



# Porky Seven News



Edition 64 .. Newsletter of the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment Association .. November 2023



## From The President

It was great to see a number of the Association members attend the commemorations in Canberra for the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of Australian operations in South Vietnam. Due to work commitments I was unable to be there on the day but I managed to catch up with a number of the group at the Mercure the evening prior and there was plenty

of good 7 RAR banter in the room when I departed. Likewise a number of us were very pleased to attend the parade held by the Battalion on 30 September in Adelaide for the Iraq Campaign Honour. The parade was excellent, and in particular, the drill movements conducted to take the troops from the inspection line into a 'VII' formation and fire volleys was impressive.

Many of you would have seen recent media reports in regard to restructures in Army as a result of this year's Defence Strategic Review. There is a need for Army to acquire various new capabilities including longer range artillery, modern air defence systems, and an increase our watercraft capability. These capabilities are all essential components of a modern balanced Army. The decision to acquire these systems and to raise the units required to operate them requires our Battalion to once again be linked with the 5th Battalion to form the 5th/7th Battalion in Darwin. The re-linking of 7 RAR and 5 RAR will occur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2024.

Army's career management agency is working closely with the Battalion to determine the options available to each member of the Battalion, and



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to offer the maximum degree of flexibility for those with young families. The majority of the troops will be required to relocate to Darwin as part of 5/7 RAR. Some of the M113 APC crewmen and instructors will be required to relocate to Townsville into 3 RAR to assist in their preparation for the introduction into service of the new Infantry Fighting Vehicle. Finally some will leave the Battalion as part of the normal posting cycle into our training centres, staff appointments and other routine postings.

The CO and RSM have been working with the command team at 5 RAR to ensure that the re-linking occurs as smoothly as possible. They will pay particular attention to our regimental heritage and traditions, including the histories of the first and second tours of South Vietnam, our two tours of Afghanistan, and the multiple operational deployments to Iraq and other regional deployments in recent years. We will keep members updated on the progress of the re-linking in the Seven News over the next year.

Mick Garraway  
President





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## 7RAR Association Committee

### Patrons

Lieutenant Colonel Levon Lambert

### President

Brigadier Mick Garraway, AM

### Vice President

Brigadier Shane Gabriel, DSC (Retd)

### Historian

Major General Mike O'Brien, CSC (Retd)

### Secretary/Webmaster

Mr Kevin Gillett

### Treasurer

Mr Bernie Cox

### Executive Officer/Editor

Mr Tony Keech, OAM (NEW EMAIL: tkeech38@gmail.com)

### Committee Members

Mr Brice Stokes

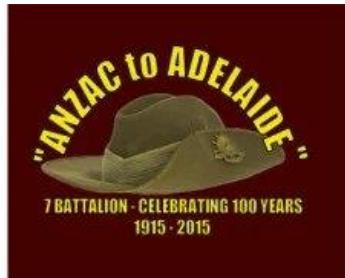
Mr John Lawson



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### DECEMBER 2023 TO APRIL 2024

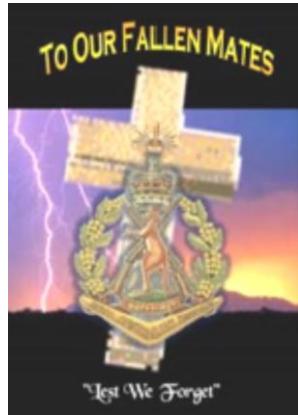
- Mon Dec 25      Christmas Day – everywhere.
- Mon Jan 1          News Years Day – everywhere.
- Fri Apr 1          Cut-Off for articles for Apr 24 Seven News.
- Thu Apr 25       ANZAC DAY ALL STATES.



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**"Rest ye oh Warrior, You will battle no more,**

**No longer to live the horrors of war,**

**Your duty was done with honour 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"**

**2152705 Peter John (Shorty) Edwards, C8, 2<sup>nd</sup> tour, passed Wed 23 Aug  
23.**

**2784350 Clive Charles Swaysland, C8, 1<sup>st</sup> tour, passed away Thursday  
24 August 2023.**

**3789403 James Orr, B5 1<sup>st</sup> tour passed away September 2023.**

**38465 Ronald Lewis, (Jim) Northcott, both tours, passed away Tuesday  
12 September 2023.**

**4721028 Kevin John Montague, C7 2<sup>nd</sup> tour, passed away Saturday 23  
September 2023.**



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**279847 Anthony Thellwell, (Tony) Williams, RFD, RMO 1<sup>st</sup> tour,  
passed away Monday 25 September 2023.**

**3788646 Bernard John Evans, D11 1<sup>st</sup> tour, passed away Monday 02  
October 2023.**

**2714622 Peter James Wilson, C9 1<sup>st</sup> tour, passed away Saturday 04  
November 2023.**



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## From the: EDITOR'S DESK

The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following award:

### MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY (MG)

Australian Army Major (then Lieutenant) Mark Augustine MOLONEY (Retd) For acts of gallantry in action in hazardous circumstances as the platoon commander 8 Platoon, Charlie Company, 7th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment at Bien Hoa Province on 7 February 1968. By His Excellency's command.

'To all who have responded on any of the mediums I would like thank you all for the kind words. This is the end of a very long process for me, this began back in 1968 when 22 soldiers trusted my decision making and obeyed all orders and requests made of them over the three days. Unfortunately, a great number of them are not able to enjoy the outcome, for example only two remain in one section and the tale goes on.



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They were a credit to firstly themselves, then the company, battalion and Royal Australian Regiment. Another 32 soldiers served in the platoon during the tour of duty and their contribution contributed to the platoon's status and is appreciated.

After 24 years it was one of them that started this long journey, which has just concluded, by starting to write about the contacts which occurred in February 1968 regarding C Company, much of this ended up in 'Conscripts and Regulars' a book about 7 RAR by Michael O'Brien.

Then began a series of representations by various groups to the various enquiries conducted post Vietnam, all these were unsuccessful for various reasons. Comment was also made in Paul Ham's book on Vietnam. Then came along "All Day Long the Noise of Battle" by Gerard Windsor and a further two submissions to further enquiries. Again unsuccessful.

Then in 2022 John Paget started his journey which ended with the final outcome recently announced. I am very grateful to John and his side kicks for their perseverance. I can now speak freely about events and how grateful I am to have been given the opportunity to command those fine soldiers.

**THANK YOU**  
**Mark Moloney"**

Please all members note, if you are a member of the 7RAR Association now you will not need to pay for anymore membership fees. As we all get on in years we will keep going as we are now.



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Keep an eye on the Website or the Seven News for updates as to what is going on in our Veteran World also keep in touch with all your mates in the PIG PEN.

If you have not been aware of the fact that we have sold out of, "PORKYS PEOPLE" books after our print of 200 copies was sold out by the end of August, if you did not get one then we have started a wait list with Karl just let us know if you are interested in getting a copy, contact me and I will forward your name to Karl.

**Officer recognised at last for the  
'battle of the bunkers'**



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**Maj Mark Moloney (retd) with his Medal for Gallantry at his home in Canberra.. Photo: Pte Nicholas Marquis.**

**UNDER intense gunfire and with 27 shrapnel wounds from exploding RPGs in his back, Maj Mark Moloney (retd) had one thing on his mind – “just keep going.”**

An enemy bunker had opened fire on the platoon he was leading through Bien Hoa Province, South Vietnam, on February 5, 1968.

Powerful machine gun and rocket fire bombarded C Coy 7RAR from previously cleared locations.



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Numerous assaults over the next three days, supported by seven air strikes and heavy artillery, struggled to breach the sizeable enemy camp.

**It's a recognition to the soldiers. There's some personal kudos in it, but it's mainly about what they achieved, because without them I would not have been able to do anything.**

**- Medal for Gallantry recipient Maj Mark Moloney (retd)**

On February 7, then Lt Moloney was about to make history.

"The enemy had reoccupied the position," Mr Moloney said.

"We had to keep the initiative the whole time. It wasn't until we got in that we realised what the size of the position was – they were good at concealing themselves. "That was the day when it was either break or give up."

Within 20 metres of an enemy position, Mr Moloney lobbed grenades, which bounced off a bunker. He gathered six M72 rocket launchers, got to his feet in a bloodsoaked shirt and fired on the bunker, with no effect.

Undaunted, he continued his attack, with the bunker falling silent after Mr Moloney crawled forward and fired an M79 grenade launcher. This was the final of four assaults in what became known as the 'battle of the bunkers'. "We were going to get in there. We weren't taking a step back," Mr Moloney said.

"One of the machine-gunners was hit. The bullet went through the gun, which is what probably saved him. "When he was being treated by the medic, he also got hit and they both spent extensive time in hospital afterwards."



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From Mr Moloney's 8 Platoon, there were nine CASEVACs after the battle, including him, but he refused to be evacuated until his men were out. Having been in previous contacts, Mr Moloney said he had to "keep his cool" to ensure the soldiers did what was needed.

CSM of C Coy WO2 Ted Lewis noted in the Honours and Awards submission how deafening the noise of the battle was. "The sounds, smell and smoke of gunfire, rockets, grenades and artillery overwhelmed my senses," he said.

On September 12, 2023, Mr Moloney was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions in hazardous conditions. The citation noted that Mr Moloney's actions saved many lives.

"It's a recognition to the soldiers. There's some personal kudos in it, but it's mainly about what they achieved," Mr Moloney said. "Because without them I would not have been able to do anything."

7RAR 2IC at the time, Maj Alf Garland, said Mr Moloney should have been awarded a Victoria Cross. Graduating from RMC in 1966, Mr Moloney didn't envisage his career taking the path it did after enlisting straight from school in Sydney. "I was just after a job at the time," Mr Moloney said.

As the years have passed, 10 members of 8 Platoon still keep in touch.

Fellow platoon commander Col John Paget (retd) put through the original submission to recognise Mr Moloney for the Star of Gallantry.

After 55 years and numerous processes, Col Paget said the award was deserved. "It's always the quiet, humble blokes that shine when it all gets rough," Col Paget said.

"The whole company have held him in high regard for what he did and all the diggers that are still alive."



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Reminiscing on his time as a platoon commander at 7RAR, Mr Moloney said he was fond of his platoon.

"Everyone will say that theirs was the best," he said. "Mine had a few rough edges and we weren't known as the gentlemen - we were probably referred to as the wild ones at some stages."

"That being said, they were very loyal and they've been loyal ever since."

The father of four and grandfather of seven discharged in 1986.

At the next dawn service, he will wear his medal in memory of those he fought alongside. "I was fortunate enough to not lose anyone but there were two soldiers in the company killed during the operation," Mr Moloney said.

"I remember them."

As you have probably heard or seen on the news that The Battalion have been identified to move back to Darwin and that 7RAR will be relinked with 5RAR which will take place in the future, indications are that will happen at the end of 2024.

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## A Company Reunion 14 OCTOBER 2023

(1) Image of 7RAR Flags at Vietnam War Memorial THE CHERRY TREE WALK at Bowral NSW.



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**2) Reunion organisers, Gordon and Philip with the young Bugler, who played the LAST POST at the Memorial Service for the 7RAR Fallen, held 14th October 2023.**



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- 3) Set up and ready to go with the Speaker System on loan from the local Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans Association, in front of the Monument.



TONY BLAKE



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## NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The second half of the year started off with seven 7RAR Soldiers joining us for at our July lunch.





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## August 3<sup>rd</sup> ... Vietnam Vigil ("Stand To")

Our available members and two 7RAR Soldiers held an 1100hrs Vigil  
at  
Centennial Park in Remembrance of Graham Kavanagh and Henry  
Stanczyk



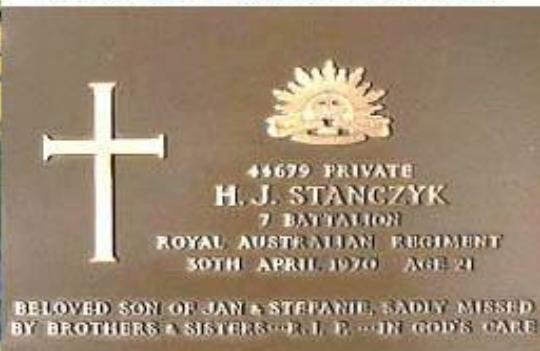
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**'STAND TO'**  
1100hrs 3rd August 2023  
Centennial Park, South Australia



**'STAND TO'**  
1100hrs 3rd August 2023  
Centennial Park  
South Australia



At the Athelstone cemetery there were five Larsson family members,  
two 7RAR Soldiers, Chris Ashenden and his wife Christine attending the Vigil.



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At Port Augusta (Stirling North Cemetery) the local RSL had organised a remembrance service complete with a minister and musicians.

Lyall Clayton travelled from Whyalla to attend the service. Members of the Port Augusta community and the local newspaper also attended.



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... and a lone "Stand To" was held at Kaniva for Norman Hawker.



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**5<sup>th</sup> August** - This year we attended the Suoi Chau Pha service which was held at 7RAR's Horseshoe Lines on the Military Base at Edinburgh.

After the service there was a light lunch with refreshments (the bar was open).



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7RAR Vets who attended the S.C.P service on the Military Base  
l-r Chris Ashenden, Greg Shepley, Kerry Eichner, Geoff Chandler,  
Tony Carr, Bob Gillies, 'Doc' Russell

## Toast to the “baggy arsed” private

9<sup>th</sup> August - 7RAR Veterans SA were invited to attend the toast to the “baggy arsed” private in the Sergeants’ mess on 9<sup>th</sup> August by the RSM Allan Ashman. This ceremony is conducted every year at the bequest of Corporal James Francis ('Gabby') Hayes who was killed in action during the battle of Soui Chau Pha. This is an annual event where all the Battalion Corporals are invited to the Sergeants’ mess to toast the “baggy arsed” private and participate in a variety of games against the Sergeants and Warrant Officers.

In attendance were Tony Carr, Chris Ashenden, Kerry Eichner, Steve Csorba, Michael Grech, Brian Richards and Geoff Chandler. Prior to



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the toast Tony spoke of his memories of Gabby, who was his Section Commander, and his many attributes especially his leadership qualities and this added greatly to the meaning of the evening.

It was a fabulous night, we were warmly welcomed and generously looked after as we witnessed the fun and frivolity of the games.

Geoff Chandler ex CHQ B Coy 1970



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## Visit to 7RAR Officers Club Horseshoe Barracks Edinburgh on Friday 11th August 2023

As fellow members of A Company 7RAR on 6th August 1967, Chris Ashenden and myself were invited by Lt Col Levon Lambert to a formal Battalion Dinner to attend the 56th Annual Remembrance of the Battle of Suoi Chau Pha during which our Company lost six of our number and 19 were wounded.

We consider it a great honour to be invited and especially considering the CO kindly arranged for his driver to transport us.

Lt Benji Marshall was tasked to "buddy" me at the dinner and he proved to be a most attentive and interesting companion. As Commander of 2 Platoon he had an excellent insight into the evolution of a mechanised Platoon over the 56 years since we were involved as National Servicemen.

One of the most striking differences was that we found ourselves on the HMAS Sydney going to War after only one year in the Army. Current soldiers appear to undertake numerous courses and appointments before such action.

After drinks we were ushered into the formal dining room and took our places for the marching in of the Battalion Colours. An excellent meal convened by 2IC Major Rupert Hindle ensued after toasts to the King and the Battalion.

President of the South Australian Royal Australian Regiment Association Mike Von Berg addressed the gathering and Major Ted Taber OC A Coy presented a comprehensive description of the Battle.

Lt Col Levon Lambert spoke on the effect such historical events have had on the evolution of culture in the Battalion and the Regiment.

After the Colours were marched out we retired for group photographs, after-dinner drinks and conversation. I enjoyed a very interesting discussion with Captain Luke Skipper - the Battalion Padre and RSM WO1 Al Ashman before being driven home once more.

I thank Lt Col Levon Lambert and his officers for their very friendly hospitality and am very confident our Battalion is in excellent hands.

Tony Carr ex 1 Platoon



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## September Lunch

**Bob Lloyd, Geoff Chandler, Tony Carr, Bob Whinnen,  
Chris Ashenden, Keith Molyneux and Steve Csorba  
with LCPL Adam Cunliffe, PTE Jai Dahm, PTE Chris Lamerton  
PTE Sam Heil and PTE Marko Jovanovic-Jozic**





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**29<sup>th</sup> September** – Following an invitation from Mick Garraway several of us visited the Horseshoe Lines and enjoyed mixing with the 7RAR personnel and other visitors as well as a visit to the 7RAR History Room after which we enjoyed a light BBQ and drinks. During this time two younger visitors were spotted, and they turned out to be Luke and Steven ... both had been A Coy soldiers between 2006 and 2012. And now one is a Police Officer in coastal NSW and the other a Correctional Services Officer in the Territory.



Luke Ross - A Coy 2007-2012  
Steven Ronayne - A Coy 2006 - 2010



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## 30<sup>th</sup> September - 7 RAR Iraq Theatre Honour Parade

Another well organised and very well executed day by the Battalion at the Torrens Parade ground in Adelaide.

Prior to the Parade the opportunity was taken to mix with the soldiers, take various photos, and of course some B Coy soldiers were found.



I-r Pte. Jack Sandry, Pte. Lucas Horvath, Pte. Harry Shawcross  
from B Coy

The Parade lasted about 90 minutes, including Australian Army officer Major General (retd) Shane Caughey attaching the Iraq streamer to the 7th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment's colours.



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The Band was fantastic (note the Gordons Tartan Kilts) and for two of their members it was the first time they had attended a Parade and so, after the Parade, it was pleasing to hear the Drum Major commanding them both on their fine performance.

Those who attended the Parade



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I-r Michael Grech, Greg Shepley, 'Doc' Russell, Chris Ashenden, Tony Carr, Bob Gillies, Lindsay Kealy, Kerry Eichner, Keith Harrison

After the Parade we were invited to attend a light lunch in the main building where the opportunity was taken to get a pic of the "two originals" who brought 7RAR down from Darwin.



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There weren't any soldiers at our October lunch ... a sign of things to come.



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## November Lunch



### November Lunch

**Bob Whinnen, LCpl Amos, Tony Carr, Pte Vander Wolt, Pte Wilcox,  
Pte Jayne, Steve Csorba, ??????, Edward Whinnen, Pte Miller,  
Bob Lloyd, Cpl Mayfield, Keith Molyneux and Lindsay Kealy**





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Plans are well advanced for our December (Christmas) lunch at which our wives/partners will be in attendance. We have been advised that 7RAR personnel with partners will also be attending.

And so as another year is coming to a close we in South Australia wish all members and their families a Happy and Safe Christmas and a really great New Year.

"Doc" (Ian M Russell) Secretary, 7RAR Veterans, South Australia



**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE 7RAR ASSOCIATION AND FAMILIES  
AND FRIENDS HAVE A GREAT CHRISTMAS AND LOOK FORWARD  
TO CATCHING UP NEXT YEAR.**

**TONY KEECH, OAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND EDITOR**



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## PEARLS FROM VICTORIA

### **7<sup>th</sup> Bns Combined Shrine Pilgrimage – 6 August 2023**

The veterans of the original 7<sup>th</sup> Bn AIF initiated this annual commemoration in August 1933. During the Second World War they included the 2/7<sup>th</sup> Bn in the pilgrimage and later invited the other 7<sup>th</sup> Battalions, including 7RAR, to join them. The tradition is continued by us and by the descendants of the earlier 7<sup>th</sup> Battalions, joined in recent years by our mates from the 106<sup>th</sup> Field Battery. The ceremony is always held on a Sunday close to the anniversaries of the Battles of Lone Pine (1915) and Lihons (1918), which are close to the anniversary of our battalion's Battle of Suoi Chau Pha on 6 August 1967. This year's ceremony was well attended and by friends and families of the Battalions commemorated. MAJGEN Mike O'Brien CSC did his normal good job of keeping the various readers on track and adding his own historical view on aspects of our military background.

Afterwards several of us went back to Bell's Hotel for a quick get-together and catch-up.. It was great to see Bruce Zunneberg and Tony Matthews make the effort coming to the big smoke.





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## Vietnam Veteran's Day 18 August 2023

### Vietnam Veteran's Day 18 August 2023

This year 50 years since the cessation of the war in Vietnam. As it is quite likely that future services will take place at local RSLs rather than a larger Service at the Shrine I took the opportunity to travel to Canberra to join the National Commemoration Service held opposite the Vietnam Memorial on Anzac Parade. I was most impressed with the arrangements to get Veterans and their families/friends into the stands and the service itself was stirring with the prerecorded stories and addresses from various personalities. The involvement of current ADF personnel was welcome for some of the older participants. The panels showing our KIAs provided a reminder of the past comrades.

## Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Although I don't have personal experience of a suicide I do have lived experience of dealing initially with Defence and latterly MCRA/DRCA and DVA and how these organisations treated their damaged personnel. The 2 weeks I spent at the Melbourne Hearing Block and it gave me an insight into some of the problems faced by current and recently discharged members. Submissions have now closed with the final hearing block to be held in Sydney from 13 March, 2024 at the Intercontinental Sydney.

Senior Government and military leaders are expected to be called to give evidence during the hearing, which will be held over three weeks. Daily hearing schedules and witness lists will be available closer to the event.

This will be the last public hearing block of the inquiry; however, the Royal Commission will hold a special ceremonial closing sitting prior to handing down its final report mid next year. Chair of the Royal Commission, Nick Kaldas, says the hearings have been critically important for gathering evidence to further the Royal Commission's inquiries.



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"The hearings that we've conducted in capital cities and garrison towns across Australia have provided us the opportunity to ask hard questions of senior Government and military leaders about the many complex cultural and systemic issues that are failing serving and ex-serving ADF members, and their families - and contributing to high rates of suicide and suicidality in our Defence and veteran communities."

- Commissioner Kaldas

## Annual Pompey Elliott Commemoration Ceremony (23 March 2024)

Organised by the Friends of the 15th Brigade this graveside service is held on the Anniversary of Pompey's untimely death on 23 March 1931 at Burwood General Cemetery. More details to come in 2024 but mentioned for your early information

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

On behalf of the Committee we hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year – especially if you have to travel long distances to meet with your families

## Parting Shot

My definition of an intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of the Lone Ranger

Billy Connolly

*Bill Anderson*

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## THE BEST FROM THE WEST

Christmas greetings to PIGS everywhere, wishing you all a very merry Christmas and peace, prosperity and good health for you and your loved ones for 2024.

## WA PIGS CHRISTMAS "PIGS SWILL" 2023

Our annual 'PIGS SWILL" was held at "The Shoe" bar and restaurant on Wed. 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. and we had a full house of about 45 from about 1100 hrs who had a wonderful time. Nicole Anderton, daughter of the late Ron Anderton, 1<sup>st</sup> Tour and one of regular attendees was once again unable to make it this year due to work commitments but wished us all the best for the day. I'm sure we'll see you soon Nicole. Our lunch formalities were as follows: Reading of 1<sup>st</sup> Tour Honour Roll - Allan West, Reading of 2<sup>nd</sup> Tour Honour Roll - Mick O'Halloran, Reading of Afghanistan Honour Roll - Pat O'Rourke,



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Prayer of Remembrance - Steve Chamarette, The Ode - Graham Edwards, Grace - Ian McNee. Don Cruden welcomed us all and showed us all his new flag design, his very last one he assures us. (see flag story further on) Don then thanked all those who had assisted throughout the year, with a big "thank you" to Allan and Betty West for all the work they do with the raffles. Well done Allan and Betty and thanks to all those who brought items for inclusion as raffle prizes. Then we settled down to a delicious lunch of Rack of Lamb and Roast Veggies and Apple Pie with Cream Tea and Coffee. Amongst those in attendance were:

Don Cruden, Spunky Fieldhouse and daughter Lisa, Bruce Wallis, Ian McNee, Geoff Murray, Steve Chamarette, John Davies, Garry and Sue Mills, Peter and Sandra Vlachou, Mick and Joan O'Halloran, Gary and Teresa Williams, Les Kail, Graham Edwards, Allan, Betty and Melonie West, Ross and Allison De Gray, Peter and Glenys Curley, Graeme Gutteridge, Geoff and Irene Brophy, Peter and Ruth Hedrick, Graham and Kerry Steele, Ann Cowen, Richard Adams, Ted and Sharron Von Paleske, Bob and Barbara Curry. Sorry if I missed anyone out,, but it looked like a great time was had by all, the last leaving about 1530hrs. Once again, RSM John Davies snapped a few photos, as shown below:



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Gary and Teresa Williams



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Joan and Mick O'Halloran



Ross and Allison De Gray



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Graham and Kerry Steele

## NEW FLAG

The WA branch is now offering an updated 7RAR flag complete with the SVN Medal of Gallantry. This will be the last flag to be produced and they are going fast, only 19 left. Cost is \$50 including Postage and Handling. Please make payment to 7RAR(WA) Commonwealth Bank.

BSB; 066132      Account; 00913220

When making payment please include your SURNAME and FLAG. Once payment has been made, please email:  
[dcruden1@bigpond.com](mailto:dcruden1@bigpond.com) or phone Don on 0431 672 001 if you do not have email, advising full postal address for posting of the flag.



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Please allow 14 days for delivery



## GOLD & WHITE CARDS INFORMATION SESSION

An information session was held at "The House" at SAS Swanbourne on October 7 2023. This was an initiative of John Burrows and included information relating to Gold and White Cards and Pensions, including War Widow's Pensions. Peter King, Deputy Commissioner of Department of Veterans Affairs joined John in answering the many questions thrown at them. About 50 PIGS and partners gathered together for a very worthwhile session, which came about as a result of Jock Henderson's passing and John's difficulty in obtaining a War Widow's Pension for Jock's widow Margaret. The session included many handouts and DVA booklets, including "Planning Ahead", "Accessing DVA Services" and "The Veteran's Guide to Better Hearing". These booklets are all available at all DVA offices and I encourage all PIGS to get your affairs in order and avail yourselves of DVA's services.



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## SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2023

The Vietnam Veterans Vigil, or VVV attempted to hold a Service of Remembrance at every grave or Commemorative plaque site across the nation and overseas on the 3rd of August 2023 in honour of all those who were killed in action in South Vietnam.

In WA, the 7RAR Association held a service ion 3<sup>rd</sup> August at 1100 hrs in Karrakatta Cemetery at the burial site of Alec Bell, KIA 1<sup>st</sup> Tour, with about 25 in attendance, whilst a service was also held at Noel Crouch's burial site in Katanning with Noel's family. The Karrakatta service also included a contingent from 5RAR who shared the service with 7RAR, with some of those in attendance in the photo below:





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The photo below shows the service held in Katanning for Noel Crouch, with Bob Sexton from Kojonup in attendance with members of Noel's family.



Julia Jacob, sister of Paul Navarre who was KIA in SVN lives in WA and she and her family have long been strong supporters of the 7RAR Association. She shared some photos of the service for Paul in



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Beechworth Victoria, where he is buried. Sadly, she was unable to attend but her niece and other family members did attend.





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**Paul Navarre's service in Beechworth.**

## **18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST CANBERRA COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE**

**The following from WA attended the Canberra commemorative service for Vietnam Veterans on Fri. 18th August 2023:**

Allan, Betty & Melonie WEST, Don CRUDEN with son-in-law Paul and grandson Ryan GRAHAM, Mick and Joan O'HALLORAN, John SMITH, Geoff and Irene BROPHY, Pat O'ROURKE with his brother Ted in tow. A wonderful, well organised event and congratulations go to DVA and others who made the service the success it was. Thankfully the weather held. Don CRUDEN with family members attended the LAST POST service held each evening at the AWM. This 18th August event was made more special by the appearance of John SCHURMAN and his rendition of "WE WERE ONLY 19". Anyone visiting the AWM in future is encouraged to attend this evening event, it is magical.



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We had a small gathering of all 7 RAR attendees on the 17<sup>th</sup> Thu. night at the Mercure Hotel and this was a most enjoyable meet and greet event. Overall, the commemorative event was successful and due, in the main, to the in-depth planning (eg handing out of plastic raincoats), location and dedication of staff. Sadly, if you missed it - you MISSED IT.

## PETER HEDRICK SPEECH TO HONOUR MARK MOLONEY

At DUNTROON, 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPT. 2023

*My name is Peter Hedrick, more commonly known as "Pepe". I was a Nasho and became a stretcher bearer/medic attached to 8 Platoon, C. Coy ,7RAR.*

*Mark was our Platoon Commander. I knew Mark reasonably well as we were both attached to Platoon Headquarters. We also saw the sights of Hong Kong together on R&R in 1967, although I suspect I saw a lot more than Mark did. I was told that at that time there were over 850 bars in the city, I think I saw more than half of them.*

*I feel honoured to be here today, representing those men who served in C Company and more specifically 8 Platoon, in what is known as the Bunker Action in Bien Hoa Province during February 1968.*

*Sadly many of our ranks are no longer with us and others are unable to travel. In a perfect world they would be here with us today as we celebrate this very much overdue honour.*

*I can confidently say that all ranks of the "Roadrunners" felt very strongly that Mark should be recognised for his actions on 7th February 1968. In fact, it was felt that Mark deserved the Victoria Cross.*

*His men in 8 Platoon knew on the very day that they were witnessing an act of extraordinary courage and leadership and that his actions not only saved the day, but also many lives. But it took the Army 55 years*



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*to come to the same conclusion. Better late than never.*

*Today we are here to celebrate and honour Mark, but I would also like to recognise and acknowledge the decades long campaign by Mark's classmates from The Royal Military College, to seek justice for Mark. I particularly would like to thank Dr. John Paget for his work in putting together his marathon submission to get this job done.*

*In closing I would now like to present this token of appreciation from the men of C Company for your tireless efforts towards gaining recognition for the selfless, heroic actions of your friend and fellow officer Lt. Mark Moloney on the 7th February 1968 in Bien Hoa Province, South Vietnam.*

*Thank you Sir. Mission accomplished.*

## A COY 2<sup>ND</sup> TOUR REUNION AT MITTAGONG by "Dicko"

On the 13th-15th October A Coy 2nd tour held a reunion at Mittagong. It was well attended by former diggers of our Battalion and partners, in fact 74 in total. The first evening was a meet and greet and registration. The following day was kicked off with a service at the Bowral memorial to Vietnam Veterans KIA. Wreaths were laid to honour 7RAR KIA both tours and subsequent deaths of members since our service. Great memorial and if you get a chance, it's worth a visit. After the service we wandered over to a museum of Nui Dat, run by a Vietnamese guy for charity. His name is Vinh Tran. Another place well worth a visit.

They provided a sausage sizzle and some entertainment including singing by a Vietnamese group. Vinh also arranged for some of the vets to do a tour around Bowral in a yank truck along with an ex-army



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Land Rover and a yank Jeep. Great day was had by all. On the final night we had an informal sit-down dinner at the Mittagong RSL. Special thanks to Phil Clark (Phil Clark says “being Dicko, he has omitted tell you that he and Di were the cornerstone of the whole event. I just attended to the bumpf!”) for his role in putting this together, also thanks to Tony Blake for being the go-to man in Bowral. We were very fortunate to be entertained on the final night by a great singer songwriter in Gary Seton.

Regards,

Dicko.

Well done Di and Dicko and all those who assisted in the reunion.

Some photos to follow:



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L to R: Gordon "Dicko" Dickson, Vinh Tran, Phil Clark

Bowral Memorial



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Gary and Janice Seton



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L to R: Greig "Benny" Ball, "Dicko", Kevin "Dookie" Brooks



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Name of a café in Mittagong, how appropriate.



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## BACK TO BRUCE ROCK

Don Cruden's grandson Matthew took the 7 RAR banner to Bruce Rock for the "Back to The Bush Veteran's Reunion" on Sat. 4<sup>th</sup> November for the street parade and with Kanga Battersby, carried/displayed the banner ON parade. The numbers were very small. Bob Curry had to leave the site and enter hospital a day earlier. Don Cruden had just come out of hospital but thankfully Keith LEWIS was on location and possibly 2 other 7 RAR members whose names we missed

It is the one country town we like to show our presence.



Keith "Kanga" Battersby with our banner.