The Scheyvillian

O.T.U. National Newsletter No. 3, 2002

Website: *www.otu.asn.au* E-mail: *info@otu.asn.au*

Bumper Edition!

Banner and Memorial Board Presentation.

See story page 5.

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DIARY OF EVENTS

Date 2002	Chapter	Event	Venue	Contact details
2-Aug	TAS	Gathering	Corus Hotel, Hobart 1700 hrs	dennis.townsend@treasury.tas.gov.au
8-Aug	QLD	Monthly lunch	Friday's, Riverside Centre	owilliamson@hatch.com.au
11-Aug	NSW	Church service and 1/72 reunion	St Matthews Anglican Church, Windsor	Greg Todd / Stan (Lee) Beaman
17-Aug	ALL	Vietnam Veterans Day		Refer local chapter.
22-Aug	NSW	Quarterly lunch	Concord Golf Club	greg.todd@another.com
30-Aug	SA	Friday drinks	Sundowner, Keswick Barracks Officers Mess	garyvial@ctmc.com.au
30-Aug	VIC	Friday drinks	Bell's Hotel Sth Melbourne	
Aug -TBA	QLD	Paragraph get together (part chapter!!)	Sunshine Coast	owilliamson@hatch.com.au
6-Sep	TAS	Gathering	Corus Hotel, Hobart 1700 hrs	dennis.townsend@treasury.tas.gov.au
12-Sep	QLD	Monthly lunch	Friday's, Riverside Centre	owilliamson@hatch.com.au
22-Sep	SA	Day in the bush!!	TBA	
27-Sep	SA	Friday drinks	Sundowner, Keswick Barracks Officers Mess	garyvial@ctmc.com.au
27-Sep	VIC	Friday drinks	Bell's Hotel Sth Melbourne	
4-Oct	TAS	Gathering	Corus Hotel, Hobart 1700 hrs	dennis.townsend@treasury.tas.gov.au
10-Oct	QLD	Monthly lunch	Friday's, Riverside Centre	owilliamson@hatch.com.au
19-Oct	WA	Formal dinner	Leeuwin Barracks Officers Mess	
25-Oct	SA	Friday drinks	Sundowner, Keswick Barracks Officers Mess	garyvial@ctmc.com.au
25-Oct	VIC	Friday drinks	Bell's Hotel Sth Melbourne	
8-Nov	VIC	Remembrance Day Dinner	William Anglis College	Terry Walsh
14-Nov	QLD	Monthly lunch	Friday's, Riverside Centre	owilliamson@hatch.com.au
21-Nov	NSW	Quarterly lunch	Vic Barracks Officers Mess	greg.todd@another.com
24-Nov	SA	Month (and a Day) Before Xmas lunch	d'Arrys Verandah, McLaren Vale	garyvial@ctmc.com.au
29-Nov	VIC	Friday drinks	Bell's Hotel Sth Melbourne	
12-Dec	QLD	Monthly lunch	Friday's, Riverside Centre	owilliamson@hatch.com.au
Other				**Ring Your State Committee**

About this edition of the *Scheyvillian*

This edition is obviously quite special. Firstly we have incorporated colour for the first time and, secondly, it is large in the number of printed pages – 60 pages qualifying it for the description of "bumper edition".

Current National Chairman Tony Sonneveld is very firm in his view that the OTU Association needs further membership growth. To enhance the prospects of increasing the membership, a vibrant, attractive and informative *Scheyvillian* newsletter is a prerequisite.

The size of this edition is a one-off occurrence and is not intended to become the norm. However, the use of colour is an issue that warrants further discussion among the members.

The main point in favour of colour is the increased attractiveness of the newsletter. Points against are mainly centred on cost. This edition has cost an extra $300 just to have colour for the front and back covers. For now, Tony Sonneveld has volunteered to pick up the additional cost (and more) with the Termimesh advertisement on the back cover.

Full colour documents finish as significantly larger PDF files and hence are slower to download from the internet. So until we all have cable connections that might create quite an inconvenience.

Your input is welcome.

Chairman's Chirpings

Tony Sonneveld
National Chairman

The OTU Association has published 32 printed newsletters over 12 years since Wayne Banks & I initiated the concept in 1991. A total of 904 pages of history has been recorded.

Alan Storen's aim is to complete 4 magazines this year which should then total 984 pages which will represent slightly less than an average of 3 newsletters per year or 82 pages of content each year. (refer to the schedule).

PAST SCHEYVILLIAN NEWSLETTERS

	Pages 1st Edition	Pages 2nd Edition	Pages 3rd Edition	Pages 4th Edition	Pages Year	Progressive Editions	Progressive Pages
1991	16	24	-	-	40	2	40
1992	24	24	32	24	104	6	144
1993	24	24	28	28	104	10	248
1994	24	24	32	-	80	13	328
1995	28	28	-	-	56	15	384
1996	24	32	-	-	56	17	440
1997	28	28	28	-	84	20	524
1998	28	28	-	-	56	22	580
1999	28	28	28	-	84	25	664
2000	36	28	-	-	64	27	728
2001	36	32	32	-	100	30	828
2002	36	40			76	32	904

as at 20/5/02

The last two issues have been fantastic and Alan Storen is to be congratulated for his efforts and let us not forget Kevin Chesson of Austed Publishing who has been collating, typesetting and publishing the newsletter over the past 12 years.

CLASS PHOTOS

8 Class photos have been reprinted in our journals, 1/66, 2/66, 3/66, 4/66, 1/67, 2/67, 3/68 and 1/70. In fact 2/66 have been published twice in 1994 & 2002. We should endeavour to have the remaining 26 classes reproduced for posterity and to reflect on our youth. Some of the earlier intakes may not have had a group or class photos. Some intakes were photographed as a total group around graduation time and other intakes were photographed on arrival as classes for identification purposes i.e. jungle greens, short back and sides with prisoner like name plates thrust out from the chest.

I truly believe that the *Scheyvillian* newsletter is our main conduit to members and that it's the only contact many country members get. Four newsletters each year will be seen as value for money and help sustain and grow our financial membership. If we can fill 40 pages or more of relevant content along with photos old and new the historical chronicle will continue to foster the SHARED EXPERIENCE.

Sadly we have to report the passing of John Gorton and 3 more graduates:- Brian "Turrets" Sullivan MC MID 1/66
Peter Lee 1/70
John Lawson 1/72

We are still trying to locate the family of Ian George Mathers 1/70 who was one of the three Aussies killed in a VC contact in Long Khanh on 7th June 1971.

The various articles included in this issue are truly impressive, if not controversial:

- Kevin Chesson – Visit to Vietnam
- Peter Blackwood 4/69 – Oxfam trail walker
- Paul Cotter 1/72 – Kokoda Trail
- Malcolm Brown 3/69 – What they didn't teach us.
- Ron Llewellyn 4/71 – Sula Solo Sailing
- Pam Lofthouse – Heritage Conservation.
  – Reunion Lunch
- Windsor Courier – Scheyville Vets Venture Back.

Malcolm Brown 3/69, a senior journalist with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, has contributed 18 articles to the *Scheyvillian* newsletter over the past 10 years as well as published several books in his own right:

2/92 How the Lizard has pulled through – The OTU Aviation Story
3/92 Disruptive Patterns – Blackhawks and Ladies
3/92 Gulf Tour
2/93 Overall
3/93 A Full Cellar – A Dip in the Surf and a Dose of Soldering – Clisdell Brothers
4/93 More than Nostalgia – (The National Reunion)
2/94 The OTU Men from the Back of Bourke
3/94 The Commemoration
2/95 Lt Col. Alan Brimelow
1/97 Still Life
2/98 A Second Scheyvillian State Premier
2/98 Profile – Marcus Blackmore
1/99 Visions of Vietnam
1/99 Mean, Lean Killing Machines
3/99 AMF's Peacekeeping Role
1/00 A 30 Year Advance in Weaponry
2/00 Our Army of Reserves is about to get its marching orders SMH
1/01 Scheyville, Termites and the Olympics

Malcolm is renowned for his no-nonsense reporting on the Lindy Chamberlain trial and hearings, building industry inquiries/commissions, visits to war zones and general commentary on Australian defence issues over the past 20 years.

Malcolm is married to Inge, a German immigrant who actually lived at Scheyville when it was a migrant camp, they have 3 young adult children, Stewart, Grace and Douglas. He was very reluctant to join the OTU Association in 1990 but I finally persuaded him. In fact, he was NSW Chapter Chairman in 1993.

In 1983 when the NSW Government elected to place 2500 patients out to live in community hostels (one third of the people in psychiatric hospitals in NSW) Malcolm wrote a two part expose of the pitfalls of this action by telling the story of his brother:- "The demon that dwelled within my brother Owen" which was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The *Scheyvillian* Newsletter has been like a good news journal reflecting the positive aspects of Scheyville, military training/service and the success of many graduates since leaving the army. Not everybody had such wonderful experiences as I have come to learn about what happened to my closest friend from Scheyville and now business colleague, Wayne Banks, the former editor of our newsletter.

Having regard to the contribution made by Malcolm to our Association through his sustained support of the Newsletters, I believe he has earned the right to tell his story. His views are contrary to the beliefs held by other OTU graduates that served at 3TB.

Malcolm has penned "The Downside of the Scheyville Experience", or "What Scheyville didn't train us for", which is being published with Wayne's approval. As I have instigated this article any concerns or criticism of its content should be directed at me. Some might view the article as contentious and unnecessary, already several long serving, now retired, senior army officers have expressed dismay that it has been written, let alone published. We are not inviting a deluge of hard luck stories, but we would welcome letters to the editor expressing views on the subject.

WEB SITE
Each issue of the newsletter will now be posted on the website on a rolling basis with 4 latest issues always current. i.e. new one on – oldest one drops off. There is insufficient storage capacity to have more than 4 issues. Gary Vial is doing a great job maintaining the site.

We need to consider the issue of colour copies of the newsletter but budget constraints will limit expenditure until membership increases to 700 and advertising revenue reaches $2,000, i.e. 10 advertorials or ads per issue.

We received commission from Alan Cocker 1/68 for 2 OTU rings purchased from Commemorative Rings Australia Pty Ltd. I happen to be the proud owner of an OTU ring which has ended my 10 years search for a signet ring.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Renewal notices were not sent out in December 2001, however 35 renewals dribbled in between February and May 2002. 305 renewals have been received throughout June. Current financial members is now 340, whilst satisfactory, it is a long way short of the budget target of 625. Donations to Youth Leadership Training are averaging $11.60 per person with every subscription renewal – Fantastic!

EFTPOS CREDIT CARD TRANSACTIONS
100 members have opted to pay by credit card. Be advised this Eftpos transaction will be recorded on your monthly statement as TERMI-MESH Sydney Pty Ltd. It is $5.00 per transaction cheaper to use an existing facility as opposed to establishing a dedicated system. Paul Meldrum can confirm that the moment the funds are cleared through Bank West a desktop transfer into the OTU Association ANZ account is effected.

BUDGET, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT
The July 2001 – March 2002 Accounts have been audited by Roger Donnelly. When bank statements and other documents are made available, Paul Meldrum will consolidate results to 30th June for reporting in the next issue. The draft budget cannot be ratified until this happens, therefore a decision of the fourth *Scheyvillian* in 2002 is still pending.

Don't bother to send amendments to the membership directory unless you are financial or a cheque is attached, because it won't happen!

Any graduate who receives a copy of this 60 page bumper edition without being a financial member is taking $10.00 away from funding of Youth Leadership Training & Development.

If it is your intention not to maintain financial membership, then at least send a $10.00 contribution to production, this

way Alan Storen can achieve his aim of 4 newsletters per year.

You might find my comments harsh, but I do not apologise because I have spent 170 hours on OTU matters since February to maximise benefits to members. 170 hours @ $50.00 per hour represents an $8,500 donation to the Association which is significant for my small business. Maybe some larger businesses might like to match the effort with a donation.

FUTURE EVENTS
Greg Todd has advised the display board, books etc. will be presented to St Matthews Anglican Church at the 10.00 am service on Sunday 11th August 2002.

Stan (Lee) Beaman 1/72 plans to hold a class reunion in Windsor that weekend. Hawkesbury Gazette has been notified and will send a photographer along to the church.

Paul Hardey of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is arranging a meeting on Wednesday 7th August at Scheyville to discuss the gates – sandstone walls with all the relevant parties. Pam Lofthouse's heritage conservation report suggests retention of the gates at Scheyville.

The NSW Chapter Fundraiser breakfast at Epping RSL on Tuesday 15th October has been cancelled due to a lack of volunteers to organise it. Concern has been raised about the effort needed to organise a successful Annual Dinner with 80 attendees generating a small surplus of $121.00, compared to the Victorian Chapter Annual Dinner raising several thousand dollars. In NSW it was not helped by 4 people not turning up or paying after the RSVP, particularly considering 3 other couples were turned away due to a restriction on numbers in the Mess.

Having organised at least 10 previous Annual Dinners, I now find myself totally absorbed in National matters, consequently I have resigned as the defacto Secretary / Treasurer of NSW Chapter.

Volunteers are sought to assist Greg Todd with the running of the NSW Chapter.

RE-UNION OCTOBER 2003 OR OCTOBER 2004
The National Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month and recently Paul Cotter attended as an observer. The team is making enquiries about facilities and services in Windsor with plans in motion suggesting 2003 is achievable. We shall keep you advised.

Hope you enjoy this BUMPER EDITION!

From the Editor's Desk

This is edition 3 for the year and the biggest so far but do keep the articles coming, especially personal reflections of the life at Scheyville, or service in the Army. Do you have any comments on articles from this or other editions – please email.

Do you have a wife or partner (or other family members) that knew you at OTU and could put pen to paper re their thoughts, reflections etc on Scheyville or the Army experience. It does not have to be a long article and a photo or two would be fantastic. We have had some great articles in the past and I am sure there are many more out there that members would love to read.

If you have a reunion, formal or informal, then a quick note or email would be great. If you attend a function, either State Chapter or local (I think that the name paragraph has been reserved for these) then please send me brief notes, names and a photo (a print or a jpg scan will be OK).

Advertising / Inserts. The association has been trying to promote youth leadership and you may have seen the articles from these young people attending Lord Somers Camp and other activities in the past several *Scheyvillians* as they reflect back on their experiences and the benefits gained. To financially support this activity you are asked to make a donation in addition to your annual membership to the association however more monies can be made available for this activity if you (or your company or employer) can either place an advertisement in the *Scheyvillian* (quarter, half or full page) or consider placing an insert or flyer with the magazine before posting. Please email the editor or publisher to determine costs involved. Any support to offset the cost of the magazine would be appreciated.

Memorabilia. If you have any articles, photos, artefacts, etc that relates to Scheyville then the RMC archivist/historian, Ross Howarth, would love to hear from you. He has established a corner in the RMC museum to hold such material and at the moment it looks bare alongside the OCS, WRAAC and RMC sections. He can be contacted on (02)6265 9733 or FAX(02)6265 9052 and can arrange movement for any larger item through the Army system. If you have any material that can be reproduced in the *Scheyvillian* then please send it to me and I forward it to Ross when I have copied it for publication.

Officer Training Unit Graduates Present Banner and History Display Board to Scheyville National Park

On Tuesday the 30th April, the Officer Training Unit (OTU) Association presented a replica Unit Banner to Scheyville National Park, as well as a display board detailing the history of the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville. The OTU was based at Scheyville during the Vietnam War, and was set up to train National Service conscripts as Second Lieutenants for general service within the Army. A total of 1,871 Cadets graduated and 328 young officers went on to serve in Vietnam. Scheyville was one of three such training schools, with the (OCS) The Officer Cadet School (OCS) operating at Portsea in Victoria and the Royal Military College (RMC) Duntroon ACT.

Jonathan Sanders, the Area Manager, said that it was a great honour that the OTU Association had decided to make the presentation to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

"The Officer Training Course that the trainees completed here at Scheyville was one of the most intensive and gruelling courses of its kind, and at the end of it, many graduates were sent to Vietnam with a large amount of responsibility being placed on them in a very dangerous situation. The whole experience must have left a deep impression on the men who took part, and obviously Scheyville has a major significance for these men as a result. That they should take the trouble to provide information and mementoes of that experience for NPWS to present at Scheyville is an honour, and one that we will take seriously".

Above: Tony Sonneveld, Geoff Bennett and Peter Wotton being interviewed by Emma Whale of the Hawkesbury Gazette.

Right: Peter Wotton with the Memorial Board.

Cover: Tony Sonneveld and Jonathon Sanders with the Banner and Board.

The president of the OTU Association, Mr Tony Sonneveld, said that the Scheyville camp and the Hawkesbury area were a special place for OTU graduates. “When the classes graduated, a part of the ceremony was a special church service held in Windsor, and many graduates still feel an affinity with the general area as a result of their experiences here.”

“There is a memorial plaque at Scheyville to the OTU graduates, eight of whom where killed in Vietnam. The Battle of Long Tan, where OTU officers and conscripts fought a much greater number of North Vietnamese to a standstill, is still commemorated by an annual ceremony at Scheyville. Providing the display material to the National Park will help them to shed light on a little-known, but important period in Scheyville‘s history, which was an important element in Australia‘s war effort during the Vietnam War”.

The Sydney Regional Manager for NPWS, Jennifer Carter, said that the presentation was an important step in bringing the history of Scheyville to light.

“The Scheyville camp has had an incredibly important role in so many people‘s lives, from the Dreadnought Boys during the early years, and the many thousands of migrants who first started their lives in Australia here after the Second World War, to the many soldiers who trained here during World War 2, and the OTU officers during the Vietnam conflict. The history of Scheyville is also the history of all these different groups of people, and the National Parks & Wildlife Service is keen to ensure that the memories of these groups are honoured and respected in the way in which Scheyville is managed. The fact that the OTU Association have provided their own material to display to the public means the NPWS can let them tell their own story to visitors to the Park.”

For enquiries: call Jonathan Sanders, Area Manager Cumberland North on 4572 3100, or 0419 753787, or Tony Sonneveld OTU Association, on 9679 7999.

Scheyville vets venture back

An excerpt from the Hawkesbury Courier May 10, 2002

Hawkesbury's contribution to the Vietnam War was honoured on Tuesday, April 30 when a special presentation was conducted at Scheyville National Park.
The intimate ceremony acknowledged the importance of the Officer Training Unit (OTU), which trained National Service conscripts at Scheyville between 1965-1973 for general service as Army Second Lieutenants. One of three such training schools, OTU saw 1871 cadets graduate from the camp and 328 officers go on to serve in Vietnam.
The ceremony was conducted by OTU Association president Tony Sonneveld, who presented a replica unit banner and display board detailing the unit's history to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. As he handed the brightly coloured pennant to park area manager Jonathan Sanders, Mr Sonneveld said the Scheyville camp was a special place for OTU graduates. "It's a great place," Mr Sonneveld said "Many graduates still feel an affinity with the Hawkesbury as a result of their experiences here."

Mr Sonneveld, who was 23 when he came to Scheyville, said the six months he spent at the camp had been the most challenging of his life. "You wondered if you were going to make it through,"he said. "But I have to say it was the best thing I've ever done."
Mr Sonneveld said the new display would add to the memorial plaque already erected in memory of the fallen graduates. "The plaque that's there now is a memorial to the eight graduates who were killed in Vietnam," he said. "This new display will help shed light on a little-known piece of history which was an important element in Australia's effort during the Vietnam War."
Park area manager Jonathan Sanders said the presentation was an honour.
"Scheyville has a major significance to these men as a result of their experiences here. That they should take the trouble to provide information and mementos of that experience for NPWS to present at Scheyville is an honour we take seriously."

Old mates back in training at

Scheyville

When three ex-servicemen gather at Scheyville National Park, it's a chance to revisit experiences lived more than 30 years ago. Our Town's Emma Whale and Kylie Pitt are at the commemoration to honour the contribution of Scheyville's Officer Training Unit in the Vietnam War.

Ask any ex-soldier what kept them alive on the battlefield, and the answer is sure to be "my mates".

The same is true of the 21-week training undertaken at Scheyville's OTU by Peter Wotton, Geoff Bennett and Tony Sonneveld (pictured above).

Conscripted as National Service Army officers for the Vietnam War in 1969 and 1970, the trio was among 1871 cadets who graduated from the Scheyville unit between 1965 and 1973. Three decades later, on April 30 this year, as the three ex-officers present a special plaque to National Parks and Wildlife Services to mark the role OTU played during the war, it's clear the ties formed during that six-month period so long ago are lasting.

"We were only together for 21 weeks," Geoff says. "And 30-odd years later, we're still meeting up."
Peter says the only way any of them survived OTU was through their mates. "The only way to get through was to work with the other guys," he says. "You simply couldn't do it on your own. It was like the good guys were the cadets and the bad guys were the instructors. You couldn't let them break you."

Talking and laughing in the sunshine, it's hard to imagine them as the same boys who came to Scheyville 30 years ago, terrified of the ordeal which lay ahead.

"We had no idea what we were in for," Tony says. "I don't think any of us will forget our first night at the unit. We finally got there, and the sergeant-majors were screaming orders at us. They were almost abusive, and we'd never experienced anything like that before."

Peter says, "We ran everywhere for the first three months. The physical exertion was unbelievable – we were training 14-16 hours a day. It was especially tough because they usually took 12 months to train cadets, and they were churning us out in 21 weeks."

Tony says one OTU practice involved assigning each junior officer to a senior officer. "You had to call your senior 'father'," he recalls. "And for mistakes you made, your father paid the penalty."
He says the conscripts were watched constantly. "They were observing us the whole time. They had 62 staff assessing cadets for 42 officer qualities, so you were always being watched, even when you were eating. I remember I struggled with doing one thing under pressure – I couldn't assemble my rifle in the dark."

All three agree the six months at OTU were the most arduous of their lives. "It was about challenging the unknown," Geoff says. "And sometimes you did wonder if you were going to make it through."

"But with all that, it was the best thing that ever happened to me," Tony adds. "Before Scheyville, I was quiet and shy. Being there forced me to do things I didn't think I could do."

As the three stand around the memorial plaque dedicated to the eight cadets killed in Vietnam, they know the impact of Scheyville is lifelong.

"There's something about the ones that went through," Tony says. "Something in the way we walk, talk and think – even so many years later. There's something similar about us."

the DOWNSIDE of the Scheyville Experience

an article by Malcolm Brown

Reading Roger Donnelly's "The Scheyville Experience", and the accounts of the marvellous things that some of the lads did after they marched off the Scheyville parade ground fills some of us with a certain vicarious pride. We sent 328 graduates to Vietnam and produced 13 brigadiers. We have a string of Military Crosses and other awards to our credit, and as a group we have indeed provided what one of a former member of the directing staff, Brigadier Phil Davies, said was "a shot in the arm" for the Army. Vast numbers that did not continue in the Army used the military skills and disciplines in a variety of ways in their subsequent careers.

But 30 years after the last graduates marched out, with the subsequent military careers all but over, it might be an occasion to note that the Scheyville Experience was not an unqualified success. For most of the 1,871 who graduated, it was a case of finding themselves loaded with responsibility with no effective authority with which to address it.

Many had the commitment, flexibility and talent to handle the situation. For others, the experience outside what was in retrospect an exacting but wholesome Scheyville environment was devastating. Some did not make it, either being bounced out of postings, refused approval to sign on to make a career out of the military, and in some sad cases, put into a situation where they faced severe disciplinary action. Just how many Scheyville graduates ended up in that position, I do not know. But for a number, things got very, very rough.

Tony Sonneveld, our livewire national president, who has taken the job back from one of Scheyville's success stories, Lt Col Brian Cooper (3/69 Ret'd), has asked me to take back some of the writing role for the *Scheyvillian*. I had foisted the job south, to Brian's stamping ground in Victoria, on the grounds that I was putting too much of my own stamp on the publication. Not only does Tony want me to take the job on again, but also wants me to look at the downside, when a couple of our members actually found themselves in the deepest strife. One was Wayne Banks (1/70) who found himself in the most uncomfortable situation of being blasted from a firing bay by a grenade while a second grenade in the adjacent bay killed one of his soldiers. This happened at 3TB, Singleton, I was there at the time. I felt a dreadful sorrow for Wayne and a fury at the system that had allowed this to happen and had, in effect, allowed Wayne to walk into a trap. I was also acutely aware of the fact that there, but for the grace of God, went I. With Wayne's approval, I will try to give an account of those events, from my perspective.

In my own case I opted to do officer training purely as an expedient way of handling my personal situation. I did not want to do National Service at all. My family was in crisis, I had a mentally ill elder brother who, at age 26, had brought his parents to a point where they could no longer continue. I had tried to get out of National Service to assist but the call-up system, where there was so much controversy and evasion, was too rigid to provide for that. I was aiming for second-best, a posting within Australia, preferably New South Wales, where I could keep an eye on the family, ready to intervene at times of crisis and preparing a possible application for compassionate discharge. I did not want to be in Vietnam, or some other remote place where I could not attend to the family matters.

At 1RTB Wagga Wagga, my platoon commander told me to apply for OTU. "It's a lurk once you're through!" he said. "The difficult bit is getting through. One in three fail. But get through and you're on clover. I'm spending my time here doing a part-time university course." It was a cynical attitude, and even then I was asking: "What about the soldiers who are depending on you for leadership?" But other OTU graduates had the same attitude. I saw a chance to get what I thought was an undemanding job, and more importantly a home posting. In normal circumstances, I would not have taken the option, but there was a degree of desperation in all my thinking. I went before the selection board, talked my way through, and went to Scheyville.

I passed the course with some difficulty, winning the Commandant's Prize for "The Officer Cadet Most Determined to Graduate". I was chuffed at the time but did not fully appreciate that there was a bit of a joke about it, they were recognising a fellow some directing staff felt should not have been on that final parade. My parents went to the graduation. The next day I told them I had asked for and been granted a posting to 3TB. My parents then broke the news that my brother was dead.

He had been fatally burnt in a fire at the then Callan Park mental hospital in Sydney some six weeks before, dying at the Prince of Wales Hospital on November 7, and they had withheld the news till I finished my course.

I was posted to 3TB in January 1970, deciding to keep my private grief and the trauma and upheaval of family life to myself. A beaming executive officer sent me and two others, John Grattan and Bernie Gleeson (both 3/69), to platoons to "see how it works". How it "works"! At the platoon I was posted to, in an infantry training company, a Sgt Free (because of the severity of this country's defamation laws, I will use a name other than the real one) had all but excluded the platoon commander, an OTU graduate, from running the platoon. The three corporals were running circles around the platoon commander as well. The company commander was doing nothing to assist, and in fact planning to sack that platoon commander and one of his colleagues, by sending them back to a lower-status recruit training company. Duly dispatched, those two had adverse comments placed on their service records that ultimately cost them any chance of making a career out of the Army.

I asked some OTU graduates who had spent some time at 3TB what was going on. They said words to the effect it was hell on earth. The particular company I had been sent to for experience had, it seemed, a history of devouring second lieutenants. Those NCOs had seven or eight years in the Army, they had been to Vietnam, and at least some were prepared to exploit the huge advantage that gave them. No second lieutenant could bring disciplinary powers against an NCO. All he could do was to make a complaint, and then it depended entirely on the attitude of the senior officer what happened. There were rules and regulations, but as I quickly discovered most of these could be overridden by rank, and it came down to the attitude and outlook of the person in the senior position. The attitudes and outlooks were so varied it was virtually a lucky dip who you got as your boss.

There was at least an understandable basis for the refusal to allow second lieutenants to discipline NCOs. What NCO having been years in the Army and been to Vietnam, would want to be disciplined by a fellow years younger and only five minutes in uniform? Some NCOs appreciated that the platoon commander had a job to do and played ball. But others did not. Instead, they assessed the attitude of the OC towards the second lieutenant and worked out what they could get away with. They became ringleaders. In most cases, the senior officers and the NCOs were thick with each other, and nothing eventuated from any complaint. One platoon commander, finding himself totally exposed and unsupported, was on record as having burst into tears. The word I got from my peers in those early days was: "The only thing you can do is get tough. You have nothing else to fall back on. And if you are not tough, train yourself to be tough."

I was posted to a recruit training company to start my career. My predecessor there had been Rob Donkin (2/69), who had been BSM at OTU and was destined to leave 3TB quickly, join a battalion and, I believe, serve in Vietnam. He made a career out of the Army. It must be pointed out there were others like him. But I was hardly of his calibre, and right from the beginning I was in trouble. The first order I gave was one relayed from the company commander. I told the acting CSM that something had to be done. He said he would comply, he did not, a situation developed, the company commander was carpeted before the executive officer, and acting CSM said I had not passed on the order. The company commander carpeted me and referred to me as a "f…ing little shit!'" Welcome to real military life, and to what I referred to forever after as the "FLS Syndrome". It was said that earlier last century when second lieutenants were in service, that people of that rank were "the lowest animal that ever crawled across the face of the Earth". With the revival of the rank in more modern times, that attitude had come back as well.

As it turned out, recruit training was not too bad. With the odd exception, like the acting CSM, the NCOs and even the company commander were of a gentler breed than in infantry training. I spent six months there, and then was posted to infantry training, which was a promotion. The NCOs there were ready for me. The platoon sergeant, a Sgt Williams (not his real name), proclaimed that "the first mistake" I made, he would "front him to the company commander". A senior corporal, Davidson (again, I will use a name other than his own), appeared to be rubbing his hands in glee, having been taught by Free how to deal with second lieutenants, or at least those who were found to be flawed. The company commander rang and abused me before I even arrived. I did have my chance of getting out of it. I had apparently impressed the executive officer and was offered a posting to a regular battalion in Singapore, on the understanding I undertake to sign on for another two years, possibly getting to Vietnam. But taking into account my family situation, I decided to stay on at 3TB and finish my National Service in regulation time. It was probably a mistake. The Army did pay more attention to second lieutenants who showed some commitment. There was a disdain for time-servers, especially those who had been given commissioned rank.

Within weeks I was being taken apart by the NCOs. I tried a reasonable approach to them, saying: "Look, let's just get on with the job. You're focusing on me, but what about the 40 soldiers out there, who we have to train?" Their implicit response was: "We'll look after the training, but first we've got to get rid of you!" Then the company commander, who would have sacked me and sent me

back to recruits, was routinely transferred. I took the chance to tell the company 2IC about my troubles. He expressed astonishment that I had allowed it to happen. He told me to discipline them, and that if I came out "second-best" again, he would sack me himself. Deciding I had at least some support, I proceeded to charge Davidson with an offence. There was consternation. No second lieutenant was ever allowed to charge an NCO! Sgt Williams told Davidson: "We'll get you out of this". Another sergeant told me: "You proceed with that charge and you'll be charged yourself!"

The charge against Davidson was never processed. He was sent on a sergeant's course. I had some months of relative peace, under a benign company commander, Major Nesbitt, with cooperative NCOs, and relaxed a bit, even winning the battalion drill competition. Then Davidson, finishing his course and obliged to spend time before his posting as a sergeant, was reassigned to me. He realised I had dropped my guard and decided to play along with this "nicey nicey" bit, pretend to be a reformed character. I fell for it. Having at that stage no sergeant, I had other things to think about. What I did not appreciate was that by that stage Davidson had worked me out, in particular what I was and was not likely to do.

There had grown up on the ranges a dangerously uncontrolled system. There were few inspections, safety briefings consisting of a few mumbled remarks and the most important requirement that a platoon commander sign a piece of paper confirming he had been briefed, and virtually open slather. There were numerous "yippie shoots", blasting away to get rid of ammunition, grenade practices and other dangerous procedures carried out with nonchalant regard for safety requirements. Second lieutenants tended, as I did, to be lulled into a sense of complacency, seeing regular soldiers who had gone before them get away with all sorts of irregularities and assuming it was all right.

In early 1971, the ammunition WO said he would not accept back any opened box of ammunition, because he did not want to be bothered with the procedures involved if he did. He was going against regulations and was letting his decision be spread by word of mouth. I was conducting a practice and found a box had been opened and the ammunition could not be returned. Short of time, having too much to do, I agreed to the suggestion that they be blasted off. It was an inappropriate range to do it, and some ricochets went astray, sailing over the top of the wall, causing alarm and falling to earth I knew not where. I was pulled up. Davidson offered to drive me back to my then company commander, Major McCallum, so that I could report what had happened. As we drove, he revealed his colours, and indicated with malicious delight that he had set the whole thing up and willed it to happen. His unspoken message was: "See you in hell, you stupid four-eyed c…!"

I knew immediately that the ammunition WO, and the range control officer, would deny that there was any stipulation about opened ammunition boxes. I also knew that no other officer would ever admit to knowledge that it was happening or that he had given it tacit approval. I also knew that I dared not make a single complaint about Davidson. I was gone, for all your money. But Major Nesbitt saw from battalion headquarters that I was in trouble and prevailed on Major McCallum by phone not to take proceedings against me. He said I had not stuffed up before and that on this occasion I "just didn't think". McCallum accepted that, though he need not have. I was his lieutenant. I had let him down. He let me off with a token punishment.

I decided not to say a thing about Davidson. The way the system worked, I would have been worse off had I done so. Davidson, and so many others like him, ate, breathed and slept this power play. A complaint from me would have been part of his game. He would have beaten the complaint, as he had before, I would have been given further demerit points and put on notice that I was being watched to see whether Davidson got the drop on me again. For Davidson, that would have been the green light. In a way, I suppose, the Frees and the Davidsons were fulfilling an essential role. The things the Army did not want in a commander were weakness and stupidity. If a commander had such failings, it was better they came out in a training environment, when people were less likely to be killed.

With the advantage of what amounted to a second life, I plugged on. I was stuck, day after day and week after week, with Davidson. My guard was up but he did not try anything more. He was most successful in his designs when the senior officer himself was gunning for the platoon commander. In this case I had not received a thumbs-down. Davidson and I did not speak to each other. But rather than focus on him, I took a broader view. What had hit me like a bomb was that, in all truthfulness, and without the contribution of Davidson, I had been breaching rules like this from the beginning of my time at 3TB anyway, as had most other second lieutenants. Most of us had followed common practice, which was to wink at the formal requirements and take short-cuts. The last proper instruction we had been given on range safety had been at OTU. There were risky things being done day in and day out. I told Major McCallum that. He asked me to put it in a letter, which I did immediately, going into great detail, mentioning among other things irregularities in the way grenade practice were conducted. It was intended to be a total expose, not only as to what was happening but why. I had certainly stuffed up, but this, I thought, might be the good that came out of it. The letter went through the system, and the response was nil. The only word I got back was: "This FLS is trying to justify himself." And that was the end of that. The Army did not participate in "discussion", it

worked on the principles of formal responsibility and punishment. As far as the military was concerned, once a second lieutenant signed the piece of paper confirming that he had been briefed, he was on his own.

Davidson was eventually routinely transferred, as was Major McCallum. I smartened up my safety awareness. But there was no sense of corporate responsibility for safety, not in a place where virtually most regular soldiers were locked into an all-consuming power game. Safety fell between the stools. I became more and more convinced that there was going to be a tragedy, but nobody listened. I decided that safety was the only priority in running my platoon, everything else had to go. I gave up most of the principles of leadership and man-management that OTU had preached, reverting the "toughness" doctrine, with unfortunate results for some of my troops. The only way an officer could afford to be "nicey-nicey" was, (a) to know what you were doing and, (b) have sufficient authority for the likes of Davidson to be afraid of what he might do to them. There was now doubt, at least in my own mind, whether I ever knew what I was doing. But there was no doubt what authority I had, which was nil. Maybe the passage of time for any officer might have improved that situation, in that he acquired more experience and authority as a matter of course, but I was never to find out.

Wayne Banks was in another infantry training company. A dangerous practice had grown up there, where platoon commanders, instead of having one soldier and one corporal in bays on each side of him, firing grenades from a rifle, would have a soldier in with him as well, so the platoon commander was also acting as a supervising corporal. There were three soldiers instead of two firing grenades at one time. This was strictly contrary to rules, but it had been going for some time, practiced apparently by other platoon commanders in that company, and for obvious reasons it got through the range practice quicker. No senior officer ever went out to check what was happening. There was never any free flow of communication between platoon commanders and range control staff, or company staff.

An unrecognised problem had developed with the equipment. A lug, which was part of the mechanism, had the tendency to break, so that when the rifle was armed, ready to fire, the safety lever flew off prematurely and the grenade fuse was burning away on the end of the rifle. It happened to another platoon commander in that company and a supervising corporal got the grenade off the rifle and threw it over the barrier. But did the platoon commander report it? No. Because the culture of the place was such that nobody wanted to know what he had to say about anything. The fault in the equipment remained unnoted. Never had there been such a clear warning. In any other system, word would have got out and people would have been alerted. But not here! On the day in question, Wayne conducted his range practice, the same equipment failure occurred. This time the supervising corporal in the bay beside Wayne did not get the grenade off and the soldier in the bay with Wayne where he should not have been was struck by shrapnel and fatally wounded. That soldier's grenade fell off his rifle and exploded, the second blast hitting Wayne.

There followed an inquiry, disciplinary proceedings, and of course Wayne's name was on everyone's lips. Wayne recovered from his wounds, but I could see others watching unsympathetically, even with a degree of malice, from the sidelines. I showed one senior officer the letter I had written about range safety, and about the grenade practices. He raised his eyebrows but said nothing more. I got wind of machinations as to what would and would not be included in the final report of the Military Court of Inquiry. I approached the second lieutenant whose equipment had been the first to fail and asked why he had not reported it. He replied: "Well, if you're driving at 90 miles an hour and you come a cropper, its your lookout isn't it? It's no-one else's problem."

I finished my time and returned to civilian life disgusted by the hypocrisy and viciousness I had encountered. Wayne, having faced disciplinary proceedings, where he was formally reprimanded, also left the Army, in a regular way, but never to lose the anguish. "I would have stayed in but for that," he said. "But after that was on my papers, I realised I was going nowhere." Wayne went on to become a successful Perth-based businessman.

I returned to journalism. Years later I linked up with Nesbitt. I was having flashbacks, probably a form of post-traumatic stress. He told me that 3TB had been the "punishment battalion" for the Australian Army, the rest of the Army had not been as bad as that. He also told me that the full facts of the grenade tragedy had never seen the light of day. Nesbitt, sadly, died prematurely of cancer in 1987. Another company commander I linked with later, reading another soulful article I had written, about mental illness, sent me a bible with a private inscription commending me for my service as a second lieutenant. But I never felt I deserved it.

In 1990 I was asked by Tony Sonneveld to join the OTU Association to help with the journal. Few people could resist being bowled over by Tony's infectious enthusiasm. I agreed to help him. I found that Wayne had had the guts and manliness to become active in the association too. I suppose military service is like life, you get out of it what you put into it. I had accepted cynical advice in taking on an OTU course. As it turned out, if anything was a lurk, it was the OTU course itself, with its high quality of staff and trainees. After that, my experience of military service amounted to one huge kick in the face.

SHATTERED REALITIES

Making the government a safer place to work

Undoubtedly, one of the most immediate results of the tragic events of September 11 was the urgent need for heightened safety measures in government facilities. The shocking realization that even the American embodiment of military might and fortified strategic intelligence, the Pentagon, could fall victim to sudden destruction caused immediate awareness of the vulnerability of government buildings.

Architects and superintendents of these buildings immediately began a search for the most effective means of protecting both their tenants and their facilities.

Damage assessments performed following the attacks on the Oklahoma City federal building, the Kenyan and Tanzanian U.S embassies, and the World Trade Centre revealed that airborne broken glass was one of the largest contributors to injury and death among building tenants.

To help eliminate this risk in other government buildings, the government contracted Bekaert Specialty Films LLC (BSF) to install Armorcoat Safety & Security Film, inside some of its highest profile and potentially targeted buildings.

The Installation

After receiving the first government contract for the U.S Capital building, BSF worked in tandem with their qualified installer Mid-Atlantic Commercial Window Shield to schedule and coordinate the installation.

Mid-Atlantic had previously been contracted by the government on various installations – having installed Armorcoat at the J.Edgar Hoover Building (FBI Headquarters), the Department of Energy Headquarters and others. This new contract grew from a one building installation to 15. To add to the challenge, the entire installation needed to be performed after business hours to avoid disrupting the daily government business.

BSF mobilized its Armorcoat Rapid Response Team, a network of 65 expert installers from around the country. The contract was awarded on October 2, 2001, and by the end of the week, the entire team assembled in Washington DC to perform the installations. To provide the hundreds of thousands of square feet of film required, BSF'S San Diego facility halted manufacturing of all other films on its three production lines until the order was completed.

Security Detail

Each installer had to undergo a series of background and security checks, including fingerprinting, before being cleared to work. Upon approval, they were assigned a clearance pass to gain entry and to allow them to work inside the building. Escorts were provided where the team had access to high security areas. Two rooms in each building were used to manage the installation: a mapping room for group assignments and tracking of areas completed, a cutting and staging room to slice the film rolls into the sizes required and assemble for delivery to the installing groups. The teams were broken down into subgroups of 5 installers each, then used the window schedule to track which group were in each area, the windows that were being worked on,building sections that had already been completed, and windows that were awaiting installation.

The government employees were incredibly gracious and accommodating, going out of their way to provide the BSF team with extra equipment and other assistance in order to help the job run smoothly.

Prior to completion, BSF received word that more government contracts had been awarded, including four House of Representatives buildings, three Library of Congress buildings, the FDIC building and different areas on a number of other facilities – 15 buildings in total.

In 33 working days after receiving the first contract for the House of Representatives, BSF's Rapid Response Team completed the installation of Armorcoat on all 15 buildings.

Armorcoat films are available throughout Australia from Bekaert Specialty Films Australia Pty Ltd.

For more information call 1800 251 575 or email peter.wotton@bekaert.com

Vietnam Discovered

10 days on a budget

by Kevin Chesson

I'm not a Scheyvillian and I've never been in the Army. I was born in Perth in 1947 and was eligible for national service in the late 60s ... but my marble wasn't drawn.

My brother's was – Barry graduated from OTU in the class of 1/68. Frank LeFaucheur (1/71) was a high school classmate of mine; I met Wayne Banks (1/70) in 1974 and we and families have become close friends and business partners. Wayne and I have a shared interest in Austed Publishing and I am the person behind the scenes who liaises with Alan Storen (Editor) to put together the *Scheyvillian* newsletter 3 or 4 times per year. I've been working on the *Scheyvillian* since its inception ... not many of you know me, but I know a lot about you!!

I am a baby boomer and have lived through the times of the Vietnam War. It was always such a huge event, happening to the Americans and then us. The late 60s and early 70s were such fantastic times for young guys like me, but the contradiction of the war in Vietnam was always there ... like a thick tropical cloud casting a sombre shadow over our lives. I didn't serve but it is a part of my heritage. It's something I still talk to my sons about (and they're low 30s and high 20s). I was always supportive of the Australian involvement in Vietnam and still am, given the circumstances of the time, but now I wonder a lot about it. You can't change history. It happened. We were fighting to prevent the "domino" effect. We didn't want communism spreading further south. A line was drawn in the sand halfway up Vietnam and the line was defended. Many lives were lost in vast areas south of that line, all the way to Saigon and beyond, and many others were ruined.

Now in hindsight, it would seem that perhaps the writing was always on the wall. I wonder now what our political leaders thought were the real chances of an unpopular despot like Nguyen Van Thieu holding on to power in the south and thwarting the advances of Ho Chi Minh from the north and his Viet Cong supporters throughout the south. It is now legendary that Ho Chi Minh once boasted that his forces could lose 10 times the numbers of the southern forces and still win the war.

Anyway, whatever your point of view, now or then, about our involvement and the subsequent outcomes, the war concluded, Vietnam was reunited and communism has not spread. Saigon was overrun in 1975, 10 years after the Americans landed their first troops in Danang. Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi became the capital of the new Vietnam.

That's a quarter of a century ago! Such a long time but it seems so much closer. Suddenly for people like me Vietnam is being promoted as an attraction. It's accessible and it's cheap and it's got the prospect of modern day adventure.

I had the opportunity to get away from work for 2 weeks during May. I didn't want to do just an ordinary "tourist" thing. I looked at Russia and thought closely about China. But then my mind locked onto Vietnam.

My internet investigations revealed that there was a fascinating railway line connecting Saigon (still called that by most of the locals, contrary to the official name) and Hanoi. Apparently, the railway line has been there for ages (since the 1930s), just rarely in one piece. Firstly the Viet Minh sabotage and American bombing during WWII, then the Viet Minh again during the French War (late 40s early 50s), then the Americans and the Vietnamese again, during the "American War", kept blowing it up because it shaped as a military supply line to the opposition. The first thing the new government did after reunification in 1975 was to begin its reconstruction. Now proudly running between the two cities on a daily basis is the "Reunification Express". There are a number of trains which use this name, but the fastest two are the S1 (Hanoi to Saigon) and the S2 (Saigon to Hanoi). There is only one actual line between the two cities so travellers need to trust that railway officials have read their timetables correctly. Somewhere along the way, one train pulls over into a siding allowing the other to pass! And it's quite a way ... the Saigon-Hanoi line stretches for about 2000 km. Both the S1 and the S2 have different classes of carriages, the best containing airconditioned soft sleeper compartments, the

worst containing just hard seats.

Well that was it! I had decided on my trip! I wanted to travel Vietnam on the Reunification Express ... and I wanted to do it alone. None of the touristy things, none of the expensive hotels, I wanted to backpack across Vietnam. No-one could stand in my way ... except possibly Maureen, my wife of 30+ years!

That night, I put the plan to her, not a rehearsed recital but a plan that she could see meant a lot to me. She was thinking "mid-life crisis" but didn't let on. Anyway, if we weren't to be staying in decent (expensive) hotels, she didn't want any part of it. She was happy to let me do my thing. We arranged that after my Vietnam stint we would meet in Hong Kong, stay at far more satisfactory accommodation and she would shop to her heart's content.

So it was all systems go. The six weeks between booking tickets and the departure date went quickly, although I was excited about the trip the whole time. Anyway, as happens, the date arrived and I was eventually flying Qantas to Hong Kong via Singapore.

At Hong Kong I cleared customs about 7.30pm and was due back the next morning at about 6.00am for the 7.30am leg to Ho Chi Minh City. In line with my "el-cheapo" intentions and the difficult arrival and departure times at the airport, I decided I would go into Kowloon to check it out again (after 20 years) and then just come back to the airport to find a comfortable couch on which to spend the night.

I caught the fast and modern Airport Express train into the city and got off at Central Station. It was dark outside and I felt quite disorientated. Was I on the mainland or on the island? Who knows ... but I did smell water and I did know the Star Ferries. I caught a ferry and it took me across the harbour to the other side. I had been on the island and I was soon to be in Kowloon on the mainland. It was a Friday night in Hong Kong, hot, humid and bustling with people. I walked around and enjoyed it for a few hours before ferrying and training back to the airport.

This is the new billion dollar Hong Kong International Airport, situated off Lantau Island, some 25 minutes by the express train from Central Station. I checked into the departures hall at about 11.00pm having been reluctantly granted permission from a couple of gun-toting security officers who thought I was a "bit" early for my 7.30am flight the next morning. They consulted with immigration officials who decided I could come through. I just presumed that I would wander around, grab a coffee or two, take a few hours sleep, have a shower and get on the plane in the morning. Little did I realise that this airport was about to do a Cinderella ... it shut down at midnight. I mean shut down! I was left in this huge kilometre-long departure hall all by myself (I think I could see one or two other poor souls at the other end), sitting up like Jackie in one of the chairs, with all of the shops shut down, no planes arriving or departing and me trying to survive 6 hours of attempted sleep. And there were no showers! Even if you were a member of one of the airline flight clubs (which I wasn't), they were closed as well.

The Departure Hall at Hong Kong International Airport, 6.00am Saturday morning.

After a long uncomfortable night, the sun eventually arose in the morning, the cleaners began to arrive and I surprised the owner of a coffee shop who was just setting up. I eventually boarded a Cathay flight for Ho Chi Minh City. It was only a 3 hour trip and surprisingly Vietnam time is 1 hour behind Perth, Singapore and Hong Kong.

As we flew over the coast of Vietnam, from the north, I was excited to be there. From my usual window seat I got a good view of the countryside below. It contained a kalaidescope of different colours – greens, blues, reds, purples and greys. The approach to Saigon was spectacular. I had never realised the extent of the waterways. Saigon seemed to be surrounded by rivers and creeks, especially further south as the mighty Mekong meandered to the sea, with its huge delta and many tributaries supporting a predominantly agricultural way of life.

After reminding myself that this was a communist country and that the last thing I needed during my time here was to be arrested for any misdemeanour, I passed quickly through immigration and customs. The only booking I had made for this trip was at the LeLe Hotel for the first night. They had a driver waiting for me at the airport and so the trip from the airport to the hotel was made easy. I arrived at the hotel, which is in the Pham Ngu Lao area (backpacker heaven). The

owner greeted me at reception and asked for my passport. I was to find that here, and everywhere else in Vietnam, the hotel would ask for and keep possession of the passport during my stay. After initial reservations about the practice, it came to be quite reassuring – at least my most valuable document wouldn't be lost or stolen.

As I was to discover during my stay, Vietnam small business appears to be dominated by the women. The owner of the LeLe was female, as were most of her staff. They do have husbands and sons but you hardly see the husbands and the sons are usually lounging outside on their Hondas.

For my US$12 per night I got an airconditioned room. It was like a big white-tiled bathroom with a dividing glass partition for the toilet and shower but with a bed, TV and cabinet thrown in. It was comfortable and clean and around the corner from D. De Tham, the central street for backpackers, internet cafés and tour offices. I had found this place on the internet and I quietly congratulated myself on some excellent research. In fact, if anybody just turned up in this area in search of accommodation, there's plenty. You can pay more than US$12 per night, especially in the posher Dong Khoi area (about 5 minutes away by Honda) where prices range from about US$20 per night through to presidential suite extravagance at US$850 per night. For a standard airconditioned room in the Pham Ngu Lao area, you can expect to pay in the range US$8-$15. I knew that I had no intention of staying long in my room or hotel, so as long as it was clean, it would be fine with me.

D. De Tham
Pham Ngu Lao, Saigon

The main problem with living in the Pham Ngu Lao area is the relative difficulty of walking along footpaths. There are motorbikes galore and "cyclos" parked there all hours, waiting for you and offering rides. Besides the incessant noise of blaring horns, a tourist pedestrian is continually confronted with "Hello ... want a ride ... what's your name ... where're you from?" "Australia." "Ah, g'day mate ,,, 'ow ya goin ... strewth ..." all in a broad Aussie accent, followed by peals of laughter, content at their original humour. Then there is the very real difficulty of crossing a street. The traffic is unrelenting. It comes at you from the front, rear and sides. There are very few traffic rules; the most obvious difference to ours is that traffic is supposed to keep to the right, but in fact the only rule that counts is that bigger is better. Pedestrians are the little people of the road system – you are supposed to make your mind up to cross a street and keep going at a regular pace – do not balk when 40 Hondas are about to run you down – keep going and they will just veer a centimetre or two to miss contact. Crosswalks have no meaning. The drivers, it seems, don't use brakes – they just use weight transfer, and most of the moving mass gets to where it wants to go.

I soon decided that the best way to get from A to B was to accept an offer of a ride and move up a peg on the social hierarchy of the road system. I think it was my second night in Saigon (Sunday), when I decided to go and see how the other half live in the Dong Khoi area. A cyclo driver approached me to test my interest and painstakingly told me about his war exploits and the loss of his wife and two children (with photos to support his case, although the wife looked like a 30 year old Sydneysider). These cyclos are like a bicycle at the back with a wide, pram-like seat at the front. Slow, but they move in the traffic and so I thought this would be the way to go. My Lonely Planet guidebook had given me clear warning that one must never accept a cyclo ride without first negotiating a price. I tried that but my new friend assured me that he loved Australians and that a discussion of money was out of the question. So we were away into the traffic and the night, and I must say it was really enjoyable.

Along the route he asked me if I was thirsty and I replied that I wouldn't mind a bottle of water. With that he promptly stopped at a street vendor, paid for a bottle for his Aussie mate and gladly gave it to me to consume. It was a hot night and I finished it fairly quickly. When he saw me holding the empty bottle (I was waiting in vain for a street bin to appear – there weren't any, anywhere), he offered to take it from me. I handed it back to him, he took it and then promptly threw it over his shoulder. Problem solved.

After a while, I was looking at my watch and noting that we had been going for about 40 minutes. I reminded him that I needed to be back at D. De Tham within the hour from the start. I got completely lost for direction while he was heading away from the Dong Khoi area, but I trusted we were heading in the right direction. I was waiting for the introduction of money into the conversation and planned to pay about 40,000 dong for the ride (cross off the 000,

divide by 2, divide by 2 again and divide by 2 again – 40,000 dong is approximately AUS$5). He stopped the cyclo and said we were not far from the finish but that he would now like to be paid 400,000 dong. I had only had a couple of Tiger beers before the ride, so my mind wasn't too scrambled, but I thought, "Hang on, cross off the 000, divide by 2, divide by 2 and divide by 2 – is that $5 or $50??" I've got a university degree in mathematics but the bloody bit of paper wasn't helping too much here. Eventually I concluded that I was being diddled! Bravely I stood my ground in the face of the veteran's wrath. He was getting really shirty, as was I – we stood arguing for a good 5 minutes, with me offering 40,000 dong or nothing. He compromised to 300,000 dong but then finally collapsed to 50,000 dong after he reminded me he had bought me a drink. I handed over 50,000 dong and walked around the corner to Kim's Cafe in D. De Tham. I searched for a friendly Vietnamese face and asked what I should have paid for 1 hour on a cyclo. 20,000-30,000 dong would have been usual, was the response. Thank goodness for that – I'd been well and truly "taken for a ride" but at least I wasn't going to finish up in jail for underpaying a cyclo driver.

On Sunday, I did a city tour taking in art galleries and war museums. There are quite a few of both. In the latter there are lots of prize exhibits – notably captured American guns, tanks, planes, etc. It was very interesting seeing the exhibits but also noting the Vietnamese reactions to Americans and, particularly for me, Australians. Basically, there was just an historical tone about the whole thing. There was not so much a good guys v. bad guys mentality. I found that except for some photographic evidence of some American war atrocities, there was a respect for the soldiers of both sides. That respect did not extend to LBJ and Nixon. The Vietnamese veterans (male and female, on the side of the north) are pretty much worshipped. The next day, I was to meet a young American guy and when discussing the war museums, he offered similar sentiments to mine.

The main challenge and purpose of this trip was to ride on the Reunification Express so the first thing I had done on arrival on Saturday was to book the ticket from Saigon to Hué. I had decided that 10 days would not be enough to get me from Saigon to Hanoi and back again, so I would travel as far north as Hué (pronounced *hway*) which is about half way up the coast in the northern part of the old South Vietnam. I then planned to bus, train or fly my way, town by town, back to Saigon. Kim's Travel could not get me a ticket for Sunday night, nor Monday night, so I settled for a 9.00pm departure on Tuesday night. This gave me extra time in Saigon, so I booked a tour of the Mekong Delta for the Monday.

I was warned that a 2-day Mekong trip is preferred (it goes further) but I settled for the 1-day trip. It was fantastic. It seemed like we travelled 80-100km south of Saigon before coming across Mekong tributaries and the Mekong itself. Prior to this trip I had seen an old American documentary detailing the role of the U.S. Navy in the early Mekong campaigns. I had seen how U.S gun boats travelled the waterways, seeking Viet Cong. In the very early days, they learned the hard way that the boats should not travel too far apart, otherwise they could be isolated in an ambush. My Mekong trip involved bus to boat to smaller boat to canoe. Moving through the creeks with the dense tropical growth along the edges was unsettling. The soldiers from 30 years ago must have had what it takes in the bravery department to carry out military operations in this environment. And that's not just the Mekong. Allied troops were fighting Viet Cong the length of South Vietnam – this is something I had not realised as a young bloke. I had in my mind that "south" was safe, "north" was unsafe. Not so. Danger was everywhere. You've got to admire all veterans of that war.

Left: The author in a Mekong Creek. Above and right: Typical Mekong farm scenes.

During the Mekong trip, we called in to a "jungle" cafe where we sipped tea and ate light Vietnamese fare while we were entertained by a group of local singers and musicians (2 women and 3 men). I was sitting alongside Jeremy, the young American mentioned previously, who happened to be born in the same year and month as my younger son and whose mother graduated high school in 1965. Out of the blue he declared, "Man these Vietnamese women are smoking!" I looked around in disgust searching for those women doing the wrong thing over lunch and muttered something innocuous along the lines of, "Are they?" – "No Man," he replied patiently, not mocking my faux pas, "I mean these Vietnamese women are HOT." It must be a generational thing.

The return to Saigon that afternoon was notable for the most fearsome road trip of my life. We were in a large bus heading from the countryside into the city at about 5.00pm. At that time of the day, the roads are very busy, with an exodus of trucks and motorbikes coming from the city, and buses, trucks and motorbikes heading into the city. The driver knew his "bigger is best" road rule very well. If he wanted to pass the truck in front (and he always wanted to pass the truck in front) he would do so even if an oncoming truck was only about 50m in the distance and closing. The effect was that the oncoming truck and the truck being overtaken, with suitable but constant blaring of horns, would move slightly to the edge of this narrow road while the manoeuvre was undertaken.

I had already figured that the safest spot to sit in the bus was the right hand side. If the oncoming truck was to slice into us, it would take out the driver and all those sitting in the left hand side, leaving me to remain unsliced in the right hand ditch. I was content with that, although I was bemused at the thought of the thousands of motor cyclists also using the road. If our driver saw 100 of them heading towards him, he would not be put off passing, they did not matter, they were smaller than him, they would look after themselves ... and they did!

Tuesday arrived and I had arranged late checkout from the LeLe to catch the 9.00pm Reunification Express. I had a foot massage in D. Le Tham, which for 50,000 dong gave me 45 minutes of work on the feet (sometimes torture with a sharp acupuncture thing which didn't actually break the skin but I was ready to tell all), followed by 15 minutes of make up time on my neck and shoulders. I had a relaxing day, packed and eventually taxied to the railway station. The scene was straight out of Midnight Express. I didn't see any live chickens but there were row upon row of locals all talking or shouting, all waiting for the call onto the platform. I went to the first official window which caught my eye, showed my ticket and was told to wait over there. There were only a half dozen or so westerners in the place; most of the rest were Vietnamese with some Asian tourists. We were finally invited to the platform, where I headed for the last carriage, thinking it would be the best with soft sleepers and airconditioning. The porter, however, told me to go two carriages forward. I was thinking, "Bloody hell, hard seats!" but was relieved to find the ticketing was spot on. I found my compartment in carriage number 7 and it was indeed soft sleeper with airconditioning. My bunk was top right, of four. I quickly covered it with a supplied sheet, climbed atop and got comfortable, awaiting my compartment mates. When they arrived I was surprised but not at all disappointed to see that they were Vietnamese. There was a man of low-mid 30s with his toddler daughter and I think his parents. With sign language and maps we worked out that they were going to Haiphong via Hanoi. I said I would be getting off at *U.A.* (as in U.S.A.). They were obviously puzzled at this until the map came out again and I pointed at Hué. "Oh. *Hway*," they said in relief. Pronunciation means a lot in Vietnam.

The Reunification Express, Saigon (above) and the ticket for a "foreign passenger".

Vietnamese travelling companions.

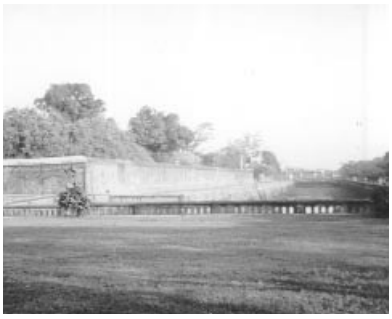
Tuesday night in the train was very comfortable. I was readily accepted by the others and the grandfather locked us all in for the night. We passed by much countryside and many towns in the darkness, with the Reunification Express stopping at only the major ones. It was difficult to see much anyway from the top bunk but possible if you angled your neck in a certain way. Of course, whenever I wanted to, I could hang around outside the compartment in the passage and stretch the legs between carriages. When appropriate, there was a western toilet at the back of the carriage and a squat toilet at the front. Wednesday was all train travel until 4.20pm, when the train pulled into Hué. My train journey had come and gone, I'd slept though half of it, but it was still nice to know I had overcome that challenge. No big deal but just the fact that I had done it marks it as one of the highlights of my trip. Now to discover mid coast Vietnam and work my way south back to Saigon.

I had been really looking forward to Hué but was disappointed, mainly because of the hotel. By late afternoon when I arrived, I was in no position to go looking around town for alternative accommodation from that which I had pencilled in

from the Lonely Planet book. This hotel told me they were out of sub US$10 rooms and I had to settle for a US$15 alternative, which was lacking in security and the bed did not even have a top sheet. I froze that night in the airconditioning.

It might be explained that US$5 does not sound like a lot of money, but it's amazing how one adjusts to the local currency. US$5 is about 75,000 dong, which is a week's wages for many employed Vietnamese.

I decided I would only stay one night in Hué, so got up very early the next morning for a brief dash around town on a cyclo (at a pre-negotiated 20,000 dong). This place is full of history, both ancient and recent. It was the sight of one of the bloodiest battles of the 1968 Tet offensive. It was South Vietnam's third largest city and it actually fell to combined North Vietnamese forces and Viet Cong for 25 days. The communists hoisted their flag aloft the Citadel's flag tower (current picture below) before the Americans retook the city. During the Communist occupation of Hué, many thousands of non-military people were killed, many were shot, others were clubbed to death or buried alive.



Left: Entering the Citadel. Middle: The flag tower. Right: The Forbidden Purple City, within the Citadel.

It must be something I have with cyclo drivers but again I had some trouble. My minibus was to leave Hué for Danang and Hoi An at 7.30am and it was important that the ride finish at about 7.00am so that I could check out from my hotel and get to the bus on time. Everything was going along fine. We had seen the Citadel and the Forbidden Purple City and recrossed the beautiful Perfume River, when instead of going straight ahead to return to my point of embarkation, the driver turned left. Stupidly, I thought "one way street", forgetting such refinements do not exist in this country. The driver then took off in directions unknown. I began trying to keep a mental note of where we should be heading but that soon dissipated as my anxiety level rose and the traffic closed in. By pointing to my watch and with difficult, and increasingly heated, conversation I tried telling the driver that we needed to return to the same spot from where we departed, urgently! He indicated he would take me to my hotel but he didn't know where it was and I couldn't remember its name (big error – always keep a copy of your hotel details, in this case it was the Binh Duong, not easy to recall). Eventually we found our way back to the start and I got to the minibus on time.

Bus trips in Vietnam are easy to organise. They usually require booking the night before, but if it is an "open" tour and if there's room, it can pick up passengers at the last minute or along the way. Open tours usually stop at two or three places en route for refreshments, toilet stops and sightseeing. This bus departed Hué and headed south towards Danang. This was the first time I was truly able to appreciate the magnificent scenery of Vietnam and was surprised and impressed at the mountainous terrain. There are mountains everywhere, which virtually follow the coastal plain north and south.

Danang was of interest to me because of its prominence during the war. Apparently it was pretty wild during those times, the "Saigon of the North". Soldiers spent R&R time here, in town at night and at China Beach during the day. However, in March 1975 the communists had taken Hué to the north and Quang Ngai to the south, effectively isolating Danang and panicking its population. The South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were desperately trying to leave Danang by any means. Ed Daly, the president of World Airlines, sent in two 727s, contrary to orders, to assist with the evacuation. The outcome was chaotic. Soldiers fired their weapons to force access to the planes, a hand grenade exploded and damaged a wing, a baby was thrown on board but the mother remained on the tarmac. Several people tried to cling to one of the plane's wheel wells but fell off into the South China Sea.

Because of my tight itinerary I had to choose whether to stay in Danang or Hoi An, a town 40km south. The Lonely Planet gave a pretty favourable description of Hoi An, so I decided to stay there for two nights and thus bypass Danang. However, the bus called into China Beach and stopped for an hour. It was obviously a popular tourist stop because there were small shops selling all sorts of paraphernalia. I began walking to where I imagined the beach would be and soon after noticed someone walking alongside. Her name was Thuy, she was about 15, she was on school holidays and she spoke very good English. She said she would show me the beach. I didn't really mind, I thought I would need to hand over 10,000 dong at the end, but she was friendly and informative. We got to the beach and it was very impressive – white sands with distant mountains hazily framing deep blue waters. Thuy took a photo of me on a round fisherman's craft and then we headed back to the start. Instead of asking for guide money, she requested that I come into her mother's shop to possibly buy something. I agreed of course and eventually was very pleased with myself to buy Maureen a marble incense burner for US$7, negotiated down from US$10. I felt a little badly taking away the small profit from these poor people, but that's the game you play.

I got back to the bus but it was nowhere near ready to go so I headed across to an open air café with only local women in view. Soon after sitting at a table and ordering a beer I was joined by five of the locals. They were delightful and friendly. We went through all the usual niceties "What's your name? … Where're you from? … G'day Mate … How old are you? … You only look 35! … Married? … Kids? … Have they got kids? … You're a grandfather!!!" With that they all turned to one of their own who was due to marry a Veteran of the war. They taunted her that she was going to marry a grandfather. I told them that I had just bought a marble incense burner for my wife and one of them wanted to know how much I had paid for it. I was a bit embarrassed to say but eventually told her US$7. She replied sympathetically, "You should have paid US$2." That whole encounter was wonderful and I think I was still smiling when I returned to the bus, although I wasn't overly happy about the price I'd paid for the burner.

At Hoi An I fluked a fantastic place to stay, the Vinh Hung Hotel. It was ideally positioned, close to everything, and had character galore. It was originally an old Chinese trading house, more recently converted into a hotel. My room (US$15 per night) had no windows and no bar fridge, but it was clean and airconditioned. Hoi An itself proved to be my favourite place in Vietnam. For travellers who want to unwind for a while, this is the place to be. It is just such a charming place, full of historical buildings and sites and without the noise and the pace of the cities I had seen so far. It is located on the Thu Bon River and about 5km from the sea. Its beach is magnificent, the equal of any I saw in Vietnam.

Hoi An used to be one of the wider region's major international ports, with ships from China, Japan, Portugal and Holland calling in. However, over time the river silted up (it is now only a metre or two deep) and heavy shipping started using the harbour of Danang, further north. Probably because of this, it escaped any major damage during the war, except for some Viet Cong activity around its outskirts.

I stayed in Hoi An for two nights but wished it was longer. Basically I walked a lot, saw the sites and spent a good deal of time on the second storey balcony of one particular café, enjoying coffee, meals and Tiger beers. I went for a 30 minute paddle with Mei, a 50 year old, in her old wooden canoe. She tried to get me to swap Maureen for her (Mei was a touch younger) but I declined with thanks.

Scenes from Hoi An, including Mei (right).

From Hoi An I was driven back to Danang, from where I caught a plane to Nha Trang, halfway back to Saigon. I had been attracted to Nha Trang because of its promotion as a "popular beach resort with crystal blue waters lapping onto dazzling white sands". During the flight and then as I arrived, I started feeling uneasy, just like another tourist doing touristy things. I booked into a beachside hotel for two nights, with the beach just across the road. The beach was undeniably nice and the water warm, but you probably wouldn't want to spend all of that money getting to Vietnam just to lounge it away on this or any other beach. In Australia we are pretty well equipped with decent beaches. Nha Trang fell away fairly badly once you left the beachside, it was hot, I had a cold and I booked into a 9 hour bus trip back to Saigon for Monday.

The 9 hour trip actually took 10 and it was quite uncomfortable. In hindsight, however, it was a beneficial part of my trip because I got to see hundreds of kilometres of countryside which showed fairly graphically the poverty in which many Vietnamese live. At one stage the bus passed a vehicle which caught my eye. It was a very small truck, about the size of a small van, but shaped like a multi-tiered truck at home which jams sheep in on the way to slaughter. It had a front driver's cabin and two levels for stock at the rear. As with our sheep trucks, it was packed with animals, but these were all dogs. All puppies on the way to market!

Time had run out to see the Cu Chi tunnels, just outside Saigon. I had needed half a day to visit them, but that half day had not happened along. All reports indicated that they were well worth seeing. The ingenuity of the Viet Cong was well known. Tunnels were widely used, offensively and defensively, throughout South Vietnam and the tunnels around Cu Chi alone stretched for 250km. Some tunnels were constructed in levels (multi-storey) and were used to house and service people and store ammunition. Today, visitors can crawl through parts of the tunnels. I had also been unable to

visit the Vung Tau region, south-east of Saigon, where Australian soldiers saw plenty of action, but I had read that access these days is fairly difficult and that there is not a whole lot historical to see, especially for people like me considering visiting the place for the first time.

As we approached Saigon, I could easily sense the change of environment – from the deprived countryside to the affluent city. I was pleased to be back in Saigon, despite the noise. I felt comfortable being here and when the bus stopped and we were told to disembark, it was dark but I knew we were not far from D. De Tham. I would have again stayed my last night at the LeLe but as I was walking along De Tham I was approached by a guy who offered me a night in an air-conditioned room for US$8. I accepted, subject to checking out the room. It was really a guest-house, with the family living on the ground floor and six rentable rooms, 2 per floor, above. Once again, clean and comfortable, so OK I'll take it.

That night I went to my favourite café in D. De Tham and ordered my favourite main course dish for 30,000 dong (cross off the 000, divide by …) – a Ravioli Montanari, fried-egg-shaped pastas covered with delicious cream sauce. Not a very authentic Vietnamese dish but who's complaining. With a Tiger beer of course, and then with a black coffee which in typical Vietnamese fashion brews directly into your cup at the table. 44,000 dong all up. I then went to one of the numerous internet cafés in D. De Tham and sent my last report home to the family. During my whole stay in Vietnam, access to internet cafés had been easy and cheap (100 dong per minute mostly (75cents/h), 200 dong per minute in Hoi An) and I had emailed home every night except one – the night I had spent on the Reunification Express.

On reflection, there had been few signs of a communist regime in Vietnam. I had seen little evidence of a police state, except perhaps at Nha Trang where there were plenty of off-duty soldiers walking along the beachside footpath. Also at Nha Trang, I had been awakened at 5.00am on both Sunday and Monday with intrusive and ongoing patriotic music and announcements over community loud speakers.

On Tuesday morning I arose at 5.30am, packed and went downstairs for my final walk around the Pham Ngu Lao district. Everything was in darkness, although it was light outside. The son and his Honda were asleep in the foyer and all doors were locked. I tried again at 7.00am with the same result. This time, however, I made a little noise and the son awoke to let me out. I had breakfast at a different café, went for my walk and eventually returned to my lodgings, passing son and Honda on the footpath. My taxi arrived soon after and I was whisked away to the airport. Soon I was to be through immigration and security and on the Cathay flight to Hong Kong.

I wasn't so sad to leave Vietnam. I thought 10 days was sufficient and I was looking forward to meeting Maureen in Hong Kong. On arrival, however, and meeting Maureen and booking into our hotel, it was soon evident we were two people moving at different paces. She was a hundred miles an hour and I was a snail. I was so relaxed and she was trying to slow down. Hong Kong prices were very high and I was continually talking about the prices I had been paying in Vietnam. In Hong Kong I paid HK$40 (AUS$10) for a coffee where it would have been 4,000 dong (50c) in Vietnam. I was a bit of a pain as I repeated the point a few times too many.

Hong Kong was not as friendly as Vietnam and, interestingly, it was way more difficult finding people in shops and on the street (including taxi drivers) who could speak English. While I was there, I put in some business time and met some locals to discuss a possible joint project. One of the women at the meeting was a teacher at a Hong Kong high school. When I asked her what language(s) she teaches in, she replied, "Half Chinese, half English, but the students these days are just so reluctant to learn English." This, I thought to myself is contrary to the worldwide trend for students to want to learn English as a second language.

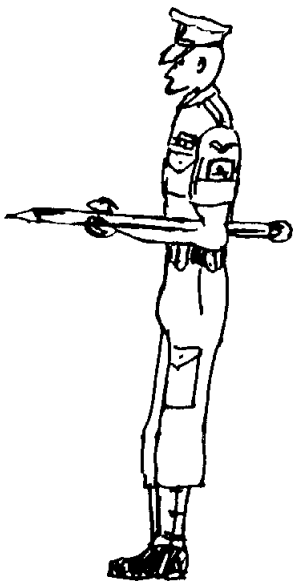
Can I recommend today's Vietnam? I think it depends on whom I'm talking to and the motivation for going there. Everyone would probably enjoy Saigon (just stay at a place suitable for your comfort zone) and Hoi An, that thoroughly beautiful and unique town in the north. Just don't visit Hoi An during October or November, when the river usually floods. Hué – perhaps I was a bit unfair on it. It does have plenty to see. Nha Trang – I suppose you've got to see it if you go to Vietnam but I wasn't fussed. If you're an adventurer of spirit, especially if you have an interest in the war years, what I did was just fantastic, and the Mekong is a must. Although I found myself in places which were not so great, most of the places I visited were well worth the experience. I enjoyed the atmosphere of Vietnam, its ancient monuments, the varied sights and the wonderfully friendly people. I know my 10 day odyssey and the Reunification Express will become a valuable memory for me in the future. I will miss Vietnam and, dare I say it, I might even miss the excitement of the traffic and the enterprise of the cyclo drivers.

OTU: FORMATIVE FORMATION

by Rob Youl (2/65)

When working as a forester at Mansfield, Victoria in mid 1965, I did my medical with several others; one entered the infantry and was killed in action within a year. A brochure arrived telling me, as someone educated beyond Intermediate, that I could apply for OTU. The post-graduation Q issues intrigued me, including tailored greatcoat, patrol blues and gloves. Did officers still use swords?

Then The Bulletin carried an article on Scheyville: Bernard Fall, was Scheyville's Clausewitz, it said! In Street without Joy, Fall told how France lost Vietnam. A photo showed Warrant Officer Moon, lean, lantern-jawed, pacestick up armpit, clearly formidable! I still use a leather lettercase my workmates gave me; I think I lost my virginity; I stayed up all night finishing my plantation maps. Then I went home briefly to a despairing mother and proud father – at least when reminiscing militarily over beers with mates at Traralgon's Crown Hotel.



Day 1, Week 1, Melbourne. Swan Street depot was a bullring of administrative tables and starched soldiers, with other little booths in crannies. White-gloved MPs on revving BSAs separated the bus convoy from placard-waving members of Save Our Sons. I think we had a leak-stop at Kilmore before hitting Pucka, presumably with no escapees.

"There'll never be another mob like the first intake!", said every instructor, for reintroduction of national service in July 1965 had gone very well for the army and trainees. Despite gross inferiority to 1/65, we were accepted, kitted, inoculated, harangued, marched – we had a genuine square-gaiter – and well fed. Private Tarrasin, an especially, indeed unusually for WRAAC, gorgeous blonde made our day, daily. She lunched before us, so as we started our main she ambled down the centre aisle. Some 800 youths privately dreamed of featuring.

The OTU tests got under way, intelligence, security, mechanical aptitude, psych (bewildering questions like: Do you ever feel like jumping from buildings?). Then the big day, interviews in a house: introductions, public speaking, initiative tests (I managed a superhuman leap across the radioactive minefield), lunch to see how one handled gentlemanly environments, and then private interrogation.

Three people I know were confronted separately with ASIO photos of anti-Vietnam or anti-Springbok protests, with their own faces circled. The quickest reaction was, "Well, gentlemen, my friends and I love rugby; we were there to protest against the protesters!" Another of these candidates, legend has it, got up and walked out. But that was later on – community dissent was negligible in late 1965.

Two weeks after joining, forty or so names were announced – Pucka's 2/65 cadets. For me it was beers with the rest of the hut in the mess, advice on where to go in Sydney – places like Binkie's Hamburger Bar – and promises that we'd always be mates, no matter our rank. A DC4 flew us from Mangalore to Richmond and buses took us through Windsor's convict-era buildings to Scheyville. The RSM was indeed impressive, the 1920s Georgian Hacienda HQ also; there was a diverse staff and a purposeful atmosphere. We met our 1/65 fathers – generally firm but friendly, however some higher ranks resembled characters from Tom Brown's Schooldays. Finney Roe was BSM. Harry Neesham flew home each weekend to play WAFL football.

(Decades on, my son, Roger Hurrey, was telling me he'd met my father, George Fisk, by then, and I think still, a senior Victorian policeman. He'd felt a bond with George, although neither knew the other was ex-OTU, nor the connection via me.)

But life was tough, starting with a six-mile run, captured forever by Army film crew and later on OTUA video. The seemingly anal rules for your gear, dress changes, extra drills and charges, mess etiquette, heavy seniors, the too early last post, the PT – all bloody hard work. I'd look wistfully at my Windsor mapsheet, imagine shooting through, walking at night two or three miles southwest to a road that took you to the highway. I'd

hitch into Sydney, make my way to Queensland and work on the docks somewhere. The Army would never find me! Doubtless many contemplated this scenario, but did anyone ever abscond?

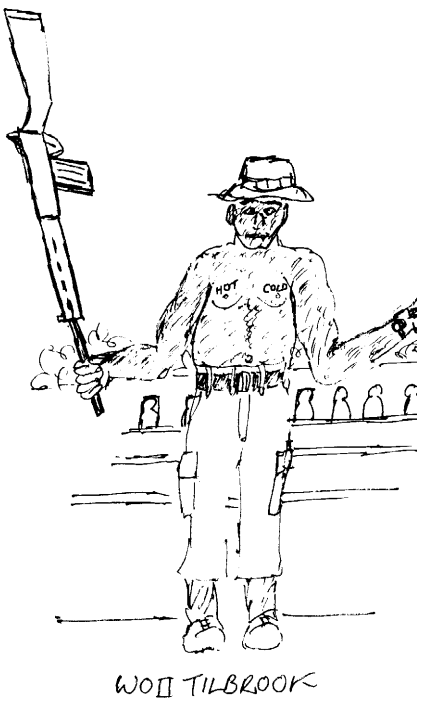
And I must have changed psychologically, as I found out much later. Despite my modest background and egalitarian character, a letter to my old Pucka hutmates, attempting to describe my eventual accession to rank and its due recognition, was so off the mark it demoralised them severely.

But there were wonderful compensations. The training was challenging, interesting and well delivered, the routine strangely satisfying. One's friends were amiable conversationalists and happy pragmatists from all over Australia. It was great to be in the bush at night, and for the first time to enjoy playing sport. Generally in Australia then, winning was everything, however at OTU everyone got a game, champion or dill. Rugby was especially good and athletics, where I had a minor triumph: Starting 200 metres behind in a steeplechase of 3000 metres, I almost won. The food was excellent, supplemented by chocolate bars and ice creams from the canteen, run by an ASCO sergeant and his Japanese wife – ASCO was full of BCOF veterans with Japanese wives. Ultra-smooth Captains Norm Behan and Owen O'Brien (see The Seventh Dawn – he's in it!) gave presentations on civilian dress – what an officer and a gentleman should wear off duty. Our swimming champs at Richmond were Hughie McArthur and Brian Showyin.

Characters abounded, especially amongst the NCOs: WO II Laurie Tilbrook, "Hot" and "Cold" tattooed above his nipples, the man who'd write his name in the mound with a GPMG; the lean WO II Goldspink; the even leaner WO II Von Kurtz, definitely a Hitlerjugend graduate, who would "vake you with his vake-up stick" if he found you asleep on Singleton exercises – the "vake-up stick" being about the size and weight of a pick helve and delivered forcefully across the shoulders or neck!; our fieldcraft specialist WO II Keith Payne VC – well named, we thought then, but we admire him now!; tough little Sergeant Taffy Burt; and the two PTIs from RAA, Corporals Williams and Matthews (?). I liked WO II Dave Eather, WO II Frank Betts, and Tasmania's WO II Bill Lapthorne – when a cadet asked Bill could he please have such-and-such, Lapthorne snapped: "Vere is no such word in v'English language as please, fank you or sorry!"

Amongst the officers were the formidable Major Adrian Cluniess-Ross RA Inf, Phil Davies RAInf, David Presgrave RAInf, David Ford GM RAASC, Norm Uniacke RASig, Tony Larnach-Jones RAAC, Don Keith RAE, Ben Bode RAAC, some of whom I got to know rather better through the Reserve.

Eventually there was leave, and us provincials had to visit The Cross, starting with The Pink Pussy Cat. Seated, in the dark, tense-groined after a very provocative disrobing, I heard the MC say, "Ladies and gentlemen, Kelly G was not a girl! She was a boy!" I was devastated; I faced a lifetime of degradation, at least male prostitution! At a hostel off George Street called, I think, Naval House, I ran into a kid from home, Noel Hamden – well, he still seemed a kid! He'd joined the RAN, and I asked him patronisingly if he'd been overseas. "Yeah!", he replied. "Yokohama, Taipei, Saigon, Honolulu, Hong Kong, Manila, Vancouver, Honiara, Colombo, Jakarta, Pago Pago, Moresby ..." I felt pathetic.



WO II TILBROOK

Windsor could entangle you too. One night, in borrowed linen jacket and black and white checked pants, a lairy combination drawing contempt from orderly officer, Captain Scrivenor RAA, I fell asleep in my sweet and sour pork. The excellent Richmond laundry that starched our greens so adhesively – it was almost a sexual penetration forcing your leg through from belt to cuff – soon restored the jacket. However, Windsor gave us a cameo too: one Sunday, Sydney stripper Sandra Nelson stopped for a beer at the Macquarie Arms after waterskiing at Wisemans Ferry, and, once recognised, did an impromptu strip for the lucky bar. Sadly, I was elsewhere.

Waiting docilely in the theatrette one night, we were suddenly alerted. "They'll never get me to go to Vietnam!" flashed onto a screen. From the wings, Lieutenant Colonel Clark appeared like Mephistopheles in an elegant evening cloak. He barked out the phrase – vehemently. "Those words," he said, as numerous images followed of combat and carnage, "were spoken by a cadet at this academy! But I say to you, that you can do no better than to devote your life to the people of war-torn Vietnam!" (He'd already been there himself, of course, instructing officer cadets at Vietnam's equivalent of Duntroon.)

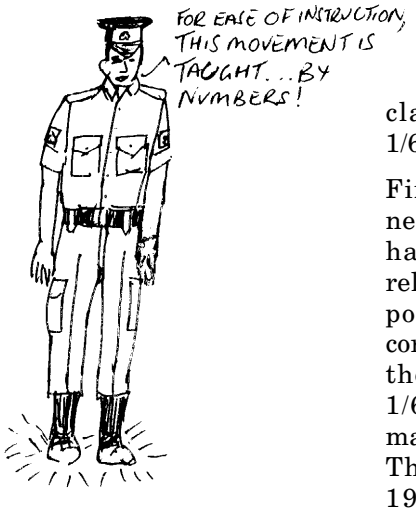
Who was that unknown cadet? Did he eventually go to Vung Tau or Nui Dat? Did he exist? In any case, it was a memorable presentation.

The 1/65 graduation was memorable too, and on a late rehearsal every man jack effected a movement – shoulder arms perhaps? – synchronously – not a millisecond variation. WO I Moon's rather admiring "Quite good, gentlemen!" made us proud. He wasn't so happy at another parade when the monitor stood in a loop of the rope and hogtied himself when raising the OTU flag, but! (OTU had many Queenslanders in my time!)

In January 1966 Sydney University cadets joined us, their black and red badges attributed to World War I cowardice. Unlikely! Every one knows all Australian males are natural soldiers, the women even better! Mike Allan, my son from ANU, and I had great times together at Scheyville and Singleton, and remain close. He and his cobbers finished training the next summer and got their stars.

The course progressed. Because of SUR we went to Singleton three times, and I loved passing through abandoned vineyards and farms, belts of sheoak and patches of rainforest in the rugged sandstone gullies beyond Pokolbin. We very successfully ambushed a local CMF patrol, our enemy for one exercise. Later my platoon was separated on a company patrol, but we navigated our way to the company ambush site and rejoined the rest. "Rest" was the operative word! The enemy walked through the killing ground three times before someone awoke from exhaustion to trigger the ambush! The last Singleton stint saw some of us force-march 20 miles; Bill Robbins' mob shat it in 3.56 and we hit OTU seven minutes later.

Every week a few blokes left. The attrition was depressing – I missed great mates from my lines like Norm Lewis, Rob Constable, Dave de Jersey, Spike Williams Geoff Smith, Rob Constable and Trevor Pearce. Equally dejecting was being on Holsworthy Range one Saturday night; lying there in the cold and damp overlooking the vast city, we imagined every twinkling light indicated some lucky bastard having sex.



WO II HALL

By now only seven 2/65 members remained officer cadets, with everyone else an NCO under BSM Wayne Bannon. For revue night the magnificent seven planned to perform a song they had composed alluding to their unusual and second-class status. However Peter Colless was stripped of his sergeants stripes, so he joined us for the final chorus, which we rewrote. There were now eight hard cases, skilled in extra drills, veterans of many charges and confinements, and the men with the best organised webbing, so often had it been jogged up the hill beyond the parade ground in the early morning. As well, one had really got to know one's sons, with the number increasing as the ranks thinned. My original two were Royce James and Jim Box. My classmates by then included a 1/65er, Gordon Hurford.

Finally the course was over; a new machine called a computer had processed our results. We relished the parade, graduation, a posting, more pay, freedom, a corps, leave, a job somewhere in the system, buying a car. The 1/65 class had dispersed, with many in 5 and 6 Battalions RAR. The initial government line in 1964 had been that national servicemen would not go overseas, but would be employed in, I recall, "service roles like drivers and engineers" – however this was not to be. When the task force was committed, we said, "But X, Y and Z from 1/65 are in those battalions!" and we realised that Vietnam could be on everyone's horizon. Nevertheless, it was not so for me, despite offering myself and passing Canungra – RAE's initial policy to send only ARA officers soon changed. Instead, I worked in 18 Field Squadron at Wacol and helped train sappers at SME Casula. One, an ARA bloke I admired as he'd overcome many problems, died in a Horseshoe mine-lifting accident.

That was my full-time military career: definitely not a waste of time, perhaps not worth a medal.

BEFORE DINNER – THE LATE JOHNNIE FRASER

Editor:

The National Committee is trying to establish contact with the family of Ian Mathers, the last officer killed in Vietnam. We have a plaque and other memorabilia to present. If you know of the family please contact any member of the National Executive (see page 2).

Ian came back to the cathedral he loved!

By CHRIS BLACK

IAN MATHERS returned to the cathedral he loved last week.

His mother and father were there, his relatives, his friends and Army mates in their best uniforms and spit-polished shoes.

The retired cathedral organist was there, too, and some of the young men who had been in the choir 10 years ago.

They all sat silently under the vast, echoing arches of St. John's.

Ian was just a young boy when he first saw the great stone building and decided he wanted to be one of the choir boys in flowing black and white robes.

He made the grade, was good, and in the afternoons he went straight from school to the cathedral for choir practice.

By the time he was 14, because of his likeable personality and superb voice, Ian was head chorister.

Then his voice broke and he concentrated on his schoolwork. But he returned to the cathedral often to pray and see his friends.

He was a young man by the time he matriculated and began a commerce degree course at university.

In his third year at Uni he was still a young man, but old enough to be called up to go to war.

Ian won a deferment for two years so he could finish his course.

And when he went into the Army last year he was a graduate.

His ability was obvious, so they put him through officer training school. On leave he came home to see his family and visit the cathedral again.

When he went to Vietnam it was as a 2nd Lieutenant in 12 Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery.

The end came suddenly, savagely, as it usually does in war, as Australian forces assaulted a heavily defended Vietcong bunker system.

Back home the newspapers dutifully recorded the death of Lieutenant Ian George Mathers, 23, of Corinda, and noted that he was the 401st Australian serviceman to die in the undeclared war.

FOR THE LAST TIME

Last week his body came home in a lumbering Hercules transport. And on Wednesday 200 people sat in painful silence under the soaring arches that had carried the echoes of his worshipping boy's voice.

On the flag-draped lid of his coffin the present head chorister, a boy of another decade, laid his own medallion of office. The cap and sword, in correct military fashion, were already there.

Canon Vernon Cornish, who had known Ian well, had come from Toowoomba to conduct the service.

"The memories of this fine young man," he said, "will always be as fresh and beautiful as the sound of boys' voices in this fine cathedral."

MATHERS, Ian George was born at Brisbane, Qld. in January 1949 and completed his secondary education at Brisbane Grammar School, Qld.

He attended Sydney University and graduated as a Bachelor of Economics in 1969.

Before entering the Army as a National Serviceman he was a student, with C.S.R. Co. Ltd.

He has been allocated to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery and posted to the School of Artillery.

E-mail

From: nick.israel@millenniumhotels.com.au
To: greg.todd@another.com
Date: 17 June 2002
Subject: OTU Annual Dinner

Dear Greg, missed out on the dinner Saturday night unfortunately; you had a sellout fortunately. Wanted to bring my video of 2/70 Graduation Parade and show all and sundry before I shoot off to Singapore at the end of the month. Appreciate if you can communicate my email address in Singapore for the next two years:

Nick.Israel@copthorne.com.sg

I'll be GM of the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel. The following website has all the details.

www.millenniumhotels.com

Looking forward to welcoming the guys to Singapore. Best regards.

KOKODA The Spirit Lives

A Story by Paul Cotter

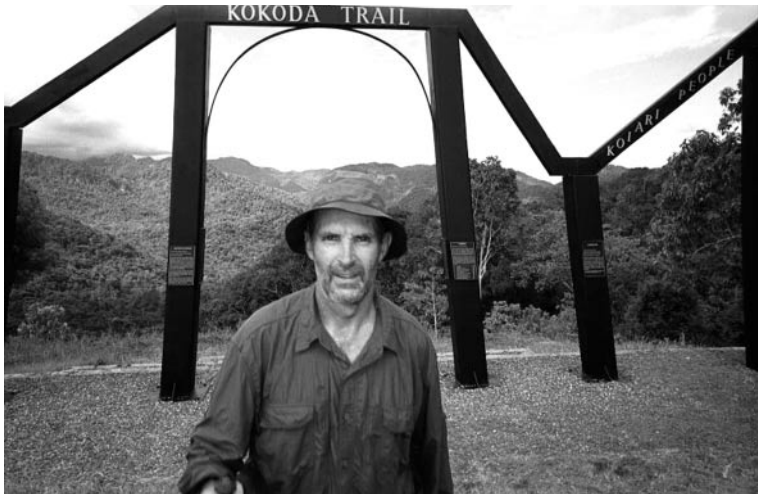
When I graduated from Portsea in December 1972, I spent twelve months in RAEME and then Corps transferred to RACT. As a result I did my YO's course with guys who had graduated after me. Two of these were Tony Hinchon and Lou Hatton and if my memory serves me correctly, Tony and Lou were members of the third and last OCS group to go through OTU, this would have been the class of 1/73. Whitlam had got in and Scheyville was all but finished.

The Battalion of Officer Cadets had become the Company of Officer Cadets and there were insufficient numbers to mount a decent final exercise for the OCS cadets. I am led to believe that instead of the final field exercise this group went to Papua New Guinea and crossed the Kokoda Trail. I was always a little jealous of their "luck" and wished that I had had that experience.

My next brush with Kokoda came when I was studying Military History for promotion to Major. The main campaign we studied was Burma, the second was Kokoda and the third was Mesopotamia. The amount of effort expended was commensurate with the priority of campaigns and hence the likelihood of exam questions, so since Kokoda was second in importance, I read the required text but did not concentrate all my energies on it.

Over the years I maintained an interest in Kokoda and when the 50th anniversary of the campaign came I met Patrick Lindsay who made the doco many of you may have seen on TV and I discussed the possibility of walking the track with a Kokoda fanatic some of you may know by the name of George Friend. I was going to walk the track one day.

Another nine years passed and the untimely death of my younger brother forced me to think about achieving the goals you want to do in life and the need to take some action to make them happen. From that time on, I was going to Kokoda and within the next twelve months. The closure of the Track by the Nationals put a slight delay on my trek but everything was clear for the trek to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the campaign.



Some of you may also know Charlie Lynn, an old RACT colleague of mine who is now a member of the NSW Upper House. Charlie has led 27 parties across the Track, so I signed up with him to do the trek finishing in time to be at Bomana War Cemetery for the Dawn Service on ANZAC Day.

Since I was going to PNG I decided to spend a day in Rabaul. I knew that Rabaul had been in Japanese hands but I did not know its significance in the battles for the South West Pacific. I had studied the Kokoda campaign, not the rest of the actions in New Guinea. I did not know that the Australian Garrison had been slaughtered by the Japanese after the Garrison had surrendered.

I visited the War Cemetery on the Island of New Britain just outside of Rabaul and was amazed at the number of soldiers from the 2/22nd Battalion who are interred there. There are 1100 graves in that cemetery and most are soldiers from the 2/22nd.

I was particularly impressed by the standard of maintenance at the cemetery. In a nation where things are often run down, someone is putting a lot of effort into ensuring that the men who defended our freedom are not forgotten. This is a credit to the War Graves Commission and also to the locals who actually look after the site.

Rabaul has an excellent deep-water harbour and was the Headquarters for the Japanese effort in the South West Pacific. The harbour is actually the flooded remnants of two ancient massive volcanoes. The rock is soft and the Japanese forced slave labourers to hew hundreds of miles of tunnels out of the virgin rock. Many of these tunnels are still in very good condition. If you can forget about the misery of the people who dug them out with pick and shovel, you can marvel at the clever construction and the meticulous surveying that must have gone into getting the levels and ventilation right.

In one location, tunnels were used to store Landing Barges so they were protected from Allied bombing. The tunnels were about 100 metres from the water and the barges were moved between the tunnels and the water on railway lines. In one tunnel there are still five Landing Barges (about the size of an LCM8) slowly rusting away from the effects of the salt air. Having served in 10 Terminal Regiment, I was particularly interested in this location.

After spending only a day in Rabaul I had to fly back to Port Moresby to join up with the rest of our group. This was the first time most of us had met anyone else from the group. At the dinner the night before we left, we met some members of a military team who were there to recover the remains of some unknown soldiers from the battle site of Isurava.

The next morning we found one of the members of this team (a Lieutenant Colonel dentist) on our aircraft from Port Moresby to Kokoda. Apparently there was not enough room on the helicopter for him so he hitched a ride with us and walked the two days to get to Isurava.

To my delight in the group of people I met there was another Scheyville graduate. Peter Thomas, who was a member of the 2/66 graduating class.

The flight from Port Moresby to Kokoda took only twenty minutes, but as you look down, you see the topography below and you quickly appreciate why it is going to take nine days to walk back.

The first day on the trek was relatively easy. We spent some time looking at the site in Kokoda itself where on the 29th of July 1942, B Coy 39 Bn initially resisted the Japanese as they came up the valley. At this time the Australians at Kokoda numbered only 100 and the first Japanese attack was the major part of a force of 1500 that had landed at Buna and Gona eight days earlier. The Australians had the advantage of being dug-in on the Kokoda plateau, a natural feature that rises about ten metres from the floor of the valley, but they were hopelessly outnumbered and were forced to withdraw.

The first night we stayed at the village of Hoi and then moved on the next day to the Isurava battle site. It took the better part of the second day to get to the battle site which is approximately two hours south of the present village of Isurava. The site has only recently been rediscovered.

We bumped into the military team who were there to recover the remains of the dead. They were looking for the remains of two soldiers but had only discovered one body. They are now going through the process of positively identifying the remains. When that work is complete, the soldier will be interred with his mates at Bomana War Cemetery.

The area had become completely overgrown by the jungle and work is now under way to clear the site and to move the village back to its former site. During the morning as part of their work the recovery team had rediscovered the actual location where Private Bruce Kingsbury was killed when he won the first VC to be awarded on Australian Territory. I understand that approval has just been given to build a memorial on that site.

While we were picking our way amongst the felled trees, one of the guides pointed out a rusty hand grenade lying on the ground with the pin still in it. He told us that they frequently discover old material like this on the battle sites. We saw old mortar bombs, remains of old weapons, bits of old boots and even weapon pits at various sites along the track.

The Japanese attacked Isurava on the 26th of August. The 39th fought tenaciously all day and were on their last legs. This was an untried Militia battalion with an average age of eighteen and a half. Their officers however were veterans of the Middle East campaign. Just in time the 2/14th and 2/16th Battalions arrived to support the 39th. Despite the fact that the 39th was supposed to be relieved they stayed behind and fought together for the next three days.

I feel proud just to have stood on the ground where these men so desperately fought to defend their country.

Australians know about Gallipoli, they know about the Somme and other European battlefields, they know about the Middle East campaigns in the Second World War, but how many know about the battle of Isurava and the Battle of Brigade Hill which was soon to follow.

The next significant location we visited was Lake Myola. This is the birth place of aerial dispatch. Bert Kienzle a plantation owner from Kokoda had been given responsibility handling re-supply issues for the Australian force. Kienzle had concluded that it was impossible to re-supply using native porters because they consumed what they had to carry just to cross the Owen Stanleys. In a flight over the mountains, he had seen a flat open area so he set out to discover it. What Kienzle found was an old lake bed covered in waist-high grass. Two streams criss-cross the lake bed which is effectively an ankle deep swamp.

The first attempts at dropping resulted in the loss of a lot of supplies. Parachutes were not available and the cargo had to be allowed to free-fall. The packaging burst upon striking the ground. Recovery improved however when they used sacks around the packaging. The packaging would still burst on impact but the contents were contained by the surrounding sack. We saw mortar bombs and other relics lying around on this open area, presumably the remnants of some of the unrecovered supplies.

By the time we got to Myola we had given up any hope of keeping our feet dry so we just waded in boots and all. On the Track, during the day, you are wet all the time either from rain, crossing rivers or just from sweat. Myola was a great stop for us because we got there in daylight and we were able to have a hot shower from a standard bush shower.

Brigadier Potts was the commander of Maroubra Force. The Japanese force had built to 13,500, 10,000 of these being battle hardened troops who had been fighting together since Manchuria in 1936. They had never known defeat. Potts thought that he was being pursued by 4,000 not 10,000. As Potts had a combined strength of about 400 men, he knew he could not defend such an open area as Myola, so he once again withdrew on the 5th of September.

The next location that lent support to the defenders was Mission Ridge and what was to become known as Brigade Hill. This area is reached after climbing a very steep narrow ridge just outside of the present village of Efogi. Efogi is the largest village on the Kokoda Track and it afforded Major General Horii an ideal forming up place before his assault on Brigade Hill.

I paid for a Porter to carry my pack and I just had a day pack on for the duration of the trek. Even with this light load I struggled to climb the ridge so what it was like for fully ladened soldiers I can only imagine.

Horii was determined to annihilate the Australians at Efogi. The Japanese had originally thought they would cross the Owen Stanleys against token opposition so they had allowed themselves only 11 days combat rations to get to Port Moresby. By now they were starving. The first exchange of fire in this campaign had started at the Kumasi River on the 24th of July and here it was early September and these stubborn Australians were still holding up his advance.

The 2/27th had by now joined the 2/14th and 2/16th so this was the first time Potts had three battalions under his command in this campaign but their numbers still only amounted to 1,000 men, little more than a full strength battalion.

On the 8th of September Horii launched an attack of 6,000 troops. Fighting was fierce, A Coy of the 2/27th repelled eight attacks in one morning.

In an attempt to cut off Brigade HQ, the Japanese in a flanking move got in between the Brigade HQ and the Battalions. The Japanese suffered huge losses but their superiority in numbers drove the Australians off the feature. The battle had held Horii up for a further three days.

In Patrick Lindsay's documentary to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the campaign he told the story of a Japanese soldier who had survived the battle of Brigade Hill. This soldier was part of a group of 42 Japanese who had been in the outflanking group. Before they launched their attack they took a vow that if any of them survived that they would come back to the site after the fighting was over to perform a Shinto ceremony over the remains to free up their souls.

During the thick of the fighting this soldier took shelter in a hollow tree trunk and only came out when he later heard Japanese voices. He was the only survivor of that group. He became a wealthy man, but many years later he formally divorced himself from his family, sold his business and all his possessions and spent a number of years searching for his lost comrades and performing the ceremony he had vowed to do before the battle.

Charlie Lynn met this man on one of his many trips and pointed out the tree where he hid in 1942. The remains of the old tree trunk are still there. It took him years but he found the remains of the remaining 41 soldiers.

The top of Brigade Hill is now cleared and there is a brass plaque behind a ricketty wire fence commemorating the site. The view is breathtaking and standing there in the sun it was difficult to imagine the sounds of gunfire and death. Charlie Lynn believes this beautiful site is the resting place for 75 Australians who were killed there sixty years ago.

I found that I was progressively running out of steam as the trek continued.

From Brigade Hill, you drop 700 metres into the valley, only to start a 430 metre climb, followed by another 430 metre descent. This brought us to the Brown River, a wide and deep fast flowing body of water that presented quite a challenge to get across. Eventually we managed to get a rope across and to tie it off on both sides. After that we waded out to where the rope started and pulled ourselves across. The current was so strong that it swept your feet from under you.

I lost a camera that was in a pouch on my belt, the current was so strong that it stripped it out of the pouch.

This crossing held us up for quite a while. The slower members of the group did not even reach the river until 9 pm. It took us about an hour to get them across and once that was done we had a further two hours ahead of us walking through a swamp for our overnight stop at the village of Naoro.

After leaving Naoro we climbed the Maguli Range, a 600 metre climb with 9 false peaks. This is immediately followed by a 700 metre descent. There were some who thought that going down was harder than going up due to the slippery surface and the tree roots that were forever trying to trip you up.

After Brigade Hill, the significance of the Military History seemed to fade. By this stage I was feeling pretty washed out and there were no significant battles after Brigade Hill anyway. The Japanese got as far as the village of Iorobaiwa (now long abandoned).

The Japanese turned back at Iorobaiwa not because of a significant battle but because they were ordered to withdraw. The Australians then chased them back over the Owen Stanleys and joined with the Americans to defeat them decisively at Buna.

Our last night on the Track was spent in a bush camp beside the Track. It is amazing how many small hiking tents can be put up in such a small space. Level spots are at a bit of a premium.

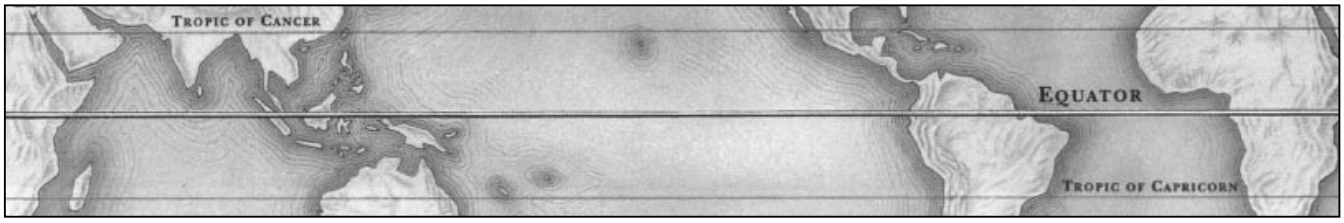
The final day involved a 550 metre climb to the top of Imita Ridge followed by a 400 metre descent to the Goldie River and a final 400 metre climb to Owers Corner. By the time I got to the top at Owers Corner, I was absolutely spent.

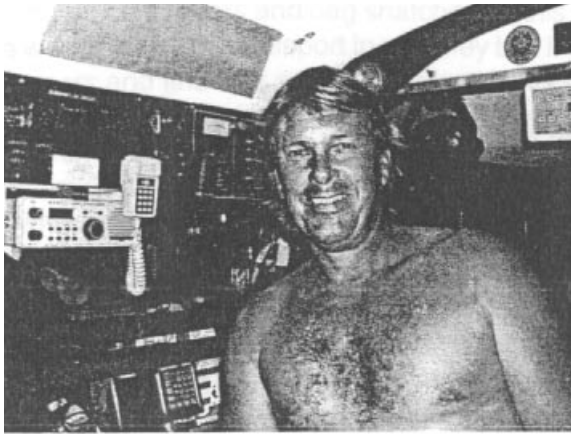
I am really pleased that I went on the trek. Completing the walk gives you a great sense accomplishment, but more than that it gives you a great deal of respect for the men who fought and died there.

On the 31st of August the Swans will be playing a match against Richmond to commemorate the campaign at Stadium Australia in Sydney. Health permitting, Ovuru Indiki, one of the original Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels will be flown down for the game and every Kokoda veteran is being invited to the match. I for one will be there to witness the event and to honour them for the sacrifices they made. In my opinion, every soldier who set foot on that track is a bloody hero.

Around the World

Part III of a story by Ron Llewellyn 4/71





Author – Ron Llewellyn

The three weeks it had taken me to sail the two thousand miles from the island of St Helena, in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean, to Salvador in Brazil marked the longest single passage, so far, on my voyage around the world. It may have been the longest, but with no severe weather or equipment problems it was also the most pleasant.

As I approached the coast of Brazil I picked up a number of strobe lights directly on my set course and believing them to be markers for commercial fishing gear I altered course to steer around them. I had been warned of the thousands of fish traps which can be found on the coastal shelf up to thirty miles off the coast, and which if caught around your rudder or propeller can cause all sorts of problems as a number of yachts could testify to. As night set in I tried to skirt the strobe lights but always they remained on my course. Eventually I realised that they were not in fact fishing markers but were fixed to the top of the taller buildings of the large city of Salvador. It seems Brazillians have a "thing" for strobe lights and mount them on almost everything whether static or mobile, especially their flashy powerboats. This can cause untold confusion with night navigation as I had just discovered.

Salvador, with a population of around two and half million, is the capital of the state of Bahia and is a very impressive city when approached from the sea. On closer inspection decaying and derelict buildings dot the landscape and hit at the poverty within. Situated on the shores of a large bay, it has a protected anchorage and after three weeks alone I was looking forward to getting ashore for a talk and a few beers.

Weather conditions were a bit unpleasant as I entered the harbour and as I only had a vague idea of where to go I set about sticking my nose into the various marinas and anchorages, wherever I saw a yacht mast, looking for a familiar face or an English speaking flagged vessel. This was the first time I had come across the "Mediterranean Mooring" system of berthing vessels and for a single handler this can be a real test of deck dexterity. It involves selecting a spot on the dock to which you are going to reverse into. You then proceed out from this spot and drop your anchor and then at the same time as you are paying out your anchor chain you reverse the boat into the chosen spot. To pay out the anchor chain requires you to be at the bow and to reverse the vessel requires you to be at the helm. Without some assistance to secure dock lines this is nearly impossible. Add to this manoeuvre wind and current and you have the recipe for a very interesting and potentially costly disaster. So consequently I said, "bugger that" and came alongside as you would in a proper marina. This causes the problem that you now take up the space of three vessels so it was inevitable that my first contact with another person was with the Portuguese speaking security guard on the marina pointing this fact out to me and me replying "Un persona, impossible." He appeared to accept this and did not push the point. Everyday for the next week they would ask me to move and every day I said OK. Anyway here I was in Brazil.

After securing "SULA" and shutting down her various systems my next priority was to check in with the appropriate authorities. I had been warned about the bureaucracy of Brazillian officialdom so I was prepared for a lengthy and tedious procedure. One quirk of custom of which I was aware was the requirement for men to wear long trousers when doing official business in Brazil. More than one yachts master has been sent packing to come back when he was correctly attired. The skipper of one

delivery yacht was made to acquire all sorts of obscure documents from various widely scattered authorities, which eventually held up his planned departure for three days. I pointed out to him that no one else was being given a hard time and maybe it was because he was wearing shorts. After a shave, a collared shirt and long trousers the problem seemed to go away.

Armed with passport, ship's papers and every other document you feel may be relevant your first steps into a strange city can be quite daunting. Very few Brazillians speak English and I had been warned about the dangers of muggers and bag snatchers in this part of the world. I carry my passport in a money belt inside my trousers and find that a plain old plastic shopping bag for my papers is unlikely to attract attention. I carry my "official clothes" in the bag and change out of my street "scungies" when I arrive at my destination. It goes without saying, no watch, and no jewellery. One of the first things I noticed was how Brazillian girls carried their backpacks on their front to prevent them being grabbed.

The dock area of any city is usually not the place you want to be wandering around. About a mile from the marina I first attended the Policia Federal (Immigration) and immediately struck one of those public servants who will be an absolute pain in the neck simply because he can. I was shown to his office but as he was not there I was stuck in a waiting room. There was no one else waiting, so after half an hour and with my patience wearing a bit thin, I entered what was obviously the "officials only" sanctum and went unannounced and unescorted to the office I had initially been taken to. My subservient smile covered the anger I felt as there he sat watching television. He was obviously very displeased at my appearance and very grudgingly performed the required formalities. I hoped he would have forgotten me by the time I had to clear out.

Customs were polite but so slow and after generating an enormous amount of paperwork, none of which I could understand, except the bit that said if I overstayed my visa I would have to pay forty five thousand US dollars duty on *Sula*. I noted my departure date closely.

My final call was to the Port Captain. In Brazil this is like their Navy. Armed guards, flashy uniforms and even more paper, but, polite and slowly efficient. I have no idea what they do with the myriad of forms that are generated by the arrival of one small private yacht. On arrival back at the marina it seemed that the three hours that it had taken me to clear in was somewhat of a speed record and our TV watching federal policeman was well known for his obstructionist tactics. Anyway, that now over I could not wait to get into this city. During my wanderings along the dock area I was somewhat taken back by the way the men would simply urinate anywhere the urge took them and the sleeping street children reinforced my earlier observations that there was extreme poverty here. I was very conscious of my personal safety but in hindsight probably a bit over anxious. Still, to let your guard down completely was asking for trouble, as I would eventually find out.

The days past quickly in this vibrant city. Brazillians love the night and around 10 o'clock in the evenings the streets come alive and music assaults the senses from every direction. This was my first experience of the Spanish way of life and I loved it. After a week of constant over indulgence I decided to give my body a rest and explore the surrounding area. I spent ten days sailing around the "Baia de Todos os Santos" (Bay of all Saints), visiting the island of Itaparica and the Paraguacu River. Although I saw a couple of other cruising yachts I never met any and as I was not prepared to leave my boat unattended at night my visiting was very restricted.

Every port seems to have them. I am talking about

Sula beached for maintenance.

the "sea gypsies", those drifters from every country imaginable living on board dilapidated yachts, whose immigration permits have long expired and who live from hand to mouth on a diet of rice, fish and rum and with whom, on my return to Salvador, I managed to anchor right amidst. South Africans, account for a significant percentage of cruisers on the Brazillian coast and have their share of sea gypsies and, as I like these people immensely, I was right at home. Accompanied by their very streetwise local girlfriends new horizons were opened. Where else in the world can you take your own drinks, sit in an outdoor restaurant and order your food from passing street vendors while the restaurant supplies cups, limes and ice. As long as at least one drink was ordered from the restaurant there was no problem. It was while heading home alone (believe that if you like) after one of these typical nights out that

I experienced by first incident of being pick pocketed. It would not have taken a very skilled person to pick my pocket as I had completely dulled my senses drinking the local "horse tranquilliser" known as Cachasa. Still it was a lesson.

I had around six months to kill as I waited out the Northern Hemisphere hurricane season but as there was a lot of coast between here and the Panama Canal I reluctantly tore myself away from Salvador. Next leg 430 miles north to Cabedello and the river village of Jacare. This leg was marked by a close quarters situation with a large cargo vessel. Always the main worry for the solo sailor, sleep versus maintaining a lookout, I awoke to a sixth sense and came on deck to find myself directly in the path of this vessel. Only my radical change of course avoided a possible collision. I wonder what their watch keeper was doing? Although there was no significant weather on this leg the adverse current and the need to avoid the numerous fishing boats and hundreds of fish trap floats meant a very fatiguing passage. The 430 miles took eight long days. An average speed against the current of just over two knots over the ground. I entered the harbour of Cabedello at last light, in a fierce squall, dropped the anchor and climbed into my berth. Next morning I motored up the river to the village of Jacare to what would be my home for the next three and a half months.

There were about 15 other yachts anchored here, most from South Africa, and they had taken over one of the bars located right on the river and in which a wonderful atmosphere of social intercourse and camaraderie prevailed. "Sing alongs" and BBQs were regular events as was the Sunday night *Forro* (Brazillian style of dance which resembles sex standing up) in the the village.

Jacare is a small village of perhaps 400 people, which backs onto a sprawling "favela" (slum). The area is very poor and was not frequented all that often by the sailors. During my time here I made some very good friends in the village and spent quite a bit of time there. One woman in the village would regularly cook me very fresh fried chicken. The preparation was very basic but the end result was delicious. I knew that the money I gave her not only covered my share but fed her whole family as well. Apart from the fishing in the river I never could see how these people were able to survive.

As is the case in so many third world countries the gap between the rich and the poor is staggering. Literally across the road from the slum wealthy high rise buildings and shopping centres adorn the landscape. Just a few minutes by bus from Jacare were the largest supermarket I have ever seen. 55 check out lanes and on a quiet day 50 of them would be attended. Free coffee and food samples, a roving band and you really could eat off the floor. Price check girls scoot around on roller blades.

The focus of life on the coast of Brazil is the beach. Rich or poor, on weekends and the ever-occurring holidays everybody flocks to the beach. Tables and chairs sprawl from restaurants and bars right to the waters edge and the famous Brazilian bikinis "fio dental" (dental floss) make this a bird watchers paradise.

When I first arrived in Jacare two women had been the victims of bag snatching youths within sight of their yachts and hence probably the reluctance of the sailors to frequent the village, especially at night. My little wake up call came one evening when I had gone to shore "only for a few minutes". Another beer and another beer later I went back out to my yacht, only 100 metres from the bar, to find that I had been boarded and robbed. I always lock the boat at night but on this occasion I had gone ashore in daylight and had not locked it. When darkness fell a passing fishing boat had seized the opportunity. I lost a lot of gear but they did not damage anything. A costly lesson. It turned out that another boat was also boarded around the same time but the thieves must have been disturbed as they only got away with a Teddy Bear. The matter was reported to the police and reward notices were put up all over the village, all to no avail. Not long after these incidents dinghies started going missing and outboard motors were stolen. Someone even tried to cut a yacht away from its anchor. Yacht mail disappeared from the boat yard office and clothing was taken off yachts in broad daylight. The atmosphere changed and the yachts started to move out. We were almost certain that the people responsible for these acts did not come from Jacare but came from one of the villages just upstream.

I was sorry to leave Jacare but with a strictly enforced six-month visa for Brazil my time was running out and I was looking forward to the luxury of Fortaleza. Half way through the 350 mile run to Fortaleza I hit the west bound current and made good time, arriving in exactly three days. It was on the last night that I had a very close call with a fishing boat. Due to the number of these vessels along the coast I had to keep constant watch at night. Usually not equipped with proper navigation lights it is very difficult to know what these boats are doing. On this occasion I was monitoring a single light on my course, prepared to take avoiding action if necessary when I went below to check my navigation. Suddenly I could hear voices shouting and I raced topside to see the stern of a large fishing boat only a couple of metres from my side. The fishing boat was anchored twenty odd miles off the coast and I had mistaken the low intensity light for distance, thinking it was still a good way from me. I could literally have passed a cold beer to the crew.

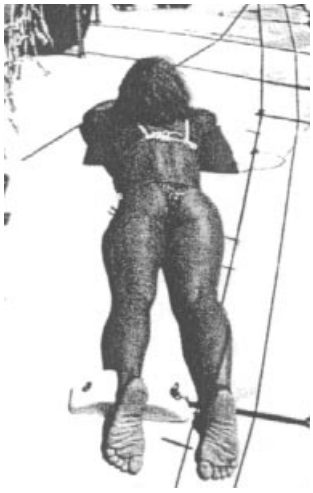
Instead I just stared at them as they receded in my wake and thought how close I had come to a nasty incident. It was entirely my fault. This was not to be the only near miss I would have and in analysing these incidents fatigue stands out as a major factor. I far prefer the wide-open spaces of crossing oceans to coastal passages, any day. I laugh at organisations that assess sailing experience by the number of "blue water" miles a person has logged. Australia has the right idea in recognising the number of days at sea as the criteria for assessing experience.

There is little choice of where to anchor in Fortaleza. If you anchor in or near the fishing harbour you will be robbed. Even if you are aboard, you will be robbed. So the only choice was the Marina Park Hotel, five star luxury. I could not believe it when I was told that for just AUS$9 per day I had a secure berth, electricity, water and full use of the hotel facilities, including gymnasium, pool and free coffee and biscuits in the foyer. Why hadn't I found this place sooner.

Just like Salvador, in Fortaleza it all happened at night. It took about a week to change body pattern from day to night. Getting home as the sun came up and sleeping and lounging by the pool all day. The beach culture was fantastic and even a couple of incidents could not scar the memories of a wonderful six weeks.

Early one evening three young women abused my hospitality by drugging my drink. I woke up, in the street about six hours later with empty pockets. Evidently this is not an uncommon modus operandi. Tourist guides warn of this little trick. The other incident occurred when a policeman, discovering that a friend and I were not carrying any ID (a requirement in Brazil), told us that this was very serious and that we would have to accompany him to the police station. I explained that I had my ID on the boat and he then advised that "I am very hungry". I looked at him quizzically and he repeated that he was very hungry. The penny then dropped and I pulled out some money and said that he may like to buy a pizza. My friend did the same. He took the money and then told us that now he would look after us that if we got in any trouble around town to see him and he would fix it.

Brazil is well known for the beauty of its women but western women that I spoke with, in general, did not feel the same way about Brazilian menfolk. Women move to the richer, populated coastal cities to escape poverty and outnumber the men by a long shot. Foreign men are in high demand. Hence, Brazilian women are aggressive pursuers of available men and very possessive when they have landed one. A fairly common approach was for a woman to come up to you and touch the back of her hand to



Shore crew working hard on deck.

yours. She would then pass a small note with her name and phone number on it. Not being able to speak conversational Portuguese this was not much use to me, but the attention was flattering. I would sometimes come home with two or three small notes. Brazil is a single man's paradise and I was going to miss it very much.

Whilst in Brazil I had a close look at my financial situation and decided that the kitty could do with a little boost. Enquiries I made indicated that the best place to find work would be in the yacht charter industry in the Caribbean but I would need to be there at the start of the season around mid November. I had worked for a while in the Whitsundays where I had skippered a number of yachts including the maxi *Appolo*, and Alan Bond's ex boat *Apollo 111*. According to my passage guide the hurricane season finished at the end of October. With this information I decided to head straight from Fortaleza to St Martin a distance of around two thousand miles, putting me in St Martin around mid November.

During this voyage I would be crossing not only the equator but an area of unstable weather known officially as the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) but probably better known as "the Doldrums". This area which can be around 300-400 miles wide is known for very unsettled weather and most boats are prepared to motor through this zone, should the need arise.

For the first three days sailing conditions were fast but uncomfortable with fresh southeasterly trade winds pushing me north. I crossed the equator at 0633 hrs on day three and had planned to celebrate with a can of Victoria Bitter but I somehow couldn't face a beer that early in the morning so I postponed the celebration till sunset. The following day the first rain squalls started. The squalls got more intense and the wind dropped away. One particular squall, which hit me at 0230hrs, reached 50 knots and forced me to heave-to. I made a note in my log that this was the first time I have ever had to

heave-to in anger. Typically the days were HOT! With little wind and confused seas, while the nights hid squalls of rig damaging intensity. I didn't use my engine and after five days of these conditions I noted the wind start to come out of the north east and wrote in the log "Think I'm through the ITCZ – Great."

Eleven days out of Forteleza the sun disappeared behind the clouds, scattered showers and rain squalls moved in and at 2300 hrs all hell broke loose. I raced on deck to find *Sula* out of control, healing violently to a severe rain squall. The mainsail was already double reefed but she would not respond to the helm and it was impossible to tack through the wind to heave-to. I winched in the windward staysail sheet effectively backing it and achieved heave-to on my set course. I had not had time to close the companionway hatch and rain was pouring into the saloon, luckily only soaking the galley and not the navigation table.

Conditions were still extreme outside and even heavily reefed as I was carrying too much sail. As I considered my next move nature added a helping hand and as I peered through the pelting rain I saw the mainsail start to disintegrate under the assault of the wind. I had no choice, the main had to come down. This is probably the most dangerous procedure, as a solo sailor, that I have to perform. Usually I will rehearse this procedure in my mind before leaving the cockpit but on this occasion speed was essential if I was going to have any chance to save the sail. I released the halyard, crawled to the mast, and with only the strength that a frightened man can muster hauled the sail down by hand. As the sail came down I could tell that I had not been quick enough and noted that damage was extensive. Next day revealed the full extent of the damage, which was well beyond my resources to repair at sea. I had 700 miles to go and now no mainsail. Fortunately *Sula* is cutter rigged and with the wind forward of the beam sails beautifully with the genoa and staysail. I was not the least concerned, it might just take a little longer than planned.

Twenty days out I saw the lights of Antigua and at 1000 hrs the next morning I sighted the island of St Barthelemy (St Bart's). A few hours later St Martin appeared through the haze and at 1600 hrs I pulled up in Simpson Bay. St Martin has a huge lagoon accessed by two lifting bridges and it was another hour before I could go through the bridge and anchor in the lagoon.

The 1944 miles had taken twenty-one days. Now it was time to look for a job.

I'm presently in Columbia preparing to transit the Panama Canal around April. With fair winds I should be home late this year.

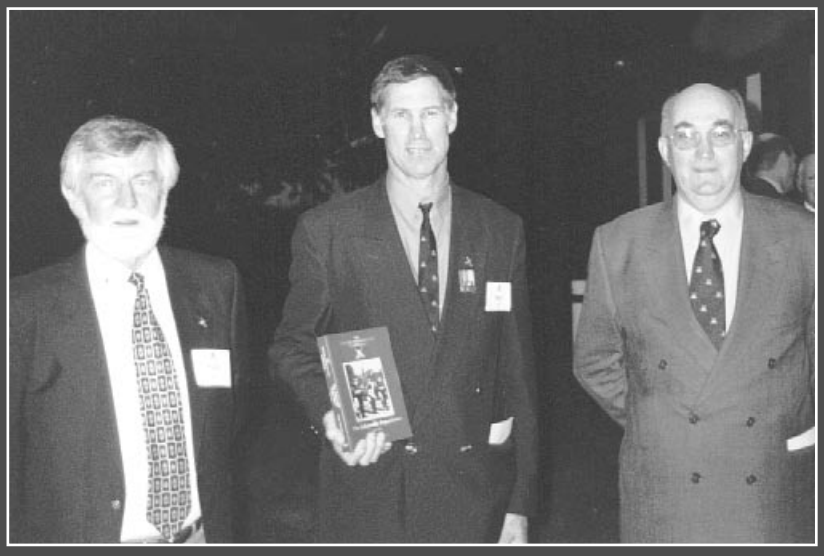
Dear Alan,

Find enclosed a photograph of three members of Class 3/68 taken after the Governor General's Banner Service in Canberra.

Paul Rees works in the aviation field in the Hunter Valley region; I am now a part-time electronics teacher at the University of Ballarat; and Paul Meldrum is an accountant with Roberts Nissan in Strathfield, Sydney.

See you at the dinner in June.

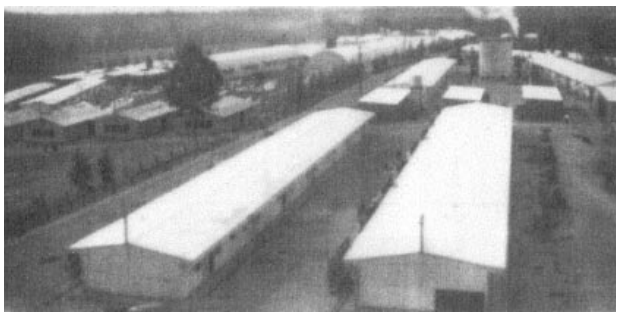
Neil Leckie



Scheyville National Park Conservation Management Plan

The OTU campus is now part of Scheyville National Park. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) recently commissioned a group of heritage conservation university students to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for three areas of the Park – the old farm, the four 1929 buildings surrounding the quadrangle, and the hut precinct containing the Mess and the Gym. I was part of the Hut Precinct Group. The process involved researching the history of the huts, then assessing what cultural significance the huts might have. Based on the significance, recommendations were made for ways of preserving what is important, and adapting the huts for new uses.

Our research uncovered documentation dating back to 1949 when the huts were built as part of the Scheyville Holding Centre for displaced people and migrants from Europe.



The Scheyville Holding Centre in the 1950s. The area to the south of the Mess and Gym was used as a laundry drying area, with the laundry huts which became OTU training rooms.

Scheyville in 1972.

The Centre became the OTU in April 1965, was used by the local community for several years following the closure of the OTU in 1973, then in 1978 became a residential campus for the Hawkesbury Agricultural College (now part of the University of Western Sydney). When the College moved out in 1983 the campus fell into disrepair, the huts were used by aircraft enthusiasts to restore planes while vandals and SWAT teams destroyed most of the other buildings. Over the next 10 years Scheyville was considered for a rubbish megatip, a maximum security prison, a second airport for Sydney then a major housing development with 4,500 houses.

The local community vigorously opposed all these ideas and due to its natural bushland the area eventually became a National Park in 1996 to fulfil one of Bob Carr's election promises. The lines, along with the school by the parade ground, and most of the other service huts were beyond repair and were demolished by NPWS. The concrete pads remain (under the weeds) so there is an opportunity to restore their visibility to give visitors to the Park an idea of how the migrants and Cadets lived.

Scheyville in 1997 after the demolition of many buildings but before the weeds covered the concrete pads.

Documents however, only provide a part of the story of a place. We are fortunate that the Hut Precinct, unlike the farm area, was used by people who are mostly still living. We have spoken to migrants for whom the Centre provided a first (often unpleasant) experience of the Australian way of life, and enjoyed meeting and lunching with OTU graduates. It was clear that the "Scheyville Experience" has real meaning for those people. It was harder finding any Hawkesbury Agricultural College ex-students who valued the place, or any subsequent users who were not more focussed on destroying it.

In the migrant documentation we discovered that the Mess and Gym huts are large examples of an American Quonset Hut. They are Quonset Warehouses, also known in Australia as SAAR Huts (we have not discovered the meaning of SAAR). Unlike the more common British Nissen Huts, the iron cladding in Quonset Huts is not all vertical, and the ribs have an "I" profile.

We concluded that the cultural significance of the Hut Precinct was related primarily to its use by migrants and the OTU, and the rarity of the SAAR huts. NSW Heritage Council guidelines provide 4 categories under which cultural significance can be assessed – historical, aesthetic, social and scientific. The results of our assessment were:

> The huts, their facilities and the siting of other now-demolished buildings at Scheyville have high social and historical significance for NSW as they reflect the attitude to and treatment of migrants by Australia during the post WWII period, where segregation of migrant families, poor living conditions and a lack of Australian people's understanding of other cultures, marked a time when Australia needed migrants yet was only prepared to accept them as"New Australians". This was a time of assimilation policy; the precursor of multiculturalism.
>
> The intense physical and mental training endured by the OTU Officer Cadets led to 1,803 graduating as Second Lieutenants, many of whom led platoons during the Vietnam War. The 22-week course is unique in the history of the Australian Army, making the hut precinct and surrounding camp area a highly significant marker of Australia's national history.
>
> The huts are of medium scientific significance to NSW as representative examples of SAAR huts, an increasingly rare variant of the American Quonset hut. Only two outside Scheyville are known to still exist in NSW. The Scheyville huts are representative of the re-use of US WWII army buildings for postwar Australian migration facilities, being part of a shipment of 30 SAAR huts from the US Army base on Manus Island in the Pacific, north of New Guinea.

The conservation of the hut precinct focuses on continuing the use of the huts for social and communal purposes while maintaining the cladding, rib structure and internal sense of space, which define the huts as SAAR huts. The concrete pads are to be retained and through appropriate management given greater visibility to provide the opportunity for visitors to the Park to appreciate the scale and operation of both the Holding Centre and the OTU, and to facilitate the interpretation of the pivotal role played by the hut precinct in servicing the camp area. It is imperative that the historic precinct remains in public ownership.

Our detailed strategies supporting those policies include:

- Encourage community activities and access.
- Give priority to OTU & migrant groups who wish to use the hut precinct.
- Prepare huts to accommodate dining and other activities in relation to the OTU reunion in 2003.
- Represent the OTU phase by maintaining the sandstone flanking walls at the Park entrance, along the entry drive through to the highly ordered camp area and parade ground.
- Reinstate numbering from OTU phase and names from OTU & migrant phase.
- Expand the scope of uses for the camp area by the rebuilding of the OTU's "Kings Row" as additional, less basic accommodation or the school/classroom by the parade ground.
- Set aside a secure area for memorabilia and make available video material such as "The Scheyville Experience".

Of course, it will be up to NPWS to decide if any of our recommendations will be adopted. However, our discussions with them indicate that they are keen to retain and refurbish the huts with an appropriate use such as part of a conference or training centre, and recognise the significance of the Hut Precinct to the OTU Association. Perhaps the next OTU reunion will be held in such a facility.

Pam Lofthouse

Seen in the News:

Gordon Wheaton 1/67
Excerpt from *The Sydney Morning Herald*
June 27, 2002
by Anthony Hughes

Visa International yesterday fired what may prove to be one of the final salvos in its battle over credit cards, accusing the Reserve Bank of Australia of lacking accountability and engaging in ìexperimentationî via its looming reforms to the payments system.

Visa's executive vice-president for Australia and New Zealand, **Gordon Wheaton**, said the RBA did not meet the standards of accountability of other regulators because its decision – likely to be handed down within the next few months – was not subject to appeal.
"If there are no appeal rights against public servants in the RBA, then why canít other industries be treated in the same disdainful manner?" Mr Wheaton asked.
"When a group of public servants seek to second guess the market, itís no wonder they are challenged."

Mr Wheaton's comments reflect frustration that the RBA has not taken into account the views of the card industry in its review of the Visa, Mastercard and Bankcard schemes despite lengthy consultation.

Visa recently completed the last of its formal meetings with the RBA, but has come away with little comfort that the bank has moderated its stance.

Mastercard reports a similar experience and has threatened to sidestep the reforms by over hauling its structure.

"(The RBA) cannot ban external lawyers from meetings as it has done with us," Mr Wheaton told an American Chamber of Commerce lunch in Sydney yesterday.

Visa would pursue legal action as a last resort to defend its business, he said

Visa, as a major sponsor of the event, had brought many international bankers to visit. But the message the RBA was sending to business was "if you do a good job building a business in Australia, you risk being made a public utility".

The RBA's proposal to cut the interchange fee (the wholesale fee levied by card-issuing banks on the merchant's bank) had no mechanism to ensure lower pricing would be passed on to consumers, while the "no-surcharge" rules would not stop retailers from "gouging the public" – particularly in country areas with low levels of competition. Access to the schemes will also be opened to new contenders.

Mr Wheaton also questioned why, if there was a lack of competition in credit cards, the ACCC had allowed GE Capital to buy Westpac's AGC finance arm, which is heavily involved in in-store credit and store cards.

Geoff Schuberg 3/67
In *The Sydney Morning Herald*
2 July 2002
by Marian Wilkinson

Just how much power does Alan Jones and his maverick crime advisers have over the Police Minister Michael Costa? A lot, according to former police commissioner Peter Ryan, and their influence is determining who is in and out of favour in police headquarters. Ryan believes Jones and his friends were behind the strategy to isolate him after Costa took over as minister late last year.

"I think there was an agenda. It wasn't immediately apparent that I was one of the targets of the agenda but within a matter of weeks it became very apparent he (Costa) wasn't going to listen to me." Ryan said yesterday after the launch of his biography.

Ryan calls the critics "the gang of four". Alongside the radio talkback host are the rebel Cabramatta police officer, Tim Priest, academic ethnic crime writer, Richard Basham, and former self-styled "white knight" of the force, **Geoff Schuberg**, who was removed from his senior position by Ryan five years before.

According to Ryan, shortly after he took over the ministry, Costa was "regurgitating" the views of the four on how to run the police force.

"I thought at first it was just a matter of bringing them into the tent," said Ryan, "but Costa was making statements that were coming straight from them, on policy matters, reforming the squads (and) having some kind of advisory body."

Ryan claims that Costa told him in February to sack his senior regional commanders – an idea, he says that came from the "gang of four". Ryan's claim is refuted by the minister but Ryan's version of this meeting in his biography is causing deep concern in senior police ranks. Ryan believes the idea to get rid of the regional commanders included sacking the high profile officer, Clive Small, whom the Premier had praised for cleaning up Cabramatta.

Ryan is wrong in thinking his only critics were Jones and his friends. He was rightly held accountable for policing failures during his watch. But even among Ryan's detractors there is a growing anxiety that anyone denounced by the so-called gang of four will see their careers suffer.

Costa's recent decision to put Schuberg in charge of an inquiry on promotions has added to that anxiety and fears that the commissioner's office has, as Ryan puts it, "given away the keys to the asylum".

EDITOR: Found in the archives. Remember these?

These charges were heard at the Subbies Court after the Formal Dining-in, July 1971.

(Owen Williamson 4170, Stan Maizey DS.)

AAF – A 4 AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES * Elected to be tried by Court Martial

CHARGE REPORT

Sheet No. 1 of 1 Sheets

CHARGE(S) against No. 3799893 RANK AND GROUP 2Lt PROBATIONARY (Substantive and temporary, etc)

NAME O.C. WILLIAMSON PARENT UNIT Puckapunyal Area Wksp (Company, etc) SUB-UNIT HQ

UNIT HQ Puckapunyal Area (Where Charged) SUB-UNIT Puckapunyal Area Officers Mess CORPS RAEME

Charge No	PARTICULARS OF CHARGE(S)
First	IS GUILTY OF CONDUCT AND NEGLECT TO THE PREJUDICE OF GOOD ORDER AND MILITARY DISCIPLINE, in that he came to an informal dinner at this Mess on Sun 26 JUL 71 in a roll neck jumper and desert boots.
Charged under AA DA or AMR	AMR&O R203(1) LX
Second	IS GUILTY OF NEGLECT TO THE PREJUDICE in that he, tonight, being the youngest and most junior member of this mess is not acting as Mr VICE-PRESIDENT.
Charged under AA DA or AMR	AMR&O R203(1) LX
Third	

AAF - A 4
Revised June 1968

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES * Elected to be tried by Court Martial

CHARGE REPORT

Sheet No 1 of 1 Sheets

CHARGE(S) against No 325023 RANK AND GROUP Lt Col (Substantive and temporary, etc.)

NAME S.J. MAIZEY PARENT UNIT 2 RTB (Company, etc.) SUB-UNIT Bn HQ

UNIT HQ Puckapunyal Area (Where Charged) SUB-UNIT Puckapunyal Area Officers Mess CORPS RA Inf

Charge No	PARTICULARS OF CHARGE(S)
First	NEGLECTS TO OBEY GENERAL ORDERS, in that he, on the 10 Jun 71 did play cards for more than bridge stakes in this mess until 0430 hrs the following morning.
Charged under AA DA or AMR	AMR&O R205(1)xix
Second	IS GUILTY OF AN ACT TO THE PREJUDICE OF GOOD ORDER, in that, he, being a self proclaimed card sharp, did lose to the "Subbies" in a card game at this mess on the 10 Jun 71.
Charged under AA DA or AMR	AMR&O R203(1) LX
Third	

Anzac women
reclaim their beloved soldier patriarch

A proud clan gathered to farewell Gallipoli's last man, ***Tony Stephens*** *writes.*
(Courtesy The Sydney Morning Herald, May 25 2002)

Flanked by his daughter, granddaughters and great-granddaughters, Alec Campbell's coffin leaves St David's Cathedral.

Alec Campbell, the last survivor of the Gallipoli campaign, was buried yesterday, a cold Tasmanian day that brought to the Anzac legend a clarity as fresh and welcome as the blue sky.

It was the old soldier's family who did it, the Campbell clan. Above all, it was the magnificent Campbell women.

The widow, Kate Campbell, the 10 proud women pallbearers who marched with the coffin on the gun carriage, the 60 other direct descendants of Alec Campbell, and another 70 members of their families who attended the state funeral demonstrated dramatically the extent of Australia's losses in World War I.

Australia lost 8709 men on Gallipoli and 48,617 in France and Belgium. Alec Campbell survived to produce his admirable clan. What might all those other young men have achieved for the young nation?

Alec Campbell had asked the question often. One of his six daughters, Caithleen (Sam) Claridge, said in her eulogy in St David's Cathedral, Hobart, that her father didn't talk much about war but that he marched on Anzac Day "for the young men claimed by the Gallipoli campaign".

Gallipoli for Mr Campbell was six weeks in a rich and rewarding life of 103 years. He had campaigned between the wars for peace. Yet, in a sense, he had re-enlisted in the last few years to continue to serve the Anzac legend.

He had become an accidental celebrity through the link between his longevity and a war on the other side of the world nearly 90 years ago.

The Campbell clan went along with his last tour of duty. Yesterday they reclaimed their man.

This service for the last original Anzac, and probably the last veteran of the war on the Turkish peninsula anywhere in the world, was not so much a state funeral as a family funeral on a grand scale.

The Campbells had not much wanted a state funeral. They decided, however, that they would complete the patriarch's last tour of duty.

Women are often neglected on such occasions, even when war made them widows or when their men came home so bruised that life became intolerable.

The Campbells did not let that happen. Alec had insisted that all of his children should receive good educations. Two of his

children have PhDs, and Mrs Claridge said in the Cathedral: "There is a continuing legacy of study among the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren." Wreaths outside the cathedral included one from the Turkish Association. A note on one said: "Thanks Digger." Another was addressed "To Dad".

A mourning bell tolled 103 times, once for every year of his life.

The Australian flag covered the coffin, along with his medals and a bayonet. The Chief of Army, Lieutenant-General Peter Cosgrove, placed a forage cap on top.

The Prime Minister, John Howard, quoted in his tribute Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood, British Commander of the Anzac force at Gallipoli: "No words of mine could ever convey to readers in Australia half of what their boys have been through ... the courage and determination and cheerfulness of those who have willingly fought for their country's sake."

Mr Howard spoke of "the respect we feel and the debt we owe to this grand old man and those he came to represent. Within his generation can be found much of the richness of this nation's history."

"Within this one life are illustrated the living values that transformed Australia from the hopeful young federation of Alec's childhood to one of the great developed nations of the modern era."

The Prime Minister said that young Australians drew strength from the Anzac story. He said that the nation pledged itself to an ethos of selflessness, shared determination, courage and compassion, adding: "We make a silent promise that the values for which so many Australians died, and others like Alec Campbell lived, will remain secure within our won lives."

Mr Howard paid tribute to Mr Campbell's work as trade union leader. (Mr Scott McLean, Tasmanian secretary of the CFMEU, had said earlier that when another unionist suggested Mr Campbell would have a state funeral, the Anzac said he doubted whether the Prime Minister would do that for an old trade unionist.)

Mr Howard paid tribute, too, to the way in which Mr Campbell had shouldered "the weight of history imposed upon him" in his old age. The Prime Minister bowed to the coffin.

Mrs Claridge remembered her father as a carpenter, swimmer, mender of shoes, milker of cows, panner for gold and reader of books about politics, philosophy and the origin of the species. He was an inspirational parent. Dr Neil Campbell, one of his sons, said "Alec Campbell was a good man, loved by his family, liked and respected by many."

Mourners placed red paper poppies, handmade by a great-granddaughter, Sylvia Claridge, in an urn. Frank MacDonald, who won the Military Medal in France and is now 104, struggled to his feet for a bugler's *The Last Post.*

Riders dressed in Lighthorse uniform led the funeral procession. A volley of three shots was fired, followed by a 21-gun salute and Alec Campbell was driven to Cornelian Bay cemetery.

Boys and girls wearing red paper poppies, having witnessed history, pelted one another with late autumn leaves.

NSW Luncheon – Concord Golf Club – 16 May 02

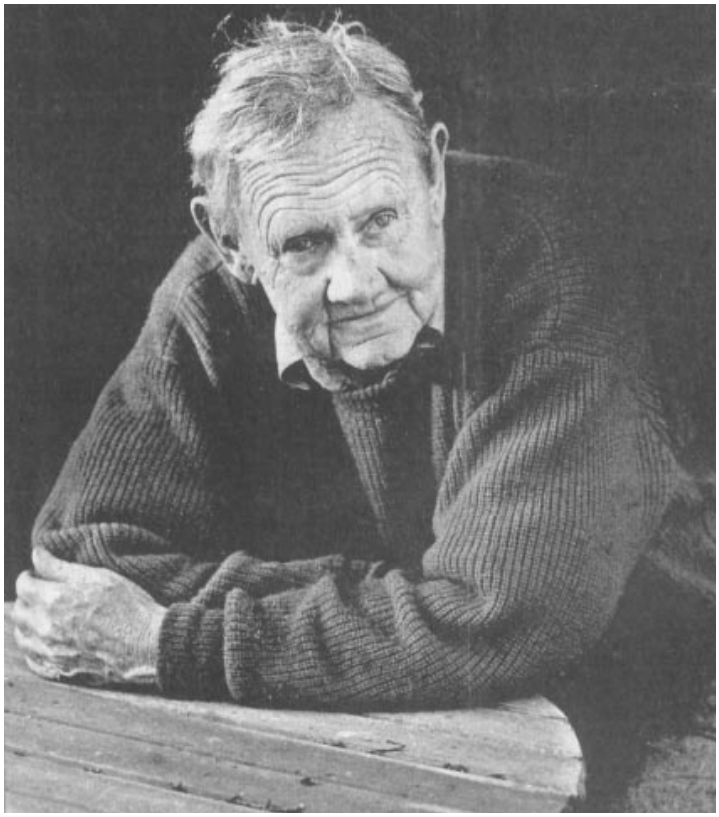
Another great lunch was held at the Concord Golf Club with seventeen middle aged Scheyvillians and one lovely lady to improve the flavour of the occasion. The 'hard core' regulars were in attendance and we appreciate their support. As seems to be the case recently, about half the diners are 'casual' or new members. If you have not been before, consider the next lunch on 22 August. The business of the branch was dispensed with quickly, drinks and lunch ordered and serious affairs of politics, economics, weather, finance.

Pam Lofthouse, a post graduate student gave an explanation of some research she and several other groups are undertaking into the development and use of Scheyville over the years. She gave us some of the history she has already uncovered and how her group is seeking to uncover stories about the 'Nissan' huts we used as a Mess and a Gym. Look for her story elsewhere in this edition. If a heritage value of at least one of these huts can be satisfied, there is an idea that NSW Parks and Wildlife may attempt to refurbish one of these huts for use a function centre. We have already considered this as a base for the proposed reunion.

Don't forget the next luncheon on 22 August at the same venue. Have your say about your Association to many of the National Committee members. We propose to present the OTU notice board and banner to St Matthews Church at Windsor sometime in July or August. Remember if you wish to be involved, let Greg Todd know.

This Life

Gentleman John fell on his sword



John Grey Gorton
Prime Minister of Australia (1968-71)
1911–2002

By Damien Murphy,
courtesy The Sydney Morning Herald 21 May 2002
Main photo: Mike Bowers

Controversy is the stock-in-trade of politicians but few other prime ministers stirred the pot so vigorously as John Gorton during his 38 months in office before, in the last Edwardian gentlemanly gesture of Australian politics, falling on his sword.

Sir John, who died on Sunday at the age of 90, came to office when Australians were still stunned by the 1967 Portsea drowning of Harold Holt.

During his first few months in office, he rode the wave of goodwill inevitably awarded a newcomer. The goodwill could not last; Gorton was too much his own man for that. So trapped by his own nature and hamstrung by lesser rivals, the wrangling continued until the day his own casting vote put him out of office on March 10, 1971.

In retrospect, Australia seemed asleep at the wheel during most of the Gorton years. The Vietnam War was a worsening wound; overseas, Russia invaded Czechoslovakia, students rioted in Paris and students and yippies turned the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago into a farce.

Australia dozed on and what became known as the Gorton Experiment was to make the change of government inevitable after the brief interregnum of Bill McMahon. Gorton's watch was to be the most turbulent time to date in Australian politics, yet he left little to show he had passed this way. His term dismayed the establishment, entertained the public and thrilled the media which at the time, were just learning to turn politics into soap opera. He even made it worse by adopting Frank Sinatra's theme song, (I Did It) My Way, just as the 53-year-old singer, by then somewhat passe, was divorcing 23-year-old Mia Farrow after a three-year marriage.

Sir John himself had an unsettling upbringing. Born on September 9, 1911, possibly in either Melbourne or Wellington, New Zealand, his parents – the English-born businessman John Rose Gorton and Melburnian Alice Sinn – were not married. Their first child, Ruth, was farmed out at birth to live with John Rose Gorton's wife, Kathleen in Sydney.

Young John was cared for by his maternal grandparents in Port Melbourne for his first five years but moved to Edgecliffe with his parents until Alice died from Tuberculosis in 1920. Devastated, his father left for Melbourne, leaving his son in the care of Kathleen in Cronulla and Killara. He eventually was sent to board at Shore School at North Sydney in 1924, where one of his older contemporaries was Errol Flynn.

Leaving Sydney in 1926 Gorton worked on his father's orchard at Lake Kangaroo near Swan Hill, NorthWest Victoria enrolling at Geelong Grammar School the following year. He boarded there until 1930, becoming firm friends with Russell Drysdale, and eventually went on to be house captain and school prefect, rowing in the first crew in the Head of the River, playing in the first XV111 and running the 880 in the Associated Public School competition.

The small "l"liberalism that became the hallmark of Sir John's political career might have started in the slums of Geelong West when headmaster James Darling organised matriculation students to take food to the homes of the unemployed as the Depression began to bite in 1930.

Two years later, as was not unusual for some sons of the Victorian land, Gorton obtained a pilot's licence and went to Oxford. There he was troubled by the rise of European fascism and, although later claiming he majored in rowing, graduated with upper second-class honours.

In Spain on the eve of the civil war, he met Bettina (Betty) Brown, an American then aged 18, studying languages at the Sorbonne. They married in 1935 and returned to take over the Lake Kangaroo orchard when his father died the following year.

In 1940, Gorton enlisted in the RAAF. Involved in a dogfight with Japanese Zeros off Singapore, he crash-landed his Hurricane and smashed his face against the gunsight. Rescued from a small island, he joined a ship which was torpedoed and was picked up by HMAS Ballarat from a makeshift life raft. He returned to Australia, and to Betty and three small children, and, after surviving two aircraft accidents with No 77 Squadron, was assigned to the Operational Training Unit in Mildura. Just before demobbing, a surgeon repaired his damaged face.

In the spirit of service that followed the war, like many of his generation Gorton wished to contribute to the peace. He was elected to Kerang Shire Council in 1946, joined the Liberal and Country Party, fought against bank nationalisation and, although failing in a bid to win a state upper house seat, was elected to the Senate in the 1949 Menzies victory.

Appointed a minister in the Menzies government in 1958, Gorton eventually became government leader in the Senate, a house then popularly, and not wholly inaccurately, seen as the home of geriatric greybeards.

With Holt's death, Gorton's boosters within the Liberal Party argued that the former fighter pilot, with his war-scarred face and the engaging, boyish smile, would be more acceptable on television, then emerging as the most telling election campaign medium.

Although justly remembered for establishing the Australia Council and the Australian Film and Television School, mostly all that remains are the memories of the shenanigans and the untoward prime ministerial behaviour where "Gorton flu" became the euphemism for a prime ministerial hangover.

One story about Sir John's prodigious intake concerned his flying to Melbourne to address a dinner before the 1970 half Senate election. In his 2001 book *Mungo – The Man Who Laughs* the former Canberra hand Mungo MacCallum takes up the story after the prime minister had imbibed long and well:

"Eventually they wheeled him back to Tullamarine and poured him onto the plane which was to take him back to Canberra. Sensibly he decided to take a refreshing nap, but when he was woken by the thrumming of the engines some time later he felt decidedly queasy: so much so that he leaned into the aisle and threw up. A stewardess came to clear up the debris and Jolly John thought he had better make the best of it. "Well", he said, switching on his charm, "I suppose you're surprised that an old RAAF man like me still gets airsick occasionally?" To which the stewardess replied: "Well yes, sir, I am actually, because the plane hasn't taken off yet."

There had been high hopes when he became Prime Minister; a compromise candidate spawned by the Liberals' refusal to hand the position of PM to the only candidate then worthy of it – the Country Party's leader, John McEwen. Thus thwarted in his ambition, "Black Jack", a great hater, made certain his arch enemy, the lacklustre McMahon, wouldn't get it, either, simply by declaring that he would not serve in a McMahon administration. With the dour but qualified West Australian Paul Hasluck the only other possibility, the Melbourne Liberal hierarchy moved to retain the leadership for one of their own. They turned to the senator educated at Geelong Grammar.

But Gorton was not immediately seen as the person who would bring to the Liberal leadership a new image. Dyed-in-the-wool Liberals were not at ease with that new image and nor were Australians at large. The vast majority of both had been born and raised in the premiership either of Sir Robert Menzies (who delighted in declaring himself "British to the boot heels") or of Holt (Unblushing in his pronouncement that Australians were "all the way with LBJ").

Gorton, compared with either of his predecessors, had about him a new, strident nationalism; it was almost as though he could sniff the coming explosion of Ockerism in the '70s.

But the truth was the Liberals had very little choice. McEwen and McMahon had cancelled each other out; Hasluck was never a goer. So for perhaps the first time, an Australian political party opted for style over substance, for someone their campaign teams could sell.

For a while it worked. But soon Gorton's political judgements were being questioned. Within his own cabinet he found himself overruled on defence policy. And a little more than a year after his assumption of office, the federal Parliament was debating something it never had before: the personal life of the prime minister.

The debate began with charges peddled in a newsletter and developed into a long, embarrassing discussion of a late night visit by the Prime Minister and a young woman reporter to the US embassy. Ultimately, the House of Representatives defeated a motion that the allegations should be referred to the privileges committee.

Sir John missed his big opportunity at the end of 1968 when he gave way to pressure from the Democratic Labor Party and cancelled plans for a House of Representatives election. In the following months the electoral tide began to run strongly against him.

The debate on his personal life brought disastrous publicity; the Liberal premiers were at odds with his centralist policies; his own ministers were unhappy with his style of government. When Sir John faced electors in October 1969, he lost 15 and was saved by just 3000 votes. In the leadership ballot that followed, he narrowly survived a challenge from McMahon.

Meanwhile, opposition to Australia's involvement in Vietnam grew tumultuous with unprecedented crowds marching through capital city streets in May 1970, illustrating how out-of-step the Gorton administration had become. His greatest crisis was to come when he insisted

on introducing a bill giving the Commonwealth sovereignty over the continental shelf. It focused attention on the deteriorating relationships between the Commonwealth and the states and confirmed Liberal suspicions that his "centralist" tendencies were out of kilter with party thinking.

He questioned the traditional Liberal policy of forward defence and suggested Australia's interests might better be served by an "Israeli-type" army. Public references to "Malaya" instead of "Malaysia" – setting limits on Australian commitments – offended the Malaysian government, an offence which was to be compounded by withdrawing army units from Malacca to Singapore.

These were the big issues; there were plenty of smaller ones for a Prime Minister who took his chapter and verse from Sinatra. One was a cavalier disregard for the conventions of the Commonwealth Public Service. Prickly mandarins were enraged by controversial appointments which ranged from departmental heads to his private secretary, the young, attractive and fiercely independent Ainsley Gotto.

The final crisis came in March 1971, when his minister for defence, Malcolm Fraser, resigned after failing to obtain prime ministerial support. A no-confidence motion in the party room was tied 33-all and Sir John gallantly delivered his casting vote against himself. He could have survived but was sick of the bickering and sniping. Instead he left with a grand gesture, forcing the man who had spent the past three years undermining him to carry the Liberals to defeat. McMahon moved into The Lodge. Gorton became minister for defence but the less prominent job did not mean less controversy. When a book critical of his prime ministership appeared, Sir John chose to reply in a series of newspaper articles in which he, in turn, criticised some cabinet colleagues. McMahon dismissed him and he went to the backbench but did not remain silent, continuing to needle the government. A year after his dismissal, he was insisting to an interviewer that he would do it his way again "but slightly more diplomatically, maybe".

But there was no again. By March 1975, he had had enough. Gorton announced he would not nominate for his safe Victorian seat of Higgins but, outraged by the dismissal of the Whitlam government, advocated a vote for Labor and stood unsuccessfully as an independent for an ACT Senate seat.

There followed two decades of estrangement from the Liberal Party. That ended in June 1999 when the party officially welcomed Sir John back into the fold with a tribute dinner at Old Parliament House.

He was appointed a Privy Councillor in 1968 and a Companion of Honour in June 1971.

Sir John is survived by his second wife, Nancy Home, his sons, Michael and Robin, and a daughter, Joanna. His first wife, Bettina, died in 1983.

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Supporting your Association

Ph: 0401 010 205

Greg Todd writes:
OTU sponsored Tahir as part of our Youth Leadership program a couple of Lord Somers Camps ago and we set a new personal challenge for him – to complete Trailwalker! He has clearly risen to it – by completing the hike despite significant physical pain, thereby not letting his team down. Inspirational stuff from the young man!

7 June 2002

Ms L Goodwin
Principal - Arthur Phillip High School
Macquarie Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Dear Ms Goodwin

TAHIR MEHMED – OUTSTANDING ACHIEVER

I am writing to applaud Tahir Mehmed for an outstanding achievement in having recently successfully completed the Oxfam 2002 Sydney Trailwalker 100km endurance event.

The Oxfam Trailwalker is a community fund-raising event that was first run in Sydney in 1999. In its 4th year, the 2002 Sydney Trailwalker will likely have raised well in excess of $1m for Oxfam (Community Aid Abroad) projects, and Tahir has played an active part in assisting his team to raise more than $4,000.

The Trailwalker is a 100km endurance event where 4-person teams must run/walk a 100km bush course within 48 hours. The Sydney Trailwalker commences in the grounds of Hunters Hill High School and quickly finds its way onto the Great North Walk track through Sydney's national parks and concludes at Brooklyn on the Hawkesbury River. The course covers some very difficult terrain, and this year the course was made particularly difficult and hazardous with constant heavy rain. At least 1/3rd of the 300 teams that competed in the event over 24/25/26 May this year were forced to withdraw, and many other teams completed without all their team members. We are particularly proud that our team (Tahir, Anthea – an economist colleague of mine, Kate – my youngest daughter, and myself) held together and completed this tough event in 32 hours, well within the 48 hour deadline.

Tahir's courage, commitment and teamwork serve as wonderful examples of the ideals this event serves to promote. Bryce Courtenay, a patron of the Oxfam Trailwalker described the event as follows: "Oxfam Trailwalker is all about teamwork. It is tough and challenging, it is also inspiring and exhilarating. Oxfam Trailwalker engages the astonishing capacity of the human spirit to achieve the extraordinary." I am sure Tahir will later look back on his participation and agree with Bryce's assessment of the event.

Please convey my congratulations to Tahir – he is a great credit to his family and his school.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Blackwood
4/69

The Oxfam Trailwalker

Through the eyes of Tahir Mehmed, a competitor.

The sound of my father's voice at 4.30am on the 24th May 2002 was the indication that my 100km adventure across bushland was about to begin. The thought of walking 100km constantly with no sleep was something that I would need to adapt to rapidly if I were to survive this walk. The nervousness started to sink in when we got our names marked off at Hunters Hill High School, I knew that this walk was a reality not a dream. The gun went off at 10.00am, 1200 competitors were either running or marching out of the High School. The feeling of just being able to walk with the crowd was amazing. I really thought that I was achieving something not everybody can achieve.

The first 13km of the walk was pretty slow as the crowd buildup blocked most of the track that would lead us to the Great North Walk. To make things even better the weather decided that it would cool us down by giving us a shower with that wonderful rain. Within minutes the ground became soft and muddy, making it difficult to walk without slipping. Our clothing became soaked and our shoes and socks drenched. I knew that this was just the beginning of it all. Throughout that whole day we kept at a constant speed and overtook as many walkers as possible to escape from the crowd. We did not spend much time at the checkpoints, as we wanted to get a really good lead on the rest of the walkers.

Before I knew it, daylight turned into darkness and the first signs of tiredness and sore muscles started to set in. I remember at the start taking special causing of where I was stepping to ensure that my shoes or socks did not get to wet or muddy, but that task seemed impossible as laziness set in and I didn't really care where I was stepping. I just wanted to finish the walk and GO HOME. Our team including Peter, Anthea, Kate (Peter's youngest daughter) and myself, was that of a team with great courage, commitment and teamwork. Throughout the long tiring wet night, our team stuck together and helped each other in every possible way.

Walking at night would have been one of the hardest tasks I would have ever undertaken in my life. My legs started to cramp and I really started to miss my warm dry bed. As we entered into a new checkpoint it bought great joy, as we knew we were one less checkpoint away then before. The checkpoints were a sign of rest and treatment. I had regular messages at each checkpoint to reduce the cramps that were being built up in my legs. People tend to ask what it was like walking at night without any sleep and being so wet. To actually describe what it felt like walking in the rain, not being able to see clearly and trying to avoid the cramps was indescribable.

It was approximately 62km when the thought of pulling out really set my mind. The pains in my legs started to accumulate and the cramps got worse. Watching those people sleeping that had pulled out started to encourage my thoughts. Even though the pains started to be unbearable the thought of finishing the walk and telling my story to my friends and family motivated me into continuing. I wasn't going to let an opportunity life this past my mind. The constant calls from my family and friends especially my father, inspired me to finish the walk telling me that I was capable of doing anything I but my mind towards. I wanted to finish the walk for my family. Darkness had slowly lead into daylight once again. I found walking through the day a much more pleasing idea as I could actually see what I was doing and enjoyed the wonderful views from over the hills.

I knew that I didn't have long to go. For the next 7 to 8 hours was just solid walking and thinking about what I was going to eat when I got home. I never realised how hungry walking could make you. To our luck the weather did not clear up and it continued to rain, making it more difficult to walk through the paths once 300 people have already been through. I remember the time when the rain got so heavy that our group decided to sit under a cave and wait for the rain to settle down. The only thing we wanted then was a nice warm cup of tea. Just thinking about those hills we climbed still bring shivers down my neck. I still couldn't believe that these legs of mind continued with the walk despite that all the cramps were limiting my walking ability.

It wasn't long before daylight turned into darkness again. We tried very hard to continue walking without stopping as we wanted to finish pretty soon. The last 2km of the walk were the most heart pounding experience I have ever had. I couldn't believe that I had actually walked 98km so far and that the walk was almost complete. As we headed for the finish line our team linked arms and walked through the finish line with pride and joy as people were cheering us along. We had just finished the most adventurous walk we have ever experienced. I believe that our team gained a lot from this walk.

The support crew that travelled from checkpoint to checkpoint delivering those delicious meals made the walk an even better experience. Without their tireless effort, I don't believe the walk would have been successful as it was. When I finished the race I promised myself that I would never in my life attempt an event like that again. But now looking back at what I have achieved and the wonderful people I have met, the idea of entering the Oxfam Trailwalker would be considered once again as this walk is a wonderful fundraiser that has a dramatic effect on the people that need the funding the most.

Eulogy for Peter Lee (1/70)

who died aged 56 on 6/12/01 from cancer after being in remission from having a melanoma removed from his leg earlier on.

Thank you everyone for joining us today. There are many who have come from interstate or country New South Wales and we do appreciate your presence. Many of you have never met before which is an indication of Peter's diverse life. Al and the family invite you to join us either after this service or after the burial at Palm Beach, for light refreshments – the address is 15 Iluka Road, Palm Beach (corner of Nabilla and Iluka Roads) and we would like to see as many of you there as possible.

Al, Terry, Helen and I have collaborated in putting together the following snapshot of my twin brother, Peter.

Peter and I had a race to enter this world and we did so minutes apart on the 13th March 1945. Apart from our mother dressing us identically, in the early days, we were totally different.

We had Terry and Helen before us who excelled academically and represented the State and Australia in cricket and hockey. What a hard act to follow. Although Peter was an accomplished and uncompromising hockey player, from an early age he proved to be the most creative and practical one when it came to building anything or making something work. He was extremely talented mechanically. Our billy carts were the best in the street – they were always the fastest, had more crashes and were then recycled into something even more terrifying on wheels. He had a great love of vehicles and was always pulling apart engines and reassembling them. Despite our mother's cries of despair disassembled cars would be scattered all through the garage, the carport and once an old chook pen gave home to some vital parts for months on end. It was the 60s and we three boys had Mini Minors. They were fun to drive but rather Spartan in their finish. Peter built very smart wooden dashboards and equipped them with tachos and other gauges, full racing harnesses, sump guards etc. We then graduated to Mini Cooper S's, a Lotus Escort and finally Peter purchased the famous yellow 911 Porsche which has had more make overs and facelifts than Elizabeth Taylor and now maintains a gracious aged look all in white.

Peter inherited all our father's drafting and carpentry skills and our grandfather's engineering talents. He gained both building and engineering certificates from Sydney Tech. Coupled with the Old Man's guidance, integrity and commitment to clients, he became the pre-eminent person in Australia in export abattoir and slaughter house design, mechanical processing and construction. He was legendary in coming up with innovative designs and circumnavigating difficulties – not always appreciated by union officials.

We were in the first ballot for military service at the age of 20 and Peter finished his technical training before entering Officer Training at Scheyville and graduated with flying colours as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Engineering Corps. Having run his own business for some time the army hierarchy knew they had a star on their hands. They asked him at his first posting to carry out the most important and demanding task there was – preparing the turf wicket at Puckapunyal for the cricket season which was about to start. From there he went to the Engineering Depot in Brisbane. After reorganising the ancient procedures in record time, the Commanding Officer allowed him to use several bedrooms in the rather empty Officers' Mess to set up an office and drawing room for P J Lee & Associates. He would take a parade of foot soldiers and then disappear into the Officers Mess to design the buffalo abattoir or cattle race. Someone suggested that he probably used the same techniques and blunt coarse language to get man and beast to do exactly what he wanted.

He became a crack shot in the Army and won several awards. He was a member of the New South Wales Gun Club throughout most of his life. It was here that his mechanical brilliance shone again. He developed a special machine which travelled over the firing range and picked up and sorted used shot for recycling.

If Al was caught standing still in their flat at Dee Why and the call for designing and building a new abattoir was not immediate – Peter couldn't resist the DIY compulsion. A new floor might be put in, the kitchen could be updated, a sauna added and always extra miles of shelves for books and CD could be built.

Peter's work allowed him to develop his intense love affair with the Australian bush. Nothing would please him more than to "go walkabout" with the Old Man in one of the beloved Land Rovers to the Northern Territory or far North Queensland. In more recent years his dedicated companions were Sam and Max, his dogs. They were inseparable and I gather there was a nickname in the bush applied to this group – "the gypsy and his dogs". He spent a major part of his latter years in southern New South Wales and Victoria and built up a strong network of friends and colleagues which he valued very much.

Peter was passionate about his interests and pursued them to a level higher than most of us would achieve. His two great pleasures were music and cooking.

When we were at school with our parents' encouragement, he made a classical guitar which was a piece of fine craftsmanship. Helen offered some basic music technique however he was self taught to an accomplished level before he ever took lessons. He went on to build superb classical and acoustic guitars, assembled a magnificent collection of fine and rare instruments and has probably one of the largest collections of guitar music and CD's in Australia. He derived enormous pleasure from his playing and no doubt it added to the gypsy image.

It was a great joy to Al that Peter loved cooking. Friends were able to share his many varied culinary talents with a bottle of good red wine. Even during the last difficult few months he would love to whip up great pasta dish where the sauce was a complete and complex work of art. He made it look so easy.

Peter was complete in himself. He had a dry wit and a great sense of the ridiculous. Many of us remember well in 1977 when he and Al married, he presented her not with fine jewellery or sentimental gifts but with an "axe" which he thought would be more useful on their camping trips. Always the perfectionist, it was no ordinary axe – it was perfectly balanced for her weight and height and beautifully polished and gift wrapped.

Peter pursued life to the full with his own style and wit. Let's all treasure our special memories of him.

Reunion Lunch with a Difference

The Sydney OTU Scheyvillians held a reunion lunch on 16th May at the Concord Golf Club, during which the usual enjoyable networking and reminiscing happened. What was unusual was their guest – although I am around the same age and well remember my male friends being called up for "nashos", I am clearly of the wrong gender to have shared the Scheyville Experience.

L to R: Nick Israel, Gordon Alexander, Tony Sonneveld, Pam Lofthouse, Geoff Bennett, Greg Todd, Malcolm Boyd, Jim Stone, Grant Prowse

I was there to discover what the OTU Association members value about the Scheyville campus, which is now part of a National Park. Those who have visited since the mid-80s will have been disappointed at the neglect, vandalisation and subsequent demolition of most of the buildings. However, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has commissioned a heritage study of the campus, so that what remains can be preserved and possibly refurbished for a new use. As a heritage conservation masters student at the University of Sydney, I am part of the group of students which carried out the study for NPWS.

Over a glass or two of very nice red, I was told stories ranging from the hatred of the ropes in the Gym to learning how to eat oysters in the Mess. The marathon seemed to be a defining moment, while one member recalled how the cadets who failed disappeared so quickly that he still owed $20 to a classmate. I could understand two beers before dinner but the chocolate had to be explained.

Some of the stories were lighthearted, yet they illustrated a very serious side to the OTU. Words such as "leadership" and "trust" were used frequently. It appeared that persistence was the key to getting through, along with a large dose of "not letting the bastards beat me". One of the most telling comments was that Scheyville created remarkable people who did remarkable things, with the example of Johnny Fraser standing still on the mine while his men escaped. Although given no choice about joining the Army, a training opportunity arose and 22 weeks later they were an officer to whom 30 men would entrust their lives.

In a lifetime of over 50 years, 22 weeks may not seem like a long time. Yet it was described as a life-defining time of being "broken" and put together again as a new person. Several members commented that they still use and value in corporate life the skills learned at OTU. Wondering whether Vietnam was part of the Scheyville bond, I was told that it is the training course, not the war, which holds the graduates together as a group.

My group was specifically researching the large semicircular huts which housed the Mess and the Gym. The challenge for us was to assess the cultural significance of the huts for the OTU, and the migrants

who occupied the camp prior to the OTU, then recommend suitable conservation policies and new uses which respect that significance.

During the lunch several suggestions were made for the reuse of the huts. Most people thought they should be restored as part of a function centre or conference centre, with the Officers" staff quarters and Mess used for accommodation (the NPWS Area Office already occupies the Commandant's Office). The provision of adventure and leadership training was a strong theme, particularly for groups of young people. It would obviously be a "no-frills" place, with challenges and physical activity important components. The huts however, could not be developed into anything meaningful for the OTU Association, without the retention of the other important features of the area – the entrance gates, the memorial and the parade ground.

While not all the information given to me during the lunch was included in our final Conservation Management Plan for NPWS, I have provided detailed notes to NPWS. Tony Sonneveld also provided photographs, and access to his extensive collection of Scheyvillian Magazines, videos and memorabilia, much of which has either been included in the Plan or passed on to NPWS at Scheyville.

It was a very enjoyable lunch, with a terrific group of people. Thanks to Tony, Geoff Bennett and the other Scheyvillians for including me and sharing your views so freely. You truly are remarkable people.

Pam Lofthouse

L to R: Paul Cotter, Paul Meldrum, Allan Hirschel, John Murray, Gordon Hurford, Merv Michell, Paul Rees, David Longhurst, John Webb.

Some Important NSW Announcements (from Greg Todd):

1. A reminder about the next lunch date (Thursday 22 August).
2. A cancellation of the hoped-for fundraising breakfast at the Epping RSL 15 October.
3. A call for volunteers in NSW to assist with administration of the Chapter – ring or email me to discuss how you can help.
4. A call for sponsorship opportunities to assist in sending more kids to Lord/Lady Somers Camps.

Vale – John Dawson 1/72

Some months ago one of my Scheyville sons, Geoff Butts asked if I was in contact with his military brother, John Dawson, and if so, could I let him know of a proposed reunion of the 1/72 class.

Having not been in contact with John for more than a decade I went about finding him by contacting the two Dawson's in John's hometown of Uralla. Expecting to locate John and getting a "serve" for being out of touch for so long, I was instead shocked to be told by his brother that John had taken his own life some seven years ago.

Anyone that ever met John would attest that he was a special person who made a lasting impression. A genuine and popular individual, he was articulate and a natural leader of people. This came to the fore when he joined 4RAR as a Platoon Commander in mid 1973. Respected by the soldiers he led and by his peers and superiors alike, John had a deserved reputation for being firm and fair. Such was his standing that our Commanding Officer invited John to apply for a permanent commission.

John was taken by the invitation, but having trained as a teacher, wanted the opportunity to see if teaching was the career for him. It was, and John went on to become a Primary School Principal, a position he held when for reasons unknown to his family, he took his life. At the time of his death he left a widow and four children under ten years of age.

I am sure that all you who knew John will be as shocked as Geoff and myself at finding out of his passing.

Rob Johnson
Brisbane
4/71

E-mail

From: OWilliamson@hatch.com.au
To: alan.storen@wesleycollege.net
Date: 12 April 2002
Subject: Honorary Life Members

Please see attached photos of the presentation of their Honorary Life Members certificates at the monthly luncheon on the 11 April 2002 to Gary McKay and Owen Williamson by Geoff Daley. This presentation was a re-enactment of the formal presentation made on Saturday night 6 April where Michael Hart 2/69 made the presentations to Gary for his untiring commitment to the Queensland Chapter since its inception and for him being one of the founding members of the Association. Owen received his gong for being the OTU Association Chairman/Secretary-/Treasurer/Quartermaster for 3 years and his work with the Queensland Chapter. The black tie dinner on the 6th was another highly successful get together of 40 very pleasantly primed members, ably organised and compered by the honourable Gary McKay.

NSW MIXED DINNER

Victoria Barracks 15 June 2002

Did you miss the great night out? Those who made it enjoyed another well-organised dinner. Have a look for the photos in this edition. We are sorry that we could not fit everybody in this year, perhaps it was the reminder notice in the mail a couple of weeks in advance that encouraged the large gathering of Scheyvillians and their guests. The staff of the Mess provided excellent service and managed the big crowd well as we were shuffled from room to room to allow for pre-dinner drinks by the fire, two dining rooms with ample wine and food and after dinner ports back in the cosy ante-room.

More than eighty people dined and listened to the experiences of the Lord and Lady Somers attendees who apparently are prepared to discuss their experiences with their sponsors but not with their parents, teachers or friends. Graeme Brown a teacher spoke about his schools involvement in the selection of students for sponsorship. Whilst they had no knowledge of the OTU Association when first offered the positions, the schools have come to regard the Association's sponsorship as an important part of their students' development. We should continue to do what we can for these students who obviously appreciate the opportunity.

We are privileged to be able to use this facility and if you have not been to one of our dinners, try it next year or for lunch at the end of this year. We may not always enjoy this Army Mess or be able to maintain the low prices for these events in the long term. If you have an idea for another event, get in contact with any of the Committee members listed in the front of the magazine and come along to the remaining lunches this year. Thanks again Tony for the effort put in to ensure a smooth running event, especially during the last couple of days.

Nick Friend (1/67) Reports:

The mixed buffet dinner held at Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess, Paddington NSW was a most successful and enjoyable affair. There were 76 attendees including two girls who had experienced the Lord and Lady Somers Camp. The girls' parents attended the dinner as well as a teacher from Chester Hill High School. The function gathered together 30 OTU graduates from 15 classes and was in such demand that late requests for seats were refused.

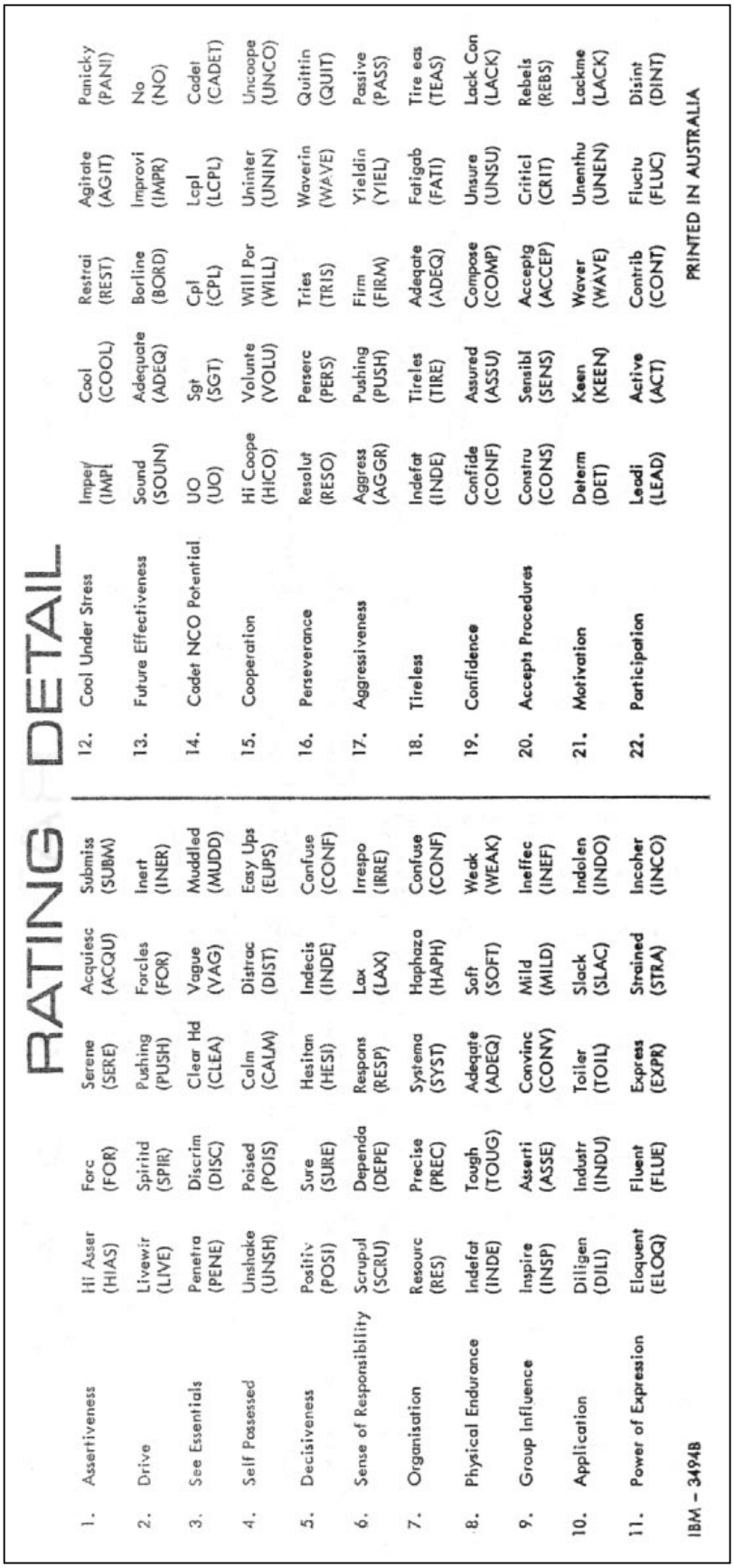
Tony Sonneveld and Greg Todd spoke with their usual eloquence and the girls gave a splendid account of their experiences. Victoria Barracks is a spectacular venue for any gathering as its beautifully maintained historic buildings provide the perfect atmosphere for good food, wine and fellowship. All this was in abundance on 15 June.

I remember being disappointed, horrified even, on arriving at the Barracks for one of these dinners some years ago and being greeted by civilians at the guardhouse instead of soldiers and eating (magnificent) food prepared by civilians. I think the community is accepting this change from the way things used to be done, as from all accounts the new system works.

Greg Todd

Lord and Lady Somers Camp guests.

Editor: How would you, your employer, your family and friends rate you now?



RATING DETAIL

1.	Assertiveness	Hi Asser (HIAS)	Forc (FOR)	Serene (SERE)	Acquiesc (ACQU)	Submiss (SUBM)	12.	Cool Under Stress	Imper/ (IMPI	Cool (COOL)	Restrai (REST)	Agitate (AGIT)	Panicky (PANI)
2.	Drive	Livewir (LIVE)	Spirtd (SPIR)	Pushing (PUSH)	Forcles (FOR)	Inert (INER)	13.	Future Effectiveness	Sound (SOUN)	Adequate (ADEQ)	Borline (BORD)	Improvi (IMPR)	No (NO)
3.	See Essentials	Penetra (PENE)	Discrim (DISC)	Clear Hd (CLEA)	Vague (VAG)	Muddled (MUDD)	14.	Cadet NCO Potential	UO (UO)	Sgt (SGT)	Cpl (CPL)	Lcpl (LCPL)	Cadet (CADET)
4.	Self Possessed	Unshake (UNSH)	Poised (POIS)	Calm (CALM)	Distrac (DIST)	Easy Ups (EUPS)	15.	Cooperation	Hi Coope (HICO)	Volunte (VOLU)	Will Por (WILL)	Uninter (UNIN)	Uncoope (UNCO)
5.	Decisiveness	Positiv (POSI)	Sure (SURE)	Hesitan (HESI)	Indecis (INDE)	Confuse (CONF)	16.	Perseverance	Resolut (RESO)	Perserc (PERS)	Tries (TRIS)	Waverin (WAVE)	Quittin (QUIT)
6.	Sense of Responsibility	Scrupul (SCRU)	Dependa (DEPE)	Respons (RESP)	Lax (LAX)	Irrespo (IRRE)	17.	Aggressiveness	Aggress (AGGR)	Pushing (PUSH)	Firm (FIRM)	Yieldin (YIEL)	Passive (PASS)
7.	Organisation	Resourc (RES)	Precise (PREC)	Systema (SYST)	Haphaza (HAPH)	Confuse (CONF)	18.	Tireless	Indefat (INDE)	Tireles (TIRE)	Adeqate (ADEQ)	Fatigab (FATI)	Tire eas (TEAS)
8.	Physical Endurance	Indefat (INDE)	Tough (TOUG)	Adeqate (ADEQ)	Soft (SOFT)	Weak (WEAK)	19.	Confidence	Confide (CONF)	Assured (ASSU)	Compose (COMP)	Unsure (UNSU)	Lack Con (LACK)
9.	Group Influence	Inspire (INSP)	Asserti (ASSE)	Convinc (CONV)	Mild (MILD)	Ineffec (INEF)	20.	Accepts Procedures	Constru (CONS)	Sensibl (SENS)	Accepts (ACCEP)	Critici (CRIT)	Rebels (REBS)
10.	Application	Diligen (DILI)	Industr (INDU)	Toiler (TOIL)	Slack (SLAC)	Indolen (INDO)	21.	Motivation	Determ (DET)	Keen (KEEN)	Waver (WAVE)	Unenthu (UNEN)	Lackme (LACK)
11.	Power of Expression	Eloquent (ELOQ)	Fluent (FLUE)	Express (EXPR)	Strained (STRA)	Incoher (INCO)	22.	Participation	Leadi (LEAD)	Active (ACT)	Contrib (CONT)	Fluctu (FLUC)	Disint (DINT)

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Letter

Dear Tony,

Following the article in the Scheyvillian No. 2, 2002, page 17, I am enclosing a few bits and pieces found when cleaning out my files.

Hope they may be of interest for Archives – in particular the rating scale card which we used when assessing students.

Always look forward to the Newsletter – well done.

Regards.

Derek Ladyman 2/66

WANTED

News articles Personal Profiles Business Profiles

Old Photographs Memorabilia

Please submit articles for publication to the editor.

All articles are most welcome and photographs and other valuable memorabilia will be returned.

Note:

Contributors of articles with photographs, please supply the photos separately (actual prints or JPEGS or TIFFS) together with captions. Photos "embedded" in other software are difficult to handle.

Who did shoot down the Red Baron?

Editor:
Found in the archives by Stephanie Dundas, wife of Roger (1/69).

This is a written account as witnessed by Mr J.J. Phelan on the Shooting down of Baron Von Richthofen during the month of April 1918.

During the 1st World War I was a member of "B" Company, 44th Battalion and was with the Battalion in April 1918 in the trenches near Sailly Le Sec – that was just after the Germans broke through on the Somme. At that particular period there was great activity in the air with both sides patrolling the new territory daily, the most noticeable was what we called 'The German Red Squadron' commanded by the German air ace, Baron Von Richthofen. Whenever they sighted any of our planes Richthofen always pulled off from his squadron and attacked -–always with fatal results for our planes. The last week I spent in the trenches I saw him destroy three of our planes. Just at that time I was transferred to the Transport Section, which was located near a small town called Corbie, approximately 1.5 miles behind the Battalion lines.

One day the following week I was on duty in our horse lines, when I spotted the Red Baron peel off from his squadron and chase one of our scout planes. The pilot of the scout plane kept diving and flattening out making it very difficult for Richthofen to shoot at him and all the time the scout kept diving and flattening out. They kept coming lower and approaching Corbie. The last dive brought the scout plane down to tree top level and The Baron, when taking that last dive, visibly slowed down considerably when he saw the earth coming up so fast to meet him. Just then I heard two short bursts from a Louis Gun, also a few rifle shots and The Baron and his plane disappeared from my view and I realised that he had been brought down. I ran straight to the spot and when I got through a thick hedge I saw the plane only about thirty yards away. There was one soldier running from the opposite direction. We both arrived at the plane almost together and saw Richthofen still sitting, but quite dead, in the plane. In a few minutes quite a number of soldiers came running from all directions, one immediately took The Baron's watch and goggles, another took his compass and another took out his own pocket knife and intended cutting out some part of the plane. At that moment, an officer arrived and saw all the souveniring, he shouted 'stand back from the plane all you men' and, of course, they immediately did so.

Just then an airforce man arrived and with the Australian officer made an inspection of the plane and the dead body. When they moved back they stopped just beside me and I overheard the airforce man saying to the officer 'It is Richthofen alright, and the plane is only very slightly damaged. Now as soon as the body is removed I want you to get some of your men to push the plane as close as possible to the hedge and have it well covered with the branches because as soon as the Germans realise he is missing, they will send planes over to endeavour to find it'. He also said 'We could have that plane flying again in about a week'.

The pilot of the scout plane was a Canadian and after some weeks of consultation between the Canadian and British Air Force, they came up with the announcement that Richthofen was shot down by the Canadian pilot.

Now to conclude, I can only say that of the thousand odd troops on the ground, not one – to the best of my knowledge – ever said anything other than the Great German Air Ace was certainly shot down by a bullet from a Lewis gun on the ground.

"Quotes"

Once over the hill, you pick up speed.

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.

The plan is – there is no plan ... So everything is going according to plan.

Gallipoli and Western Front Tour

Gary McKay (2/68) is intending on taking a tour group to Gallipoli and the Western Front battlefields in 2004. He has secured the services of Mr Kenan Celik who is regarded by the Australian War Memorial as the most knowledgeable tour guide operating on the Peninsula. Mr Celik is a (recently retired) university lecturer and former head of the English Department at *Onsekiz Mart Universitesi* ('18th March University') in Canakkale, the gateway town to the Gallipoli Peninsula. Kenan was awarded an OAM in 2000 for his services to Australian – Turkish relations.

Gary is canvassing for interested parties who would like to accompany him and his wife for a 27-day tour that will take in Turkey, France and Belgium. Read this blurb and get an appreciation for what it involves.

'From the haunting ridges, valleys and beaches of the Gallipoli Peninsula to the evening Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, the tour of Gallipoli & the Western Front embraces the major sites where Australian soldiers served. Although most travellers choose to take the whole 27-day tour, the first part of the tour, a fourteen-day visit to Turkey, and the second part, a thirteen-day tour of France and Belgium, are also offered as separate journeys.

On the Gallipoli tour you will walk the major battlefields where Australians and their allies and enemies fought and died, attend the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Anzac Cove, and enjoy the warm hospitality and distinctive culture of the people of Turkey.

The journey begins where east meets west in Istanbul - a city enriched by two thousand years of history and adorned with spectacular mosques, minarets and bustling markets. You will visit the fabulous Blue Mosque, Saint Sophia, the Dolmabahçe Palace and Harem and visit the exciting Grand Bazaar where the adventurous can haggle for traditional Turkish craftwares and bric-a-brac. You'll also visit the Topkapi Palace, take a guided boat tour along the Bosphorus, explore the old city and sample the fine Turkish cuisine.

The tour then travels to the Gallipoli Peninsula and the famous straits of the Dardanelles. Here, in this spectacularly rugged landscape, a sense of tragedy surrounds the thousands of graves of Australian soldiers who lie alongside of their comrades from many nations and those of their former Turkish enemies. At Gallipoli the tour group stays in a comfortable hotel on the Peninsula just south of Anzac Cove.

Your tour will be led by an expert from the Australian War Memorial, and with his guidance, you will scour the dramatic ridges and the isolated beaches, visiting place names which have a unique place in Australian history - Anzac Cove, Lone Pine, the Nek, Quinn's Post and many more.

Here the soldiers of Australia and New Zealand forged the Anzac legend. Their courage, resourcefulness and humour in adversity became a source of national pride and an expression of national character. On Anzac Day, the commemoration on the actual site of events that changed the course of Australian history, is the single most moving experience of the tour.

You'll then return to Istanbul for shopping and, after a tour final dinner, those continuing on the Western Front part of the tour leave for Paris and the battlefields of France.

The Western Front Battlefield Tour offers Australians the chance to retrace the footsteps of the Australian Imperial Force through France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom; to visit such places as Pozières, Bullecourt, Amiens, Fromelles, Ypres, and Peronne.

The tour provides an excellent opportunity for Australians to see places once so familiar to the generation of men and women who served on the Western Front. Quality hotels, air-conditioned coaches, and fine food contribute to the travellers' comfort, while experienced guides and historians are on hand to locate and explain the significance of places visited.

This specially designed battlefield tour, which has been operating since 1993, is both a commemorative and educational journey into an important part of our nation's history, and – for some – a personal pilgrimage. It blends these opportunities with visits to famous cultural sites, and to many fascinating places not found on the normal tourist routes.

In addition to the ancient cities and rustic villages, known to the soldiers serving in Picardy and Flanders, there are

interesting new things to see. These include outstanding museums like the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Peronne and the In Flanders Fields Museum at Ypres, as well as monuments such as the new The Digger sculpture at Bullecourt, and the memorials at Fromelles and Le Hamel, unveiled in July 1998.

The Western Front tour visits the many battlefields, historic sites and monuments throughout the Somme, Arras, and Flanders. It includes time in Paris for sightseeing, shopping and dinner at the Eiffel Tower. The tour travels to London on the Eurostar high speed train for visits to Horseferry Road, where AIF Headquarters was located, and the Imperial War Museum.

The tour is designed to avoid the incredibly over-crowded Anzac Day services as much as possible and allow a better appreciation of the ground and the entire battlefield. Those interested will be given a comprehensive reading and guide book list that Gary has compiled from his time spent with the Mr Ashley Ekins a senior historian at the Australian War Memorial.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to see the battlefield that forged the Australian nation, gave rise to the legend of Anzac and is indelibly etched into the heart and soul of Australia.

If you would like to express interest in going with Gary then contact him on his e-mail garymckay@bigpond.com.au or write to him at P.O. Box 689 Coolum Beach QLD 4573. The price of the tour is approximately $4500 for a 14-day tour of Turkey and $9000 for the 27-day tour. This tour stays in 4-5 star accommodation and is extremely good value for money as we have the best guide and know the best places to stay. All prices include airfares, accommodation and meals. All you have to do is buy the souvenirs and wine.

Opening Shutters on Vietnam

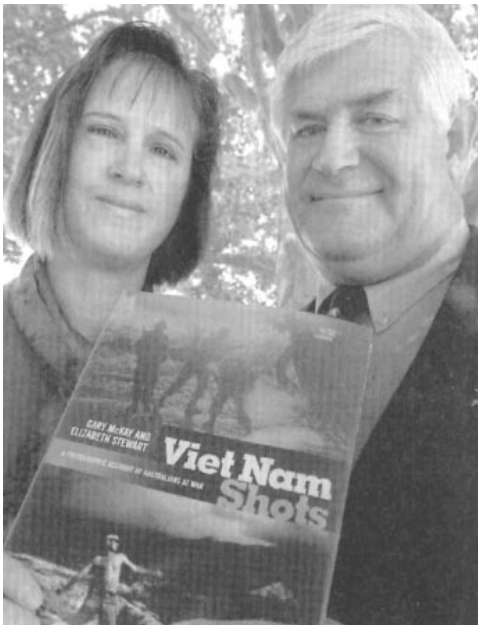
by Scott Hannaford
Courtesy The Canberra Times
9 April 2002

Never-before-seen photos of diggers at war were made public yesterday with the launch of a book on Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Chief of Army Lieutenant-General Peter Cosgrove launched *Viet Nam Shots: A Photographic Account of Australians at War* by Gary McKay and Elizabeth Stewart, which shows some of the everyday tasks undertaken by Australian troops during the conflict.

Compiled from thousands of images stored in the Australian War Memorial's archives, the book adds a visual perspective to what Australians have been told about the war, according to its authors.

Mr McKay, a decorated Vietnam veteran, said it was important to remember the war as there had been a new generation of Australians who had grown up since diggers returned from Vietnam.



Elizabeth Stewart and Gary McKay with their book.

Ms Stewart said photos had played an important role in the war, and many of the images had been "feel-good" photos, taken to reassure families of soldiers in Australia.

She said there was a lot of hesitance from people when it came to delving into war history, and putting a book of photos together would make it more accessible, especially to school groups and those wanting to find out more about the role of soldiers.

General Cosgrove said the book would help prevent Australians forgetting the breach created between society and the army by the Vietnam War. The war had set the precedent for public sentiment influencing the use of Australian troops in conflicts. "In a society such as ours, popular support for the defence forces and civic support for their operations are fundamental ingredients of the moral authority," General Cosgrove said.

Viet Nam Shots: A Photographic Account of Australians at War is available through Allen & Unwin for $45.

Letter

Dear Alan,

Thought your readers might be interested in the "virtual" reunion I arranged for the graduates of the Class 3/66 to recognise our 35 years since graduation. We are too geographically dispersed to hold much of a physical reunion.

With a bit of detective work and some help from classmates I managed to obtain addresses for 48 of our 56 graduates. Four of our team are deceased and there remain 4 that I have not been able to find: Geoff Jackett, David Mee, Tony Tuxworth and Gordon Williams (in case anyone knows of an address).

I invited them all to contribute a short biography of what they have done since Scheyville and a recent photograph. Fortunately 28 responded and I have been able to publish (at reasonable cost) a colour booklet that includes their contributions along within our class photos taken in 1966.

I am astounded at the diverse careers and remarkable achievements of this dynamic group – it makes fascinating reading even if the photos show that 35 years is a long time.

I can only encourage others to do the same and hold a "virtual" reunion.

Best regards,

Peter Whitelaw 3/66

Copy of a letter from Geoff Walls (in Singapore) to Peter Whitelaw

Dear Peter,

At the outset may I say how grateful I am that you took the initiative to produce the 'virtual reunion' booklet.

As you will have read in my contribution I have spent more time out of Australia since I graduated from Scheyville than I have living there.

For the initial 10-15 years of my working life maintaining contact with my NS mates from afar fell away as I progressed through bachelor days, marriage, children, ever increasing personal financial challenges and being relocated every two to three years, often to relatively remote and culturally different regions.

Then, 20 years after Scheyville , I moved to London and my new role required me to represent South Australia at Anzac Day parades and church services as well as Remembrance day events.

So I wrote to my mother back in Australia and she managed to find a shoebox full of my National Service memorabilia including my Vietnam campaign medals. And there I was on the 25th April 1987 lined up just off Whitehall around the corner from the cenotaph about to 'march on' with a fairly motley collection of Australian and New Zealand military and civilian personnel.

The band struck up and after a few skips and stumbles we managed to get in step and by the time we marched onto Whitehall we were in reasonable shape.

I could feel the rhythm coming back and fancied to myself that uniformed onlookers would be able to recognise that '… that bloke's spent more than a couple of years on a parade ground in his time!'

Then again I probably wouldn't have passed the scrutiny of RSM Moon who, on more than one occasion, exhorted me in that quietly persuasive way he had – to 'stop wobbling your arse Walls. You look like a cheap tart trying to drum up business!!'

The following year I went to France for the Anzac services in a number of villages near where one memorial simply and starkly put it '… here Australian troops fell at greater numbers than at any other time in the Battle of the Somme.'

An unforgettable day when four, if not five, generations of French men, women and children gathered to, as the Order of Service said, '… *n'oublicz jamis les australiens* – never forget the Australians.'

As I watched a childrens' choir leading a candle-lit parade to a dusk service at a village Anzac memorial and their pure young voices soared into the darkening sky as they sang '… in 'istory's page, let every stage Advance Australia Fair.' I cried as silently as I could, and not for the first time that day.

And by sheer coincidence, I bumped into a bloke from Perth who had been with me in Vietnam. About twenty of us from the same unit are off to Vietnam at the end of October – 35 years on!

What the above recollections are leading us to is that for the last 30 years apart from Tim Fischer's path crossing mine on a couple of occasions and catching up with Brian Rakich in Perth a couple of years ago I have had no contact with any other 3/66 classmates.

So the hour or so I spent devouring news of my fellow graduates was like reading a Le Carre paperback – you're tempted to flick a glance or two over the final pages to see who's left standing!

I managed, however, to resist the temptation to jump ahead and read the entries of those who became mates at Scheyville and read through in alphabetical order.

I did, however, revert to a childhood reading habit and studied the 'now' and 'then' photographs closely before I began reading!

Peter, congratulations on a superb publication. I am sure you have understated the cost outlays so please accept the enclosed cheque which is probably still short of the mark.

Best wishes,

Geoff

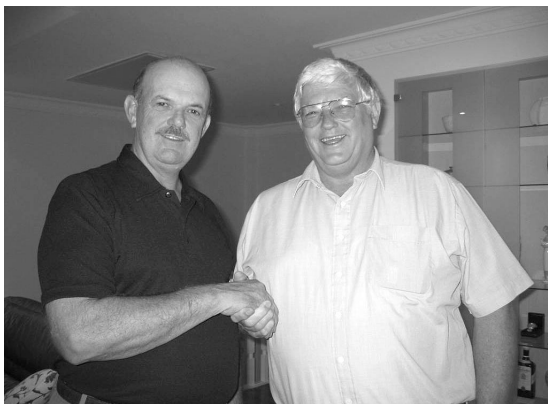
E-mail

From: mervynmichell@hotmail.com
To: info@otu.asn.au
Date: 14 May 2002
Subject: Reunion

Dear Editor,

I thought that you would like news and a picture of a recent reunion of two OTU old boys that occurred when Peter Morgan and I met again after nearly 36 years. Peter and I were adjacent room mates throughout our time at OTU in 6 Platoon in class 1/66, separated only by the room of a junior classman (who obligingly assured one of us unlimited EDs in their early days).
On graduation in July 1966, Peter marched out to the Infantry Centre and early service in SVN with 6RAR between October 1966 and June 1967. I was assigned to Artillery and served in SVN with 4 Field Regiment RAA from June 1967 until December 1967. Both of us exited the Army at the completion of our two years. Peter spent his last months in Brisbane before returning to teaching in Grafton and an early retirement some five years ago. In my case, a return to Perth followed immediately after SVN service and a management and marketing career led to a transfer to Sydney in 1974 and retirement from January this year.
Coincidentally, the new OTU directory arrived several months ago while I was sitting in front of my e-mails and on checking my own entry it fell open at Peter's address. I immediately sent him a "blast from the past" e-mail that led to us meeting in my home in Drummoyne on 9 May 2002, nearly 36 years after our last farewell. As you can see from the photo the years have varyingly been kind to each of us.
The years fled away as we had a great reunion and recounted the happenings of both our time in OTU and the subsequent years. We ended the evening agreeing to repeat the celebration a little more regularly in the future. If any other OTU 1/66 old boys would like to join us on the next occasion, they only need e-mail or ring me or Peter. Peter regularly visits his children in Sydney and I travel to Perth for family visits fairly frequently and we would both like the opportunity to meet others now that time and circumstance permits.

Best regards.
Merv Michell 1/66



Dear friends,
I have just read and signed the online petition: "CAMPAIGN FOR A FAIR GO", hosted on the web by PetitionOnline.com. the free online petition service at:

www.PetitionOnline.com/fg2aus/

I personally feel that there is an obligation to give "A FAIR GO" to those who have served and are serving this nation.

Best regards.
Stephen Merralls 2/70

Qld Golf Day

13 June 2002

"Beautiful one day, perfect the next." Hey, it's Queensland, what else did you expect when the local branch of the OTU Association staged the first annual Scheyville golf championship.

The event was organised by Geoff Butts (1/72) and Laurie Muller (1/65) on 13th June at Indooroopilly Golf Club. Laurie is the current President and our thanks to the club for presenting the course in superb condition.

A slight south-easterly and a temp of 22 degrees C greeted the players for a 7.30 AM tee off on the East Course (I.G.C. has two championship layouts). Not bad for mid winter. The field included Geoff and Laurie, Gary McKay (2/68), Barry Maffescioni(4/70), Peter Lauder (2/66), David Carey (2/70), Rick Main (3/67), Nick Pearson (4/67), Denis Gately (2/72), Vince Green (2/72), Peter Sheedy (1/65) and Peter Watson (1/67).

Unfortunately, Tiger Woods will have no challengers emerging from the group although Peter Sheedy who had 41 Stableford points to win the individual trophy may disagree with this. Peter also joined with Peter Watson to win the main trophy for the best pair with a best ball score of 47 Stableford points. Nearest-to-the-pins went to Peter Lauder, Rick Main and Peter Watson twice. A short drive was not provided for but would have gone to Gary McKay with 5 centimetres!

At the other end of the scale, the trophy for the bloke with the big balls went to Peter Watson with a hit of 278 metres (maybe Tiger isn't safe). NAGA award went to Vince Green (sorry Vince, I know I promised not to tell.)

Most interesting display was in front of the clubhouse when one of the crew was seen to tip all of his clubs onto the 9th green. Seems he placed a huge cigar on his bag while he took a putt. It fell in and he was desperate to get it out before his bag caught fire. That's right isn't it David?

The game was followed by the trophy presentation at the usual monthly lunch at Fridays.

As the event was a great day for those who attended it's hoped to stage the event annually in future to coincide with the June lunch and will be at Royal Queensland Golf Club next year.

Q store

ORDER FORM

O.T.U. Association – National
14 Bessemer Street
Blacktown NSW 2148

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

ADDRESS: _____ **OTU CLASS:** _____

_____ **State:** _____ **P/CODE:** _____

PHONE: _____ **FAX:** _____

Your cheque in pre-payment should accompany the order.

ORDER ITEM		**QUANTITY**	**PRICE $**
• ***Window Sticker*** (Transfer)		_____	2.50
• ***Lapel Badge*** (Pewter, 17mm square, 23mm diagonal)		_____	5.00
• ***Collar Badge*** (Larger, 27mm square, 35mm diagonal)		_____	5.00
• ***Hat Badge*** (Typical slouch hat size)		_____	5.00
• ***Cuff Links*** (per pair)	Pewter	_____	15.00
	Gold	_____	15.00
• ***Tie*** (Navy blue original pattern 9cm wide – on order)		_____	30.00
• ***Bow Tie*** (Same material as tie – 6 only left)		_____	30.00
• ***Plaque*** (Jarrah shield with pewter badge & OTU tag		_____	42.00
• ***Rugby Jumpers*** (for the family, 2 only M left)		_____	75.00
• ***Pullovers Navy*** (with OTU emblem – size 18 only)		_____	50.00
(with OTU emblem – size 22 only)		_____	50.00
• *Video* (2/69 Reunion and Scheyville Plaque Dedication)		_____	25.00
• ***Postage* – $7.00 flat charge** (except badges & cufflinks only $3.00)		_____	7.00
Total Order Cost		**$** _____	

A short note from the Quartermaster (Geoff Bennett 2/66)

New stocks of the OTU plaques will be available from July. These are excellent for home or office walls. Use them to get the discussion going or find new Scheyvillians.

New ties will be 9cm wide to met current fashion designs, so perhaps you need another one now.

Clothing is being deleted from the range so sorry not all sizes are available.

Scheyvillian Experience videos and books must be ordered directly from Film Australia at North Ryde or Queensland University Press respectively.

the ultimate security against termites

For more information contact Wayne Banks (1/70) or Tony Sonneveld (1/70).

Beware, not all physical termite barriers are the same.

Only Termimesh is made from marine-grade stainless steel mesh. Years of independent testing have proven that termites cannot penetrate, eat or destroy the Termimesh barrier. Termimesh is flexible enough to cover all types of construction, yet durable enough to last the life of the building. It is certified by the Australian Building Products and Systems Scheme. Plus we supervise its installation and have approved specifications covering all construction types. Use Termimesh and you'll never have to worry about termites.

Call **1800 444 468** for your free information video, visit our website **www.termi-mesh.com,** or speak to Tony Sonneveld at Termimesh Sydney on **(02) 9679 7999.**

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