



Porky Seven News



Edition 70..Newsletter of the 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment..December, 2025



7RAR in Afghanistan

Click on the pic to view a slide show of 7RAR in Afghanistan. Navigate by clicking on the > sign



Santa has a senior moment

(Relevant for some of us more mature members)

L;97_____





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From the President

This time a year ago, we saw the removal of our Battalion from Army's Order of Battle with the re-raising of 5/7 RAR. In that December Newsletter, I noted that; "While none of us welcome this situation, we should be assured that the re-raised 5/7 RAR will take on key characteristics of the Pig Battalion as their identity, holding them alive and ready for the day when again we are returned to Army's Order of Battle." 12 months on, we can be assured that this expectation is central to the current Battalion. We look forward to building a closer relationship with the Battalion, particularly as the only RAR Battalion comprising four rifle companies, we can all relate our service within the Platoon, Company and Battalion to those still serving and take pride in their achievements.

Thank you to those who have provided your perspective on the future direction of our Association. There are initiatives linked to expanding our membership; the funding of 7 RAR commemorative objectives and new Association merchandise we need to exploit further. Please keep the ideas coming and our network both strong and widening. I make this comment particularly to our more recent 7 RAR veterans to assist in maintaining our Association objectives through your involvement and network.

I wish you all the best for the Christmas Season and the New Year.

Best Regards, Shane

Shane Gabriel

Email: shane67gabriel@gmail.com



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Trophy named for fallen 7 RAR Section Commander



We were recently advised of a great initiative by the School of Infantry to commemorate one of our fallen, **Corporal Mathew Hopkins**, killed in action in Afghanistan during the Battalion deployment in 2009.

Mat was to be posted to Depot Company as a Section Commander following that deployment. Previously a trophy in Mat's name was awarded to the best soldier in 7 Platoon, Depot Company however this was discontinued following a restructure.

With the support of Victoria Hopkins, a new award has been instigated, the **Corporal Mathew Hopkins Trophy**, awarded to the Depot Company Instructor of the Year. The initial award was made recently to **Corporal Lincoln Goldspink** to whom we send our

congratulations.

We also thank Victoria and the Commanding Officer, School of Infantry for this initiative to remember one of our own, killed in action while serving with the Seventh Battalion. A portrait provided to the Hopkins family was also donated to Depot Company as a fitting reminder of a talented and greatly respected Section Commander.



Corporal Mathew Hopkins Trophy



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Secretary/Webmaster

You may notice some of the pics in this newsletter are links. For the not-so-computer -literate members, if you run your mouse over the pic it changes shape if it is a link. Left Click and it will take you to another page of info. It is the huge advantage of electronic newsletter (eNewsletter) and will bring more information in the future as I explore the possibilities.

The Association is looking at developing merchandise as I get lots of requests for gear that show the person as a 7RAR Pig/Boar. South Australia via Doc Russell are particularly active in this matter and currently are waiting for a quote on new ties with the boar motif. More on that later

New RSL National President



The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) today announces Peter Tinley, a distinguished Former Special Forces Officer, has been elected as the new National President.

The retired Special Air Services Regiment Major and former Western Australian Government Minister was formally elected today by the RSL's State Branches prior to the RSL Australia Annual General Meeting. Click on the pic to read more

Last Post Ceremony

I received this email from HQ Coy HQ Comm Z Association

LAST POST CEREMONY FOR 216920 PTE MARVIN WALTER AYRES

I am writing to you on behalf of the HQ Coy HQ Comm Z Association where the above soldier served in the CMF prior to joining the regular army.

We are organising through his sister to have a Last Post Ceremony at the AWM hopefully sometime in 2026.

We wondered whether any members of your Association would be interested in attending.

We plan to hire a bus and I would think stay overnight and return the following day



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I am an ex CO of the Unit and of course knew Mick Ayres (as we knew him) very well as he was a Sgt in our Unit and very well loved and respected. We were all very traumatised to learn of him being KIA.

I shall leave it in your hands and if you wish to be kept in touch on the dates etc for the Ceremony please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes,

Capt Bruce York (Ret) OAM

rbyork41@gmail.com

Mobile +61 (0)428 114 540

Vale



173517 Rod McRae 7 Sep 25

2412127 Graham Griffiths, MM 23 Sep 25

214937 Leonard (Blue) Buckley 14 Oct 25

39701 Phil Littler 31 Oct 25

3789560 Harry Woods 3 Nov 25

38140 Trent Grall 26 nov 25

At the going down of the sun and in the morning
we will remember them

RIP guys



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Mates for Mates



Doing it tough? Feeling lonely? Check these people out.

Our social connection activities help bring veterans and families together with a community that understands, helping to build mateship and connection.

We create regular opportunities throughout the week, and on weekends, for mateship and peer-support through social, recreational, and family activities, including weekly BBQs and coffee catch ups, creative art workshops, cooking groups, health and fitness-related activities, Mates4Mates school holiday programs and more.

[Click on the pic for more details](#)

Together again.

[Click on the pic to read all bout the relinking of 5 and 7RAR](#)





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THE BEST FROM THE WEST – DECEMBER 2025

7RAR 60th BIRTHDAY LUNCH

Sunday 31st August saw members and wives/partners celebrate our old battalion's 60th Birthday, admittedly one day early. Fifty-six of us gathered at 1200 at the Mandurah RSL for the lunch and it was great to catch up with old mates, some who had never before attended any 7RAR functions. MC for the day Peter Vlachou started the formal proceedings at 1230 by welcoming all those who were in attendance and paying tribute to those of us who didn't come home and those who we have lost along the way. Peter then invited Dave Mabbs, President of the Mandurah RSL to say a few words about the club and a brief rundown of the Mandurah War Memorial, which is world class and well worth a visit.

Mick O'Halloran then provided us with a concise and well researched history of 7RAR over the 60-year journey, well done Mick. Peter then invited Steve Chamarette to read our Battalion's prayer, thank you Steve. The Battalion's Honour Rolls were then read out, Vietnam 1st Tour by Noel Bell, Vietnam 2nd Tour by Geoff Murray and Afghanistan by John Burrows. We then moved outside and gathered in front of the RSL Memorial Wall where wreaths were laid by Don Cruden, Spunky Fieldhouse, Mick O'Halloran, Geoff Murray and Val O'Brien, sister of Noel Crouch KIA 2nd Tour. This was followed by two verses of The Ode recited by Graham Edwards, followed by The Last Post, a minute's silence and reveille, very moving indeed. As we were all outside, John Davies called us all together for a few group photos.

Once inside, Peter called on Val O'Brien to say grace and we then sat down to a delicious lunch. Meanwhile, Mick O'Halloran was going around convincing everyone to buy raffle tickets, to be drawn later. Mick had also organised a wonderful 7RAR cake for sweets and Peter called on Don Cruden, Spunky Fieldhouse and Val O'Brien to cut the cake, delicious. Peter then called on Graham Edwards to thank our hosts for accommodating us, and their assistance in making our event a memorable day here in Mandurah. Mick then drew the raffle and announced all the lucky winners of cash prizes. Peter then called on Geoff Murray to make a special presentation to Don Cruden, for the many decades of service to the 7RAR Association of WA and to the National Association. Without Don's efforts there would not have been a WA Association and we thank you sincerely Don.

After a few more drinks, we ended what was a fantastic lunch to celebrate our battalion's history.

Some photos to follow:





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Group in front of the Memorial Wall



Val O'Brien and Spunky Fieldhouse cutting the cake



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Graham "Pud" Ross MC



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Geoff Murray presenting the plaque to Don Cruden

AWARDS

In the last August newsletter, I made mention of the State President's Commendation awarded to Allan West. However there has been another award, this one an RSL 50 Year Certificate awarded to Mick O'Halloran for 50 years' service as a member of the RSL, well done Mick.

2025 7RAR PIGS SWILL

About 50 PIGS and their ladies gathered on November 26th at The Shoe for our annual PIGS SWILL, from about 1130 hrs for a few drinks before our formalities, which were:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Prayer of Remembrance | Steve Chamarette |
| Honour Roll 1 st Tour | Peter "Pepe" Hedrick |
| Honour Roll 2 nd Tour | Les Kail |
| Honour Roll Afghanistan | Garth Kennan |
| The Ode (two verses) | Geoff Murray |
| Grace | Peter Vlachou |



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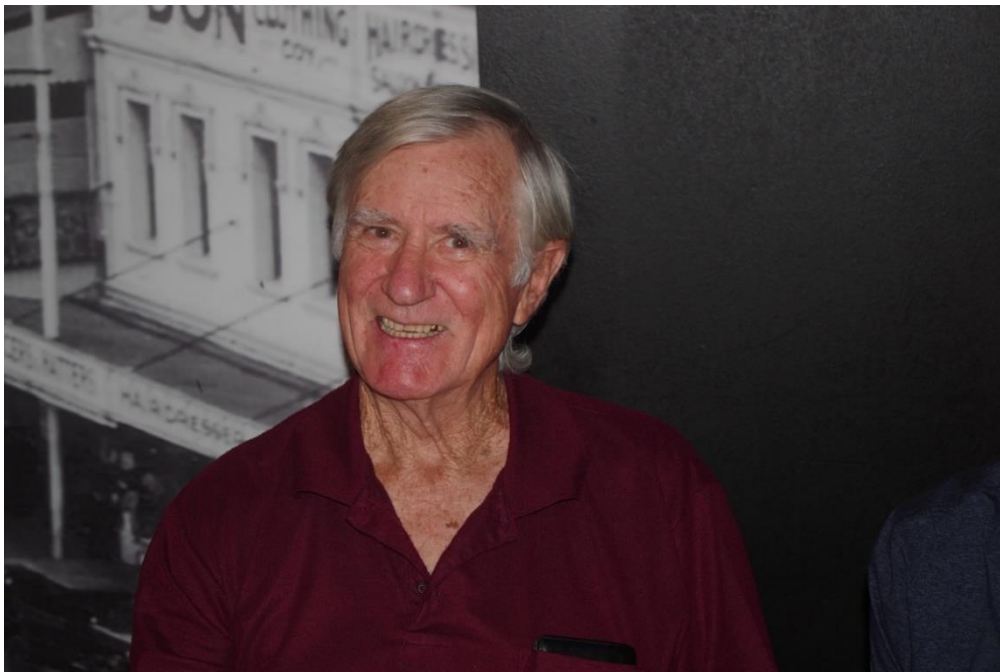


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These were then followed by a delicious lunch of Rack of Lamb, Apple Pie and Cream, Tea and Coffee. After lunch, Betty West then drew her famous raffle, which she and Allan have been conducting for many years, after which Betty announced that it was her last raffle, thanks Betty for all your efforts over many years, greatly appreciated. Straight away Lisa Fieldhouse volunteered to carry on Betty's raffle so we should be ok for a while, thanks Lisa. Also, many thanks to Chris and Jan Wark for their attendance at the luncheon, having to travel by TransWA Bus system Bunbury to Perth and return, great effort. Gordon "Dicko" Dickson brought along a booklet his daughter had produced showing all of the five hundred odd Australian soldiers killed in Vietnam, including photos, maps, weapons, photos and descriptions of all the KIA's including statistics of the breakdown between the Services, breakdown by state and country, numbers for each battle and operation and a breakdown by Service Unit. The booklet is 40 odd pages long and if you want a copy, contact Dicko on 0413 943 729, at \$20 per copy.

Great lunch as usual and thanks to Charlie Matheson who makes sure the Shoe is booked for all our lunches throughout the year, well done Charlie. Nicole Anderton sadly had to miss this year's PIG SWILL as she was working at sea so she sent her best regards to everyone and made a donation to the association, thanks Nicole for a wonderful gesture and we hope to see you next year.

Some random photos to follow:





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Our resident photographer John Davies



Gordon "Dicko" Dickson





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Charlie Matheson



Les Kail

BUSSELTON REUNION by Gordon Dickson

The reunion kicked off with a meet and greet at the Shelter brewery and we couldn't have picked a better evening than we did. The view from the mezzanine floor was amazing, apart from a view of the famous jetty we had a backdrop of a very large cruise ship which departed into the horizon. Day two consisted of a service at Rotary Park adjacent to the RSL club. Again, perfect weather conditions. We cannot thank the RSL enough for their assistance, providing chairs, flag attendee, microphone, lectern and appropriate music. Opening address was given by Phil Clark followed by the reading of the honour roll of both tours and Afghanistan. This task was carried out by Greig Ball and Gary Seton. Prayer of remembrance was conducted by Steve Chamarette and the ode was read out by Ian McNee. Morning tea was hosted by Busselton RSL and special thanks to Steve Mott the outgoing president who coincidentally was attached to 5/7 as a forward observer. Steve is about to embark into a new role on the board of RSLWA. The current vice president Jack Evans was also willing to bend over backwards for our function. We presented the club with a 7RAR flag and a booklet of all KIA in Vietnam for their support. Day three was the final function and conclusion of the reunion. This was held at the Esplanade Hotel in Busselton and again we were treated like royalty where nothing was too much trouble. Phil Clark was the MC and toasted the Battalion. Phil also enlightened us with a history lesson on



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Breaker Morant. A quiz night was held with prizes donated by Steve Chamarette and Peter Vlachou.

Many thanks to Joan O'Halloran for passing the hat around and gathering enough cash to present Dianne Dickson with a beautiful bouquet of flowers in appreciation for all of our catering needs. Special thanks to Lainie Dickson for producing all programs and information bags, which included, pens, note pads, shopping lists, lollies, bumper stickers and fridge magnets. We also had some attendees from the first tour who were very complimentary of the reunion and went as far as saying it's the best they had been to. All in all it was a great get-together which was well supported. The question was asked if we should have another reunion in two years' time and a lot of hands went up but not one to organise. I'm sure someone will get the urge and come forward.

I would like to personally thank Phil Clark and my wife Dianne for their roles in keeping this reunion afloat, great effort guys.

Some photos to follow:





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Dicko with some of the attendees



Steve Chamarette reading the Prayer of Remembrance

SCHAPER FAMILY DONATION

Following Melvin “Curly” Schaper’s funeral, Curly’s family have made a wonderful donation to the Association, expressing their appreciation for assistance at his recent funeral. Thanks very much to the Schaper family and please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.



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Scene from "Curly" Schaper's funeral

DIGGERS TURNING SEVENTY by Teresa and Gary Williams

Gary Williams was discussing with some of the other Veterans from Charlie Company 9 Platoon 2nd Tour, that as they all turned 77 this year, we might do something to celebrate the occasion on the Seventh day of the Seventh month. Those that were available were Gary and Teresa Williams, Dale and Deb Marshall, Les Kail, Ted and Sharron Von Paleske and Mick and Joan O'Halloran.

It was decided to book an overnight stay at the Crown and then have dinner, this was all organised and we all booked in.

Unbeknownst to the others, Les Kail had been in contact with some of the 9 Platoon members in the Eastern States to see if they could come over for it.

Luckily there was a couple that was able to make it. Les had told Teresa and they managed to keep it a secret until the night in question.

Dennis and his wife Helen Mathews were able to come over. They arrived a couple of days before the event and stayed with Les.

We all met up and the guys were very surprised when Dennis and his wife walked in. Everyone enjoyed the catch up and had a great time. We met again for breakfast the next morning. Les then took Dennis and Helen back to his place where he had organised a small tour to Kalgoorlie and the Golden Loop for them to see.



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After they returned from this trip, we all met again for lunch at The Cut Tavern in Mandurah. Another great time was had by all.

We were all very grateful to Les for organising for Dennis and Helen to come over for this occasion and very grateful that they made the effort.

some photos from the catch up to follow:



L to R: Dennis Mathews, Les Kail, Dale Marshall, Gary Williams, Mick O'Halloran & Ted Von Paleske



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The Diggers turning 77 with wives.



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NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

With 7RAR relinking with 5RAR in the Northern Territory in late 2024 we Veterans in South Australia who had for over a decade had the privilege of the 7RAR catafalque party participation at our Suoi Chau Pha services had to think seriously about how we could continue our annual Suoi Chau Pha commemorative service on the 6th of August 2025. Bearing in mind the importance of the service because two of our members were in that four hour battle which virtually decimated the lead section. A chance comment by the secretary at the Battalion dinner in September 2024 led to a continuing connection with a 7RAR officer (Capt Darrian Williams) who was transferring to 10/27 RSAR in Adelaide.

Long story short, he became the link who eventually led to our connection with Lt Col Darrin Tyson of 10/27, (ex 7RAR and third generation Australian army ... his father being 'Tich' Tyson a Vietnam Veteran) ... from then on the progress towards our 2025 SCP service was very smooth. Cpl Brad Whitehorn, the guard commander, kept us well informed prior to the service regarding the Catafalque Party and the flag marshalls.

Before the Service commenced Tony Carr spoke with members of the Catafalque Party and the Bugler



**The performance of the Catafalque party was perfect ...
... as was that of the Bugler who had travelled from the Barossa Valley.
Lt Col Darrin Tyson and RSM Mark Broadbent were also present**

Kerry Eichner welcomed everyone and the Catafalque Party mounted the Memorial



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**Keith Harrison,
ex 10/27 RSAR,
read the opening prayer.**

**Keith was most helpful in
supplying the lecturn,
mike and
PA sytem, flags etc**



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followed by Tony Carr describing the 4 hour battle and all the events that followed.



Kerry Eichner then read the 7RAR first tour Honour Roll

“Doc” Russell read Barry Leesue’s account of the attack on the enemy bunker system by Alpha Company



and Geoff Chandler read the second tour Honour Roll.



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The Afghanistan Action Report was read by Scott Tampalini



followed by Kerry Eichner laying a wreath for our fallen.



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Lt Col. Darrin Tyson (ex 7RAR) and RSM Mark Broadbent



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e Catafalque Party and the Bugler after the Service



**SPR Jesse Bull, PTE Jack Caven, SPR Sam Cerbito, SPR Brent Easson,
MUSN Emily Hewitt, SPR Craig Rogers, CPL Brad Whitehorn, PTE Joshua Woods**



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58th Anniversary of Suoi Chau Pha

On this day we commemorate not only the Battle of Suoi Chau Pha, but also every battle, contact and incident during which the mettle of the 7RAR soldiers has been tested ... a test which has never been failed.

And on this day we also remember with deep respect those who returned to Australia and eventually lost their battle with life.



Commemorative Service organised by
7 RAR Veterans SA
6 August 2025





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Commemorative Service

Welcome - **Kerry Eichner**

Mounting of the 10/27 RSAR Catafalque Party

Prayer - **Keith Harrison ex 10/27 RSAR**

The Suoi Chau Pha Battle - **Tony Carr**
Honour Roll - 1st Tour Vietnam - **Kerry Eichner**

2nd Tour Action Report - 'Doc' **Russell**
Honour Roll - 2nd Tour Vietnam - **Geoff Chandler**

Dedication speech to **Matthew Hopkins**
- **Scott Tampalini**

Laying of Wreaths - **Kerry Eichner**
President, 7RAR Veterans Sth Aust

Reciting of the Ode - **Chris Ashenden**

They shall not grow old,
as we that are left grow old
age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning
We will remember them.
LEST WE FORGET

Response (ALL) "Lest we forget"

Last Post - Bugler - **MUSN Emily Hewitt**

One minute silence

Reveille/Rouse - Bugler - **MUSN Emily Hewitt**

National Anthem

10/27 RSAR Catafalque Party demounts

Acknowledgements and Farewell - **Kerry Eichner**

and then ... time for reflections at the
Vietnam Veterans Memorial

and then ... move to

the British Hotel, 58 Finnis St., North Adelaide
for drinks and lunch



Our very grateful thanks to the 10th/27th Battalion, The Royal South Australia Regiment for providing the Catafalque Party.
Commemorative Service organised by the 7 RAR Veterans SA.

lest we forget



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7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment HONOUR ROLL

Vietnam 1967 - 68

10 Nov 1967 PTE Norman George ALLEN aged 22
6 Aug 1967 CPL Donald Raymond AYLETT aged 22
5 Feb 1968 PTE Marvin Walter (Mick) AYRES aged 23
29 Jan 1968 PTE Alec Ernest James BELL aged 21
6 Aug 1967 PTE Edward Francis BROPHY aged 22
26 June 1967 PTE James George COX aged 22
27 Nov 1967 PTE Bryan Thomas CULLEN aged 20
10 Nov 1967 PTE Barry Edmond FALLON aged 31
6 Aug 1967 PTE Alfred Barleif HARSTAD aged 21
27 Nov 1967 PTE Norman Victor HAWKER aged 22
6 Aug 1967 CPL James Frances HAYES aged 27
2 Feb 1968 LCPL Ross Charles McMILLAN aged 22
6 Aug 1967 PTE David Geoffrey MILFORD aged 22
6 Aug 1967 PTE John Martin O'CONNOR aged 25
2 Feb 1968 PTE Robert Graham PERRIN aged 22
27 Jan 1968 PTE Paul Zygmund TRZECINSKI aged 21

Vietnam 1970 - 71

16 June 1970 PTE Gary Owen CASHION aged 19
21 May 1970 PTE Noel Valintine CROUCH aged 22
27 Oct 1970 LT Rex William DAVIES aged 25
6 June 1970 PTE Stephen Warwick DICKSON aged 21
15 Jan 1971 PTE Milton Raymond DUFTY aged 21
16 Jan 1971 LCPL Eric HALKYARD aged 27
22 April 1970 PTE Robert Edward HUGHES aged 19
21 April 1970 PTE Graham Robert KAVANAGH aged 21
6 June 1970 PTE Stanley George LARSSON aged 23
30 Dec 1970 PTE Allan LLOYD aged 20
6 June 1970 PTE Paul John NAVARRE aged 21
6 Feb 1971 PTE Raymond Brian PATTEN aged 20
26 April 1970 LT Robin Christiaan POTHOF aged 21
27 Aug 1970 LCPL Neil Thomas RICHARDSON aged 23
3 April 1970 PTE Ronald Keith SMITH aged 19
30 April 1970 PTE Henry Jan STANCZYK aged 21
1 Feb 1971 PTE Alan TALBOT aged 21

Afghanistan

16 Mar 2009 CPL Mathew HOPKINS aged 21

LEST WE FORGET



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Later twenty one who attended the Service, including members of the Catafalque Party, enjoyed drinks and a meal and good conversation at the British Hotel in North Adelaide.

Lt Colonel Darrin Tyson has since advised that a Catafalque Party from 10/27 Battalion will attend our SCP Service in 2026 😊

Our September and October lunches were well attended.

Unfortunately due to a camera issue there are no photos 😞



Remembrance Day 2025

Bob Whinnen attended the Remembrance Day service at Robe where he laid a wreath commemorating the sacrifice of his paternal grandmothers two brothers in World War One

They were the Wilson brothers of Robe Clifton Ross Wilson 50th Battalion AIF, killed in action Mouquet farm 1916, aged 23 years and Colin Roy Wilson 48th Battalion AIF, died of wounds, aged 25 years

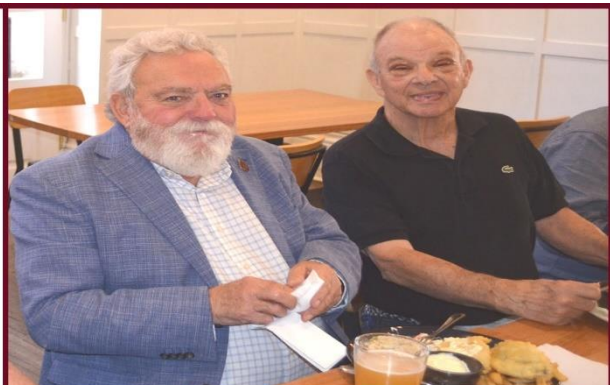
LEST WE FORGET

November lunch

Camera probs fixed as can be seen below



Geoff Chandler and Michael Grech



Bob Whinnen and Tony Carr



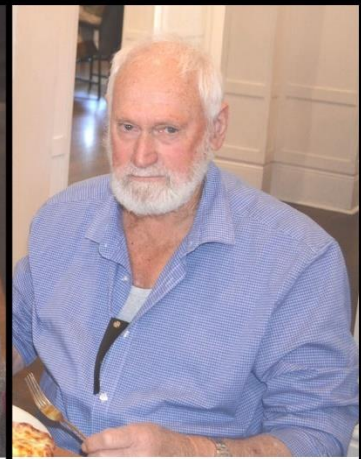
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Chris Ashenden and Leonie Lloyd



Bob Lloyd



Tony Carr and Barry Leesue



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MERCHANDISE



In late August we ordered 20 pens inscribed "7RAR Veterans Sth Aust" to be sold to members at \$5 each
All 20 sold within 18 hours of advising members by email
– orders have continued to be received and our second order, with refills, from our supplier is 75% sold ... again before delivery 😊
... and so we are ordering even more.
... and now we are into the festive season, with a new year around the corner
... and so ...



... stay safe ... 'Doc' ... secretary, 7RAR Veterans SA 🤠



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Pigs in Paradise

What to do if you live in or are visiting Brisbane



Monthly Rifleman's Lunch

First Friday of every month from 11.30am at the Mooloolaba Surf Club.

Lunch is open to all serving or ex-Infantry soldiers of all eras. \$15 with a choice of steak or fish. No booking needed



RAR BRISBANE LUNCH

1st Thursday of every month (under Central Railway Station) From 11.30am No RSVP needed, SIMPLY TURN UP



7RAR Lunch Last Friday of every month at Grand Central



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Christmas Lunch at the Sofitel



LtoR Leigh Christie, Vicki Christie, Mick King, Gordon Tredrea, Lyn Tredrea, Clare Nolan, Joan Gillett and self

Between sickness, old age, medical appointments and holidays we were lucky to get some of us together for the last lunch of the year. An enjoyable lunch with very long time friends

Kev Gillett

Brisbane



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Some History,y



In Phuoc Tuoy Province Vietnam during 7 RAR operations
Sep 1967. Celebrating the Battalion's third Birthday :
CO 7 RAR LTCOL Eric Smith, ~~Senior Instr GCS Portsea~~
2IC MAJ David Drabsch and OC Support Coy MAJ Ken Bladen



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The Officers in 1967



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Pictured upper right are Tracker dogs Tiber (front) and Justin (rear) wait to carry out helicopter winching training with their handlers and soldiers from 7RAR in Nui Dat, 1967. Tiber shown with his handler Lance Corporal Norm Cameron of 7RAR during Operation Paddington, July 1967. Tiber was later assigned to 1RAR and handler Private Bryan Meehan (pictured lower right).

Tiber was retired in June 1970 and transferred to a new home with staff at the Australian Embassy in Saigon. His new owners are Mr Gordon Selleck of Traralgon, Victoria and Mrs Roslyn Selleck formerly of Kerang, Victoria. His canine comrades were similarly re-housed with civilian owners in Saigon following their service. Tiber has his Vietnam campaign ribbons on his collar.

Thank you Tiber for a lifetime of service. Lest We Forget. 🐾



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And more current news

The Sydney Push at the TPI Christmas Party

