ex-Melbourne Reunion) brand new @ \$10 each

Note all funds go into our 7RAR WA bank account.

Don also still has some 7RAR flags and fridge magnets, all enquiries to Don. Ph. 93740014 or email: [dcruden1@bigpond.com](mailto:dcruden1@bigpond.com)

#### **ANZAC DAY PHOTO (by Val O'Brien, sister of Noel Crouch)**

Good morning Geoff, thanks for your recent email, much appreciated. I've attached a photo (see below) taken at the Perth Anzac lineup, which drew a great crowd as usual and the weather was perfect. It was great to catch up with everyone too. Always emotional though. Great to see the young people involved. I've also attached a photo taken of a painting I recently completed and passed on to my son of WW1 historical rendition of the Sydney in the foreground and the wreckage of the German ship Emden beached on Keeling Island 🌴 part of the Cocos. " The One Who Was There".

All the best to you and yours. Regards. Valerie



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All the best to you and yours. Regards. Valerie



*L to R: Val O'Brien, Gordon Dickson, Tony Martin, Peter Vlachou .*



*Val's painting of the "Sydney" and the "Emden" battle from WW1.*



**WALLY KLESZCZ'S HOT RODS**



## **FUNERAL OF JOHN BELL (brother of Alec Bell, KIA 1<sup>st</sup> Tour)**

**Don, Spunky and John Davies attended the funeral of our late Honorary Member John BELL (elder brother of Alec BELL KIA SVN Jan 1968) today Monday 27 May 2019. John marched with us for many years on ANZAC DAY carrying the Australian Flag in honour of Alec.**

**In the latter years he was accompanied by his late wife Pam who wore her father's WW2 medals. As age caught up with John he handed over the flag to his son Ben who for the past 2 years has paraded on ANZAC DAY with us. John's funeral was a testimony to his membership of the Variety Club of West Australia, an organisation that gathers funds for many charitable organisations. The number of odd shaped vehicles and personnel in attendance showed the high regard in which John was held.**

**It is regretful that one only learns of a person's life at a funeral. How sad. Oink! Oink!**



*John Bell ready to march.*

### **DON CRUDEN'S TRAVELS (by Don Cruden)**

At long last I made the journey to meet Ray Pack, C2nd at Grass Valley, about 120 km east of Perth, having passed this village area many times and not calling in to meet and greet him. It was nice to be able to put a face (and a body) to the name after numerous phone calls over a number of years.

### **7RAR D Coy 2<sup>nd</sup> Reunion Nelson Bay NSW (by Peter Vlachou)**

Sandra and I travelled by caravan from Perth to Nelson Bay, Port Stephens NSW for the D2 Reunion in March. Over 75 attended a very successful event in a beautiful part of the East Coast of Australia. We are grateful to the organising team for a memorable reunion. The fellowship was fantastic and reinforced that special bond that endures for a lifetime. Planning is underway for the next D2 Reunion to mark the 50th Anniversary of 7RAR's second tour of Vietnam.

We were on the road for eight weeks and enjoyed many sightseeing highlights and visited a number of RSL Clubs. Additionally, it was special to reunite with distant friends from different eras of our life during our trip.



Back L to R: Brian Henry, Richard Kenny, Peter Dixon Front L to R: Ray Ezzy, Graham Nix, Merv Hains, John Heydon, Peter Vlachou, Brian (baby-san) Power



*Reunion Service D2nd on the grounds of Wests Nelson Bay Diggers*

## **BACK TO THE BUSH BRUCE ROCK**

**The annual Back to the Bush veteran's reunion Bruce Rock will be held from Mon. 28<sup>th</sup> October to Wed. 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019. This is the 19<sup>th</sup> year of this reunion and our banner will once again be in attendance for the march. The extended period has been made to allow members to stay in Bruce Rock for the Melbourne Cup period. The march through the town will be held on Sat. 2<sup>nd</sup> November starting at 1200 hrs. We would welcome a large attendance by our members. Please ring Don on 93740014 any night after 1800 hrs.**

## **TRAVELLING**

**Ray MARR is at present travelling in North Queensland to a place call Pandanus Park, a retreat set up for Vietnam Veterans and hopefully we may get some notes of his travels for the next newsletter.**



## **TERRIBLY SAD NEWS**

We have just learned the terrible news that Dave Ingles' son has lost his 5-year battle with cancer, a double tragedy for Dave who also lost his wife earlier this year. We are all thinking of you Dave at this most sad time.

## **WARNING ORDERS:**

1.

**50<sup>TH</sup> COMMEMORATION CEREMONY - PRIVATE PAUL JOHN NAVARRE- 6 JUNE 2020.**

On Saturday 6 June 2020, a ceremony will be held to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary for Private Paul Navarre (formerly Crawley) who was killed by a mine explosion in Phouc Tuy province South Vietnam. Paul was a rifleman in 9 platoon, C Coy, 7RAR 2<sup>nd</sup> tour, regimental number 2792729.

Sadly, other soldiers from 9 platoon who were KIA in the same incident were private Stanley Larsson ( Adelaide S.A.) and private Stephen Dickson (Wallsend N.S.W.) Mick O'Halloran ( Perth W.A. ) WIA survived the explosion.

Paul's summary of service in Vietnam were:

1ARU 4/3/1970 - 31/3/1970,

6RAR 1/4/1970 - 13/5/1970,

7RAR 14/5/1970 - 6/6/1970.

Paul's sister Julia Jacob and her son Albert Jacob and other family members will be present.

Please note the date has been fixed and the location will be the Perth metro area. However, the exact location, program and venue details are not yet finalised.

Please note that all service personnel, in addition to 7RAR, are very welcome to attend this important occasion

I have been requested to coordinate this event by my good friend Don Cruden, "C.O. 7RAR W.A. Branch". If you have any recollections from Vietnam of Paul that you could share with me that could be included in the service that would be greatly appreciated. Also if you may be attending or have any other queries please contact



me on ph 08 9534 3091, or email

[michael.ohalloran1@bigpond.com](mailto:michael.ohalloran1@bigpond.com)

In closing, may I send my best regards to everyone and wish a speedy recovery to anyone on the sick list.

### LEST WE FORGET

Mick O'Halloran

### WARNING ORDERS (cont)

**7 RAR Assoc. WA 50 YEAR COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE FOR  
PRIVATENOEL CROUCH ON 21 MAY 2020 IN KATANNING**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1970 Noel was killed in a bunker assault. He was a machine gunner with 3 Platoon A Company. Noel was 22 years of age and was from Katanning in WA.

The commemorative service was initiated by Don Cruden, an Assoc. life Member and will be held in the town.

Katanning is a farming community located 277 km south east of Perth. There is good accommodation in the town and well worth a visit. We hope for a good attendance of members and other Vietnam Veterans as this is one of the few Commemorative services held in rural WA with most being held in city locations.

More details will follow as plans for the service are developed in consultation with Noel's surviving sister Val and other family members.

I thank Don for the opportunity to be involved with this commemoration. I knew Noel as a young bloke as I lived and worked in the town myself in younger, pre-army years.

Noel and I knocked around together from time to time and this service will give us all the opportunity to honour and remember one of our own. I would welcome any ideas, advice or stories from those Noel served with. Please contact me on 0418 952 162

### LEST WE FORGET

Graham Edwards

## MEMBERS PARTICULARS

If any member changes address, phone number, email address etc, please notify us so that we can keep track of you.

Also, please note that your membership subscriptions fall due on August 31<sup>st</sup> each year so, in order to save Don having to chase members up each year, please make an effort to pay your membership subscriptions when they are due. To download a form, just go to the 7RAR website at:

<http://www.7rar.asn.au/> then scroll down to Admin on the right and under Admin, click on Form Downloads and select "7RAR Asscn Membership Application Form. This can then be printed off and posted back to Tony Keech with your membership or pay online vis Electronic Transfer using the details on the form.

## NAMETAGS (Note: For BOTH Men and Women)

Costs:                                      Small Tag (6cm x 4cm) \$13 including delivery

    Large Tag (9cm x 6cm) \$18 including delivery

Payments: Post cheque (made out to G Murray) or Money Order to:

    Geoff Murray

    30 Bouvardia Way

    Greenwood WA 6024

Or:    Electronic Funds Transfer to: BSB 066 132 Account 00913220



*Approx. 6.0cm x 4.0cm*



*Approx. 9.0cm x 6.0cm*



## NEWSLETTER

Remember, the newsletter is only as good as the contents, so please contact Geoff Murray if you have anything to report, no matter how trivial. Geoff can be contacted on:

Mobile                    0432 253 043

Email                    [geoffandlorraine@yahoo.com.au](mailto:geoffandlorraine@yahoo.com.au)

Cheers - Geoff Murray



## PEARLS FROM VICTORIA

### Mail Chimp

Our email tree still needs further members and the Committee would appreciate any contributions especially if you haven't received any messages from us in the past. We use a program called Mail Chimp which gives us stats on how many emails are read, how many are flicked straight to the Deleted Folder and sometimes where the email resides. For example 9 are shown to be in the USA, but this might be because they are gmail or Outlook accounts. Be assured that emails we send out will not be trying to sell you solar panels, insurance or your financial detail. We don't send out many and would be generally covering Anzac Day, Shrine Service or, unfortunately, the passing of another member.

### Bonsai Story

We sometimes forget that (South) Vietnamese people still hold Australian soldiers in high regard. I was selling Anzac Day badges earlier this year on behalf of my local RSL. A youngish Vietnamese fellow came up with his mother and bought one of our badges. Shortly afterwards he came back and presented me with a lovely bonsai as a token of everything we had done for his old country. I will remember this gesture for a long time - I hope other members have similar memories.

## Anzac Day 2019



Our intrepid marchers getting themselves organised for the 'normal' start to the March. The committee were in position from 8.30am with our banner up to provide a focal point for other members to form up. We had about 60 members marching with us which wasn't too bad considering the timing of Anzac Day and Easter this year and we didn't manage to have any younger veterans with us and, as always, they are very welcome to join the older ones (if only to remind us how we used to look!) Our thanks to Melbourne High School Cadets for bearing our banner and to Graeme Chapman for leading us.

## Anzac Day Post-March Reunion

Bell's Hotel) welcomed us again this year and the Main Hall was filled with family and friends. Despite our very strong suggestions Bell's didn't apply for an early licence so we were dry until the normal (Victorian) opening time of 12.00noon - problems talking to younger people, when we said early opening they translated this as opening the doors early (but not selling grog). This situation has been addressed for 2020 so we can slake our thirst as soon as we arrive. Notwithstanding this very minor glitch the pub looked after us well and the food was at its general good standard. The now traditional calling of our Roll of Honour was conducted with a band of willing volunteer readers. It's not always easy to read their names but it is important to remember them as we don't get the chance generally elsewhere. Lionel

Boxer once again joined us for a selection of piping melodies. We were also joined by our friends from 106 Fd Bty and it is always good to have them there giving us the same support as 1967/68 – but not quite as loudly.



### Anzac Commemoration Service, Wattle Park (28<sup>th</sup> April 2019)

The Patriotic Area within Wattle Park is of great significance to those associated with the 24<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF. It is not generally realised that the first of the 'Lone Pine' seedlings struck from the seed brought back from Gallipoli by a member of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion is standing in Wattle Park. Beside the Lone Pine is a clock tower monument in memory of Royden Bennett of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion – killed at Pozieres in 1916. The service was held by and on behalf of

24<sup>th</sup> Bn (AIF) Association

2/24<sup>th</sup> Aust Infantry Association

7<sup>th</sup> Bn (AIF) Association

2/7<sup>th</sup> Aust Bn Association



The keynote speaker for this service was MAJGEN Mike O'Brien and Ian Dunn and I went along to hear his thought-provoking talk to the assembled crowd. Amongst his examples of war's casualties was Mike Berrigan - dreadfully wounded in Vietnam in 1967 and lingered as a casualty until 2011 - arguably the last victim of the Vietnam War (Lest We Forget).

### Suoi Chau Pha (All the 7s Shrine Ceremony) – Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August



Our annual ceremony was conducted in the Sanctuary at the Shrine of Remembrance - representing 7thAIF, 2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> AIF and 7RAR. This year we also remember 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion (39-45). Also present were members of 106 Field Battery who provided 'A' Coy with effective fire support during Suoi Chau Pha. We were also joined by a younger 7Bn veteran and it great to see him come along. I've lost my notes with his name but he's pictured holding our gonfalon. There were about 40 veterans and family in attendance and about 30 of went back to Bell's for a very pleasant lunch and chinwag.

In the past we have received some comments about a late notification but advice was passed out at this year's Anzac Day March and the Shrine service does fall every year on the closest Sunday to the Lone Pine attack by 7<sup>th</sup> AIF in 1915 and Suoi Chau Pha by 7RAR in 1968. You are warmly invited to join us next year on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August at 10.30 for an 11.00 start.



The Service on Sunday morning was held in fine but very windy weather. Numbers seemed to be down this year but was the normal moving ceremony. The main themes this year featured Operation Goodwood (Hat Dich Dec'68 to Feb'69) and Binh Ba (June 1969). As decided last year we did not bring our banner as the Committee regards this as a Vietnam Veterans 'Day. Originally it was planned to march behind the RAR Association banner - which failed to appear and caused some initial confusion. Some adverse comments on the lack of our banner was received but any members who want to see it next year are invited to join the Committee as we could do with some more input from members; please contact Bill Anderson or Ian Dunn for details of the next meeting.

On a different note - it was great to meet up with Les Bray who had come down from the Swan Hill area with about 25 other veterans from various units for the March.

#### VV Service - Keilor East RSL

KERSL ran their service on Sunday afternoon but not as blessed with the morning's weather - very wet and umbrellas in profusion. Despite that the crowd was still large and would have numbered several hundred (hard to count with all the brollies). The address was given by Brian Sheehan on Engineers in SVN and specifically Tunnel Rats. Chloe Garrett sang the National Anthems of New Zealand and Australia underneath a handy umbrella - with the NZ anthem including the first verse in Maori.

#### Parting Shot

"Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards." Vernon Sanders

*Bill Anderson*

0419-877-463

[lastwill@hotmail.net.au](mailto:lastwill@hotmail.net.au)

**From The Webmaster**

They know us at Gunnedah (*photo: Paul Mathews*)

Looking for a destination for your “Grey Nomading?” Then head to Gunnedah and link up with the Silo Art Trail.

Locals and visitors alike are flocking to Gunnedah Water Tower Museum to see the new Vietnam War veterans murals.

Gunnedah and District Historical Society's Marie Hobson said the museum had become a "destination", buoyed by its inclusion in the Australian Silo Art Trail. Already, a post about the murals in the Facebook group has been shared almost 7000 times and attracted more than 500 comments. [Click here for more](#)



**After the tragic loss of Dave Willis** some of us gathered at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in ANZAC Square Brisbane to farewell the man. We couldn't make the funeral in Sydney but we were on parade at 1400. 'Pommy' Northcott travelled up from the Gold Coast and looked resplendent for all his 80 plus years. Not many attended but then it was late notice.



*L to R WO1 Rob Munro (RSM 1 RAR), WO1 Adam West (incoming RSM 3 RAR, WO1 Barry Fawcett (RSM 7 RAR), WO1 Dave Allen (Command Sergeant Major Forces Command), MAJGEN Mark Kelly (Retd), WO1 Matt Lines (RSM 25/49 RQR), COL David McCammon (DSCMA), LTCOL Mick Kearns (CO 3 RAR), WO1 Paul Denhart (Incoming RSM 7 RAR), WO1 Scott Krum (CATC)*

**From Facebook** (for those who don't go there) A very fine bunch of 7 RAR men at the Corps Conference

**Facebook** [Link](#)

Admin have devised a set of questions for prospective members to answer so we can welcome people who have an interest, or served, or are serving in 7RAR or are related



to someone who meets those prerequisites. I'm regularly confronted with requests to join but no questions answered. If you recommend someone to join, then tell them to answer the questions when they make application. If they don't, I will be obliged to deny them access.

I have been working on improving the look of the Newsletter but whereas form is fine, content is more important. I appeal to those with a writing bent to think of contributing accounts of their service. We are currently under-represented by the Iraq, Afghanistan and Timor accounts and to keep a contemporary journal we need input. The Battalion has an account in this issue and it's a vast improvement but we need more. We have old men rehashing old stories but little from the younger set.

Think about it

Kev Gillett

Brisbane