



Porky Seven News



Edition 71..Newsletter of the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment..April 2026



The President

This newsletter is our final 'Coord Instructions' before we look ahead to Anzac Day. I hope all members of the Association wherever we find ourselves, have the opportunity to remember those we served with, particularly those no longer with us, and for you all to know your service is valued and honoured. I especially hope as many as possible can gather together in Association groups to remember, commemorate and enjoy the mateship of being able to say you were in 7 RAR.

Bob Whitaker's speech as invited by DVA to help mark the 75th Anniversary of National Service (posted to the website on 16 February), is a great example of the enduring nature and impact of service that defines Anzac Day. While Bob was addressing the unique nature of National Service, with active service during the Vietnam War, his observations of service resonate much more broadly. To quote Bob - "Our training was intensive, Unit cohesion and morale was high, and our leadership strong. We developed bonds during training and active service which remain, beyond family, the strongest in our lives. We were united in our loyalty to each other and to Unit and Corps. We wore the Skippy Badge with pride."

I would only respectfully add "and the Maroon lanyard." While the current day Battalion wears that interwoven with the Gold of 5 RAR for the time being, I can assure you those current day Diggers feel the same personal and collective pride in shared service. Future editions of our Newsletter will include their news as well, reinforcing their role in maintaining the history and traditions of 7 RAR. They have a busy year ahead and I trust you will enjoy their stories.

Wherever you find yourself on Anzac Day, I hope it is with those you know and trust. Please send in your reports and pictures for the website to share.

Duty First

Brig Shane Gabriel



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Last Post Reflections

18530 Neville Robinson 26 January,2026

217135 Eric Tickner 30 January, 2026

4720479 Allan Whiteway 9 February, 2026

6709504 Robert Gillies 9 February 2026

42147 John O'Brien 17 March 2026

36185 Richard Hylard 28 March,2026

5716412 Robert Cusak 2 Apr 2026.



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Great photo, great blokes – Jim and Father

PEARLS FROM VICTORIA

As I missed the last two 2025 issues of the Newsletter, I thought a quick recap of highlights from Victoria would be useful.



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Anzac Day 2025



2025 Anzac Banner on Parade

We had a good roll-up for the March notwithstanding it was effectively a long weekend with Anzac Day falling on a Friday. This was the first year we formed up numerically and it seemed to work well as we didn't have to wander up and down Collins St to work out our forming-up point. The timings provided for assembling appeared to use the 'hurry up and wait' principle and should be addressed for the 2026 March. Our banner looks as good as ever and having volunteer school cadets carry the banner does make it easier on older veterans.

Bell's Hotel continued to look after us post-March and because we are regarded as a private function we don't have to wait until the noon start and can have a cooling drink as soon as we arrive. The meals, as usual, were up to



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their usual standard and the Main Hall where we have our get together provides a light and airy venue easily catering for the crowd of Pigs, family and friends

The occasion also gives us the opportunity to remember fallen comrades as we read out our Roll of Honour – includes Matthew Hopkins (Afghanistan)



Calling the Roll -
Ian Dunn at the lectern

7s Shrine Battalion – 10 August 2025

The main highlight of 2025 was our annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine – commemorating 7AIF, 2/7 AIF and 7RAR. Although 7RAR is not a lineal descendant we were welcomed by 2/7 to join them when 7RAR first returned from Vietnam. We have continued to honour this pilgrimage since then, especially as the date normally follows very close to the anniversary of Suoi Chau Pha.

Due to a mix-up in bookings, we were unable to conduct our ceremony in the Shrine Sanctuary, so we took a chance on Melbourne weather and selected the Battalion Tree as our revised location. The location proved to add something to the occasion and was conducted without the benefit of a sound system, so we

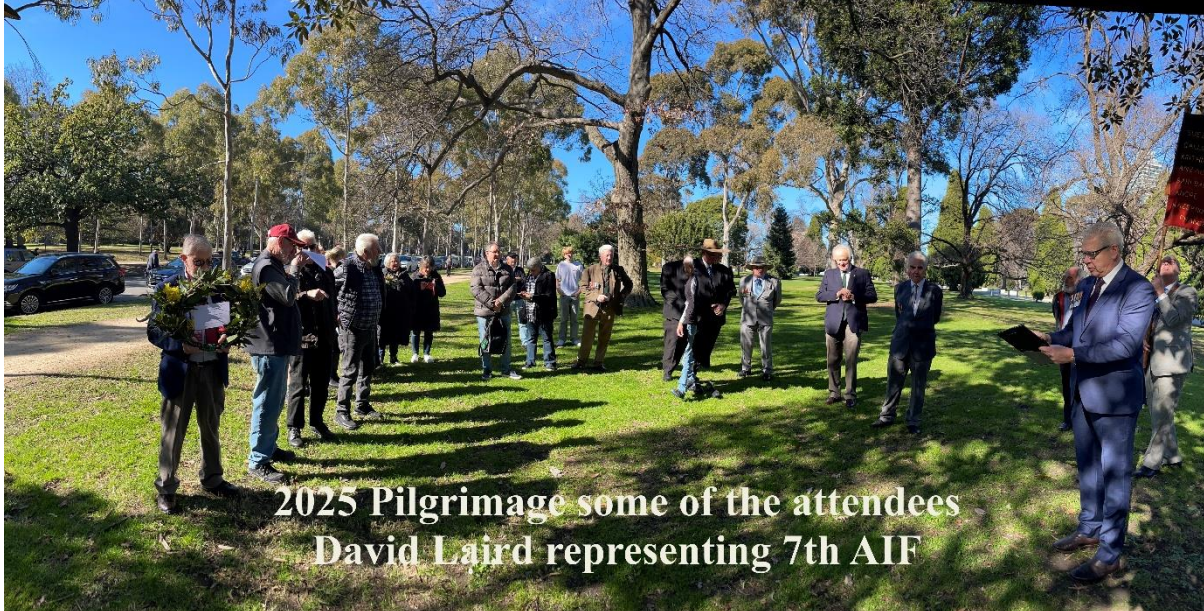


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just had to speak up - no real problems for some of us.



2025 Pilgrimage some of the attendees
David Laird representing 7th AIF

Lt Col Graeme Kingsley Chapman DSM

I'm sure members of Charlie Company 1st Tour will be pleased that their OC was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal as announced in the November Commonwealth Gazette. An extract from the Gazette shows the Citation.

Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Kingsley CHAPMAN (Retd)

For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as the Officer Commanding C Company, 7th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam in February 1968.

Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Chapman made an extraordinary contribution to the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, during his entire tour of duty in Vietnam. In particular, he displayed exceptional leadership during February 1968 when the 7th Battalion was deployed to protect major United States bases from enemy attack during the Tet Offensive. Lieutenant Colonel Chapman led his company with great skill and bravery in a prolonged action that became known as the Battle of the Bunkers. His Company's success in this battle was due to his tactical skill, tenacity and inspirational leadership. As Officer Commanding C Company Lieutenant Colonel Chapman consistently displayed distinguished leadership in warlike operations.

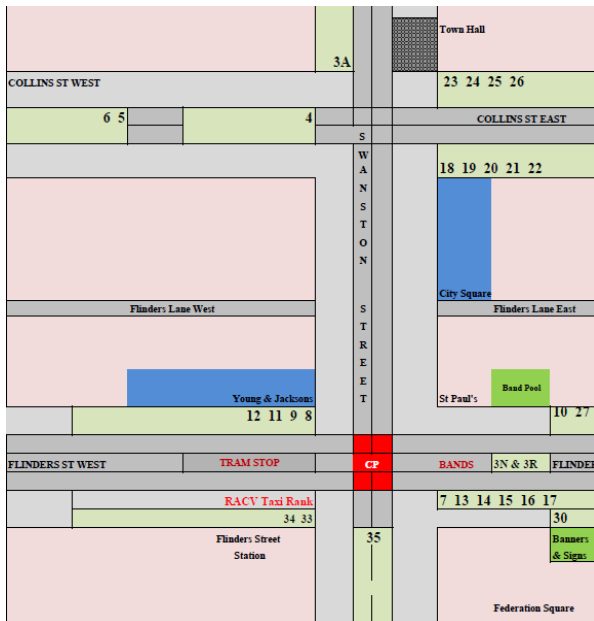


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Melbourne ANZAC Day March & Reunion (25 April)



Last year there was a fair bit of confusion regarding our form up time. This year the more reasonable time is at 0830 with the RAR passing the Start Line at 0909 if everything goes to schedule.

Our form up location is Collins St West as shown on the diagram above (just look for our banner) and, like 2025, we shouldn't have to jostle for position – according to the RSL website we are to march in numerical format as follows: - 1to 9RAR, 2/4, 5/7 and finally 8/9RAR. The RAR Association (Vic) are now considering reverting to the previous arrangement where the Battalions take it in turn to lead the rest of the Regiment. If this occurs advice will be sent out to the Battalion representatives. Irrespective of what happens just look for our Banner as mentioned above. It wouldn't be the Anzac Day March if there wasn't some confusion but it will all work out anyway.



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If there any interstate visitors, or younger 7RAR veterans, please join us and let Ian Dunn (0402-047-235) or Bill Anderson (0419-877-463) know.

Bell's Hotel

The wonderful people at Bell's have welcomed us again for 2025. After the March we'll again be in the Main Hall at Bells Hotel, 157 Moray Street, South Melbourne—with easy access via the lift. Hotel is via the bluestone lane off Tope St. Our numbers will be boosted by our friends from the other 7th Battalion Associations and from 106 Field Battery who have been invited to attend.

As with the March, any interstate visitors or younger Veterans (and their families and friends) are warmly invited.



Main Hall, Bell's Hotel



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Anzac commemoration Service Wattle Park April 19, 2026

We have been invited to a commemorative service at **Wattle Park - Patriotic Area**, to be held on **Sunday, 19 April 2026**, please arrive by **12:30 pm for a 1:00 pm start**. This service will honour the significant history of the area, particularly its connection to the **24th Battalions of the 1st and 2nd A.I.F.**

The Lone Pine seedlings, which have great symbolic importance due to their ties to Gallipoli and the Anzac legend, a proud connection to Australian military history. The Lone Pine tree at Wattle Park, planted from a seed brought back by a member of the 23rd Battalion, is a reminder of the sacrifice made by soldiers during the Gallipoli campaign

The service is being held by and on behalf of the following:

24th Battalion (AIF) Association

2/24th Australian Infantry Battalion Association

7th Battalion (AIF) Association

2/7th Australian Infantry Battalion Association

7RAR (Vic) Association

Camberwell Pompey Elliott R.S.L Sub-branch

Melbourne Tramways Band

Parks Victoria

7th Bns Combined Shrine Pilgrimage – 09 August

As an advance warning, we will be holding our annual pilgrimage on Sunday 9 August. This short service is planned to be held in the Sanctuary to commemorate the contribution of the various 7 Battalions – 7AIF, 2/7th AIF, 7 Bn 39-45 and 7RAR. In the case of 7RAR, we will be remembering Suoi Chau Pha.



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All Victorian Pigs are welcome to come and remember our own time in SVN
After the ceremony we will be heading off to Bell's to continue remembering fallen comrades or those who have subsequently passed
More details to be advised in the next Newsletter.

Parting Shot



Bill Anderson

0419-877-463

lastwill@hotmail.net.au



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THE BEST FROM THE WEST - MARCH 2026

COLIN "FRED" COWAN IN WA

In February Freddie Cowan visited WA and caught up with a few old D Coy mates for a lunch at the Perth RSI Club. What a fine looking bunch below.



L to R: Colin Tye, Peter Vlachou, Charlie Matheson, Freddie Cowan

2026 ANZAC DAY

No details are available yet for this year's Anzac Day march, but we can assume something along the lines of last year, hopefully without the burst water main at the last minute causing a relocation of the form up points. Meet in St Georges Terrace from 0900 somewhere between William and Barrack Streets, look for the banner. Details should be in the paper before the day and I will advise if any changes. Once again, meet at "The Shoe" in Yagan Square after the march.



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END OF MONTH LUNCH

Our March End of Month lunch was a cracker, with about a dozen in attendance, mostly from 7RAR but also some mates from 14th Intake nashos who went to other battalions or corps. Among those there:

Gary Mildwaters, Lee Boyd, Garry Mills, Gordon Dickson, Chris Chapple, Bruce Wallis, Bob Meeks, Ian McNee, Geoff Murray, Peter Vlachou, Graeme McKeon and Steve Chamarette. Lots of frivolity and solving all the world's problems ensued. As usual we always chuck in our loose change and give a donation to that wonderful organisation Legacy, through Ian McNee.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VISITOR FOR ANZAC DAY

Brian Edwards A2 2nd Tour and wife Colleen are coming over from South Australia for our Anzac Day parade next month. Brian was over in Perth for our 2006 reunion. They arrive in Perth around 20th April and will be staying at the NESUTO Mounts Bay Road Apartments (Ph. 92135333). We would like to ensure that their stay is a welcoming one and hope that ex A Coy members catch up with Brian and Colleen while they are here.

ADVICE FOR WIDOWS PARTNERS DEPENDANTS

John and Kerry Burrows have compiled a tremendous article relating to Support for Widow (ER)s, Partners and Dependants, which all 7RAR members will find informative and very useful as we negotiate the latter stages of our lives. We're all at the stage now that we have to think about this stuff happening to us so it is really timely. It is quite long, too long to include in this newsletter, however it has been forwarded to our webmaster Kev Gillett for, hopefully, inclusion onto the 7RAR website. I encourage all members to read this article as it provides such wonderful advice. Thanks again to John and Kerry for making this information available to all.



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DON CRUDEN OAM

Just in case there may be people who weren't aware, our 7RAR Association leader in WA of many decades is now **DON CRUDEN OAM**, awarded in the Australia Day Honours List this year. Well done, Don, richly deserved. We couldn't think of anyone more deserving of this recognition. Sounds like another job for the medal-mounters to have your medals re-mounted, but well worth it.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Our December lunch was held after the last Porky7 News was distributed and here is the pic. Several regular members were absent as they were either in hospital or had just got out of hospital. Leonie Lloyd had made small Christmas tree shaped Christmas cakes for everyone. There were many great comments about them since the lunch.



l-r Bob Lloyd - Leonie Lloyd - Kerry Eichner - Michael Grech - Tony Carr - 'Doc' Russell



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FEBRUARY LUNCH



Kerry Eichner and Ricky Skiathitis, Program Manager of Andrew Russell Veteran Living had a very long conversation. Ricky is ex 7RAR Afghanistan



Chris Ashenden, Keith Molyneux and Michael Grech



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l-r - Bob Lloyd, Tony Carr, Geoff and Anne Chandler standing Leonie Lloyd

VALE

Sadly in February we attended the funerals of two of our members.

Both were high achievers, one in business, the other in martial arts.

Rob Gillies



Rob was driven, focused and quietly determined. He lived by a simple philosophy: the harder you work, the happier you'll be. He left school at the end of Year 10 and started working as a bank teller. But quickly realised he wanted more — more challenge, more adventure, more purpose.

So in April 1969, he enlisted in the Australian Defence Force. He served in Vietnam from February 1970 to March 1971 as a Corporal... following in the footsteps of his father and his future father-in-law — both World War II servicemen and former prisoners of war in Changi.

Service, resilience and courage were part of his DNA.



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He truly found his calling when he stepped out of banking and into sales — and once he made that move, he never looked back. He threw himself into it with energy and enthusiasm, working for companies like Diversey & Mars Foods and building a reputation for hard work and connection wherever he went. Outside of work in Tasmania, he played football for the Kingston Tigers and contributed heavily off the field as well. His commitment to the club eventually earned him Life Membership and years later he would again receive the same honour for his services to his beloved Glenelg Tigers. As his career in sales began to gather real momentum, he knew that Tasmania might not provide the opportunities he was chasing. So he made the brave decision to move the family to Glenelg, South Australia. The location wasn't random — the Glenelg Tigers and the beach certainly helped seal the deal. His first role in South Australia was with SAFCOL where he held the role of National Sales & Marketing manager which meant plenty of overseas travel. His next big career move was with the South Australian Brewing Company, stepping fully into the liquor industry — and it suited him perfectly. It was hand in glove with his business instincts, his outgoing personality, and the lifestyle he and his wife embraced. He later moved to MacMont Hospitality Supplies. During his time there, the SA Government legalised poker machines, and he once again saw opportunity. He established both a gaming and liquor distribution division for the business — a move that showed his ability to adapt, innovate and think ahead. His final and longest chapter was the founding of Liquor Smart bottle shops, which was later rebranded to Thirsty Camel. It proved to be another masterstroke. Time and again, he backed himself — and more often than not, he was right.

Beyond his remarkable professional achievements was something even more impressive — his willingness to give his time to others.

No matter how busy he was, he always found space to help



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someone with their career. That might have been mentoring them, connecting them with the right person, offering practical advice, or simply giving them the reassurance they needed to back themselves. He had this way of instilling belief in people — helping them see that they were ready for the next step, even if they couldn't see it themselves.

In many ways, he was a life coach before that was even a thing. His contribution to the community was also significant, particularly through the Liquor Industry Golf Club of South Australia. As Chairman of the Club's Charity Committee for 25 years, he dedicated himself to raising funds for children's charities. It was work he cared deeply about, and he was honoured with Life Membership — a recognition that meant a great deal to him. He was always quietly making a difference ... never looking for recognition.

His battle with leukemia over the past three and a half years was nothing short of extraordinary. From the moment he was diagnosed, he attacked it with the same determination he applied to everything in life — with vigour, discipline and unwavering positivity. He never complained... Not once... He would always say, "There are people worse off than me." He had a perspective, a courage, a quiet strength ... which was remarkable.

May he Rest in Peace.



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l-r - Bob Whinnen, Bev Biggins, Carol and Tony Carr,
Lindsay Kealy, Chris Ashenden and Bob Whitford



l-r - Bob Lloyd, Keith Molyneux, Kerry and Jo Eichner,
Linda and Bob Whinnen



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There were over 300 people at Robs funeral service including 14 of our own members.

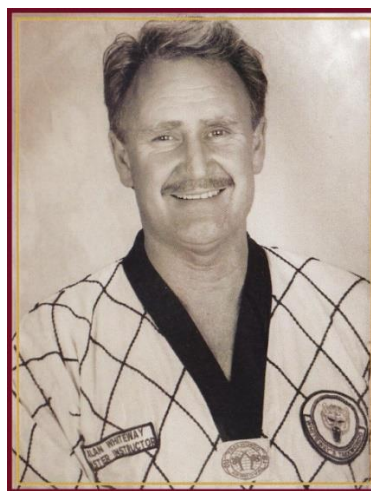
Greg Shepley also spoke about Rob and then recited the Ode

The service concluded after 2 hours, and all were invited to the Glenelg footy club to further celebrate Robs life

Seven days later we had another funeral service

VALE

Over 100 attended Alan's funeral service.



ALAN FRANK
WHITEWAY

24.11.1948 ~ 9.2.2026

Proud Father of
Shane and Jamie

Grandfather of Nicola

Australian Army Private:
4 Platoon B Company 7 RAR -
Vietnam War Active Combat Service
1970 - 1971

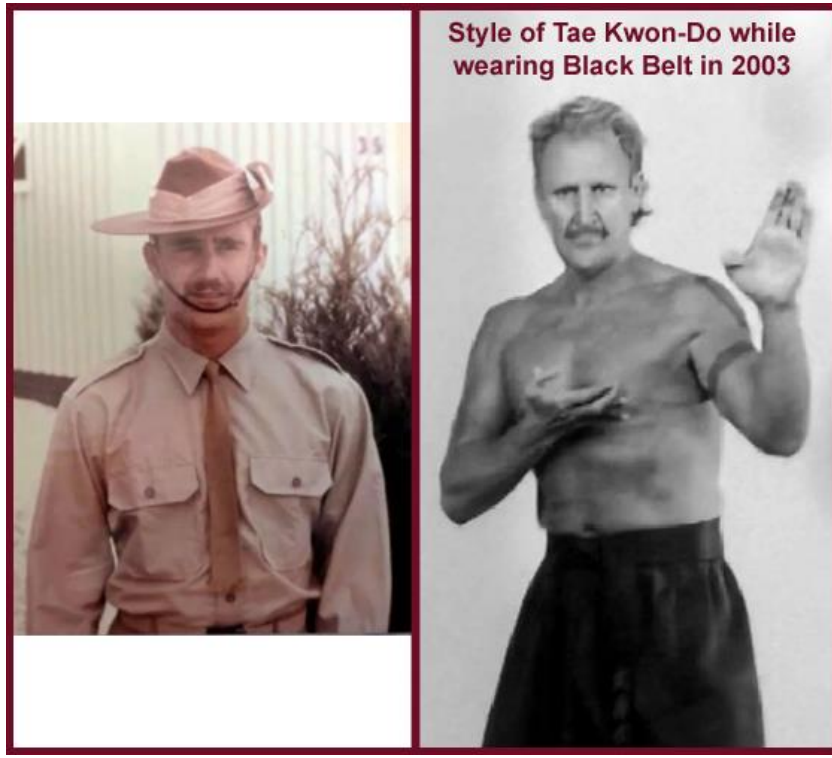
7th Dan - Taekwondo Master Instructor



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After Vietnam Alan worked for the E&WS Department and became secretary to Dean Brown... a position he very much enjoyed.

In the early 70's Grand Master Choon Bong Lee came to Australia and Al was very much a part of ensuring he stayed in Australia.

In 1974 Al won a bronze medal in the Asian games.

In 1992 he opened Whiteway's Tae-Kwon-Do Academy and ran it until 2006.

He then moved to Thailand.

Al was a man of very few words, but when he spoke people listened.

He built confidence in kids, discipline in teenagers and strength in adults.

People of different ages, different backgrounds, different chapters in life all connected because of him. He was strong, he was loyal and he cared.

He returned to Adelaide in the second half of 2025.



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Over 100 attended Alan's funeral service.

Graham Cornes (ex 5pl) spoke about AI and then recited the Ode and after the last post he, Peter Sochacki (ex 4pl), Bob Whitford and "Doc" Russell (ex 5pl) each laid a poppy.





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MARCH LUNCH



Tony Carr and Geoff Chandler



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I-r - Bob Lloyd, Cameron Mapstone, 'Doc' Russell and Geoff Chandler
It was a very enjoyable lunch

ANZAC DAY March arrangements

The ANZAC Day organising committee requested a brief unit history of 7RAR, which has been supplied. They also required information on our Unit Leader (Kerry Eichner) and our nominated Veteran (Tony Carr). The above information has been forwarded and will be used during the ANZAC Day TV commentary in Adelaide.

Pigs in Paradise

I rang the Port Office Hotel to make a booking for ANZAC Day and after talking to the woman on the phone for a couple of minutes I had to ask "Are you a computer?" She answered "Yes, I'm AI. Now do you want your table downstairs or upstairs?"



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Nearly fooled me but now I wonder if she knows about ANZAC Day.

Anyway, the reunion for us Pigs is, as always, at the Port Office Hotel at 40 Edward St, Brisbane Queensland 4000

ANZAC Day March

The FUP is on George Street between Mary and Margaret Street

Order of March

Look for Number **43. 7 RAR ASSOCIATION** after 6RAR Association. The parade starts at 9:30 and we will most probably step off after 10:00 so be there ready for that.

We lost **Neville Robinson** in March after a fall. Neville was an original, posted in from 3RAR after Borneo. He was effectively a 3 and 7RAR historian with recollections and stories of everyone he came in contact with over the years. He had an amazing memory. Pictures below indicate how well respected he was with hundreds attending his last parade.

RIP mate We will miss your stories at our End of Month luncheons



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200 odd people saying goodbye to Neville. This pic is only half the Church



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L to R Brig Shane Gabriel, Mal Spendlove, Jack Ezzy, Bill Delaforce, Kev Gillett, Mick Spruce and Robyn Spruce.

Also present but not in view Gordon Tredrea

That's all from Queensland

Kev Gillett