

Vale – Brigadier Dick Flint AM



The End of an Era

Brigadier ‘Dick’ Flint, the last remaining of OTU’s Commandants and Chief Instructors, passed away on 15 March 2021. Dick now joins Commandants (then) Colonels Ian Geddes, Christopher John ‘Kit’ Miles, John Hancock ‘Jock’ Studdert OBE, Keith Percival ‘Paddy’ Outridge and Lieutenant Colonel David Noel Kerr, with Chief Instructors (then) Lieutenant Colonels Lawrence George ‘Algy’ Clark MC, Stanley John ‘Stan’ Maizey and Dale Percival Burnett in the list of men who will be long remembered for guiding Scheyvillians to achieve their best.

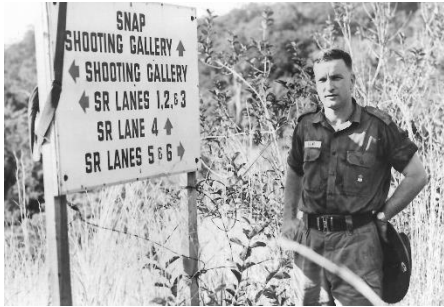
Until recently, Dick was a regular visitor to the OTU Queensland Chapter lunches and the annual ‘Black Tie’ Dinners. Following a stroke on his 90th birthday, Dick slowed down, but kept in contact with Scheyvillians right until the end. He is seen in the above photo used in the background during his funeral service wearing his OTU badge. A Vale is included in this edition for Brigadier ‘Dick’ Flint AM.

Richard Seaton ‘Dick’ Flint was the younger of two sons for Frank and Florence Flint being born in Brisbane on 19 September 1928. He was schooled at Woolloowin State School and Brisbane Grammar School. Dick was more interested the Air Cadets (see right), sports such as rowing, basketball and being in the gymnasium than being in school, so he left after year 10 and found work as a Fitter/Machinist with Queensland Rail. (Right Sir Cadet Flint)



As a 21-year-old Dick joined the Citizen Military Forces with A Squadron, 2/14 Queensland Mounted Infantry (an Armoured Car Squadron) on 2 March 1950. On 25 August 1952 he was commissioned in the CMF with the 2/14 QMI (Photo at right was on the day of commissioning of Sgt Flint). On 22 December 1952 he transferred to the Regular

Army Special Reserve and was posted on staff at the 11th National Service Training Battalion at Wacol in Queensland. On 2 July 1955 Dick transferred to the ARA. On 30 March 1957 Lieutenant Flint commenced a posting at Taurama Barracks outside Port Moresby with the Pacific Islands Regiment (the first of five postings to PNG and where he would learn Pidgin English) and on 6 January 1958 was posted as Adjutant and promoted to T/Captain. On 22 August 1961 Dick was attached to the US Army with the 25th US Infantry Division (Hawaii) as an 'Exchange' Officer. (See photo below taken in Hawaii)



Returning to Australia, he was then posted to the Infantry Centre for two years. This was followed by a year at the RAAF Staff College from January 1965 to January 1966 from where he was posted to Army Headquarters in Canberra. Promoted to Major on 2 July 1965, on 10 October 1967 Major Flint deployed to South Vietnam as a Staff Officer with Headquarters, AFV (Army Component), returning to Australia on 14 August 1968. He was posted to AHQ in Canberra, where the family

bought their first home.

Lieutenant Colonel Flint was posted to OTU Scheyville as Chief Instructor on 10 October 1969, Marching In on 3 November 1969. He commuted weekly from Canberra during that posting. While at OTU he commenced lifelong friendships with some of the Cadets. Marching Out of OTU on 7 May 1971 Dick moved to RMC Duntroon before being posted to the Defence Personnel Executive (Army Office) on 14 July 1975, a posting that changed to Personnel Branch. In this posting Dick was appointed as the Honorary Aide de Camp to the Governor-General. In the 1980 Australia Day Honours, for his service as Director of Army Training and Director of Training Requirements - Army, Dick was awarded the Order of Australia (AM) in the Military Division. On 4 February 1980 Dick took up his last posting at Operations Branch. Brigadier Flint officially retired from the Army on 3 January 1983, the family having moved to Eumundi on the Sunshine Coast onto a 5-acre fruit farm. As the years went passed, the property became 'a bit much' and Dick and Lyndall moved to Banora Point in Tweed Heads South in 1989.



Dick met Lyndall Fergusson at church in 1949 and they were married in February



1952. Both Richard, born in 1953, and Sue in 1955 were born in Brisbane while Drew was born in 1962 while the family was in Hawaii. Richard would marry Anne (now deceased) and later Lorraine and Sue would marry Bob. Grandchildren then followed. While in Hawaii in 1961/62, Dick contracted a virus that took a toll on his health. (Right: Dick in Hawaii with US Col Malxner) The virus reappeared in 1976 and for 2 years it again affected his health.

Still located at Banora Point, after 50 years of marriage Lyndall died in 2002. Dick moved to RSL Care in 2006. In later years Dick met Daneh who became his friend and companion. As

Dick's health deteriorated, she ensured that Dick could still attend the OTU Queensland Chapter activities.

Below left: The Flint family at Government House, Yarralumla, Canberra after Dick had received the AM. Below right: 'Farmer' Dick at Emundi



Living at Tweed Heads, Dick was a regular attendee at the Kokoda Day Services on August 8 at the Rotary Kokoda Memorial Wall at Broadbeach. Bernie Carney (3/68) reported that in retirement Dick was an avid golfer who regularly played with two mates of about his same vintage and once remarked to Bernie that his group possessed nearly 270 years of collective wisdom. 'Then Dick suddenly stopped turning up and I later learned that he had suffered a stroke on his 90th birthday and had driven himself to hospital.'

Dick had been battling cancer and had radium treatment about a month ago which did not go well for him. In his failing state he still wanting some control, mentioned that he only wished for a small family funeral. Geoff Richardson (1/70), who had regularly been in contact with Dick, was included and was invited to speak at the service, representing the many young Australians who were Cadets at OTU. Geoff sought permission to attend the funeral with Geoff Daly 4/69 (Queensland Chapter Chairman) and Chris Madden 1/70, who were also close to Brigadier Flint to attend the celebratory functions. Dick slipped away on the morning of 15 March 2021.

Geoff Richardson (1/70) wrote: Across the past 10 years, or so, I have called regularly on Dick at his retirement living complex at Tweed Heads. Obviously, the friendship was born

out of Scheyville. I was fortunate to meet young Richard Flint, one of Dick's sons, before last Christmas when visiting Dick and I have just spoken with him. Dick failed with cancer and had radium treatment about a month ago which did not go well for him. Dick, even in his failing state but still wanting some control, mentioned that he only wished for a small family funeral. My name was included and have been invited to speak, and I am honoured to be able to attend and represent the many young Australians who were Cadets at the Officer Training Unit Scheyville. I have sought permission to attend the funeral for Geoff Daly 4/69 and Chris Madden 1/70 who were close to Brig Flint in arranging celebratory functions.

The Funeral (Geoff Richardson, 1/70)

The funeral of Brigadier Richard Seaton 'Dick' Flint on Monday 22 March at Tweed Heads went well and Geoff Daly, Chris Madden and I were honoured to be included. I hope our fellow OTU members have linked on and viewed the live feed. RSL Gold Coast were represented, and the long list of appointments were read out from Dick's "Statement of Service". There were two other military colleagues of Dick in attendance at the funeral along with the extended family and close friends. The Tweed Heads Memorial Gardens and Crematorium, catering for civilian and military persons, are in peaceful surroundings with mature trees and neat gardens.

Meeting more of Dick's family, although at his funeral, was comforting. Dick and Lyndall have contributed well to our community having three children, Richard, Susan and Andrew who produced five grandchildren and to date have seven great grandchildren. Family members with babes in arms added to the occasion.

In delivering my 'Words of Tribute' in the service I mentioned that our friendship grew out of Scheyville and that Dick Flint was a significant person in my life.

As Chief Instructor at Scheyville Dick stated that his appearance at the top of the parade ground, walking through the gym and sitting in on classes was not just to check on Cadets but to check on the Instructors, to see if they were delivering his program as described by him. The removal of Cadets from Scheyville who did not match up, or rather, chose not to continue with the task, is best used in work-places, especially schools. There was no time given to spread the news through the ranks, just an empty room appeared.

Dick and I talked about Brisbane Grammar School and Papua New Guinea although we were at each place at different times and for different tasks.

Royal Chinderah Golf Course was a recreational outlet and apart from the course, the scoring by some of his old mates was a challenge for Dick. For his body maintenance he visited his gym regularly. After his stroke, at 90 years, his movement slowed but he was quick to inform the physio that he was a disciplined man and that he would do his set exercises himself without supervision. He was disappointed when his walk time slowed on his daily walk around the Darlington complex. I told him that I thought his date of birth had something to do with that.

I went on to relate some events that occurred during our 1/70 course at Scheyville and chose not to use names, so as to protect the said Cadet. Lieutenant Colonel Flint was involved in handling these matters. An unauthorised discharge of personal firearm was taboo, but this did happen to two Cadets in a field exercise. One Cadet chose to admit his guilt and was pardoned but the second Cadet chose to lie and was shown the door.

In our junior time on campus we had to run, on the double, to different facilities. One of our number, like many others, whilst negotiating a corner leaving a PT class, came past Colonel Flint. The said Cadet on seeing an officer stopped abruptly, stood to attention and saluted. Our kind, but firm, Col Flint told the Cadet to check his dress before saluting (ie no hat).

A date was something to look forward to on the much-treasured leave we did get. One Cadet had his mind on other matters at the end of a field exercise and in his hurry left some blank ammunition in his basic webbing in his room. After an enjoyable outing, said Cadet was called to explain and openly said that he was only thinking about his date that was in front of

him and not about finishing a field exercise. Col Flint's reply was, "Was she a nice girl?" The said Cadet burst out a "Yes". Col Flint said, "Good, off you go and check webbing next time."

Another Cadet, from Darwin, came to dinner one night in a distraught state and on opening up over dinner explained that his fiancé had just told him on the pay phone that their upcoming wedding was off. The clash of Catholic and Protestant religious beliefs had arisen. On recounting the facts to Col Flint the Cadet was pleased when he heard, "Cadet, you will be on a plane to Darwin tomorrow". A few years ago, on attending an OTU luncheon in Brisbane, this 'matured' Cadet was fronted by Dick and was asked how did things turn out. The Cadet answered, "Sir, we have been married for 47 years!"

Another Cadet was playing rugby with me in an ASRU match in Canberra when from a knock to the head he was carted off to Canberra hospital. On waking, this injured player found one, Col Dick Flint, standing beside his bed who commented, "Lad, you were lucky they hit you in the head, if they hit you elsewhere, they may have hurt you!"

Dick Flint got my attention in a Military Law class a couple of times, not to check if I was still awake with it being a night class after a full day, but rugby was the topic. I had played NSW Rugby in 1969 so any link to rugby interested me. Dick would say, "Richardson, those rugby people have been on the phone again." My quick response was, "Yes, who, when and where." The answer was NO! Maybe Dick wanted me to help some of the 'marbles' players learn the game of rugby in our internal company matches. Who injured the instructors?

In outlining some events that played out during our time at OTU Scheyville I hope I have portrayed the care and empathy displayed by this man Dick Flint. A good man, some would say, "A person of Quality."

Dick Flint, my CI at Scheyville and for the last 20 plus years my good friend, mentor and mate. (Owen Williamson, 4/70)

My magnetic personality as the Regimental Duties (RD) Corporal at the BOC BHQ, and the location of my room, Room 26 on the downhill side of King's Row, and the closest to the Officer's Mess, ensured that I received a lot of attention when it came to room inspections. The Extra Drill Parades (EDs) that we received as punishments for minor infringements were becoming debilitating and if they continued, I felt that I would surely fail. A suitable solution had to be found.

One night I had a bloody good idea that may solve the problem. The very next day I put the plan into place. Everything went brilliantly and I had the most immaculate room in the camp. EDs were a thing of the past and I got on with the task of passing. However, about a week before the final 10-day exercise out in the bush I was called to the Adjutant's office and asked to please explain why I had a room setup in the 'visiting bands quarters?' I explained that I was always getting EDs and I had to come up with a suitable solution to combat the problem. Their answer to that, was for me to charge myself, with the charge being, "Conduct unbecoming an Officer." This catch-all charge covered nearly any misconduct other than robbery and murder. In order for you to learn the military legal system you were given the task of charging yourself. This meant writing out all the necessary paperwork and ensuring that on the day the charge was heard that you properly convicted yourself. There was no defence and no right of reply. A week out from the 10-day exercise was a frantic time ensuring that everyone was too busy to be giving me EDs. This allowed me to complete all

the paperwork to charge myself. Being as anal as I am, I did it all very thoroughly and as far I could see without any mistakes.

With charge documents in hand, being a part of the BOC BHQ, I presented myself to the RSM (WO1 Almond – Second to God or the Commandant) to see if my documentation would allow the charge hearing to proceed. He took one look at it, read about four lines, threw it down in disgust and said, “Mr Williamson, when you get it completely correct bring it back. Dismissed!” I thought bugger what had I done wrong? I checked and rechecked it, until I couldn’t find a thing wrong. Back to the RSM for another encounter with the “Second to God” to see what my fate would be. This time he didn’t even look at the paperwork before asking me in a gruff voice, did I know that if I was charged, I would certainly get 10 days Confined to Barracks (CB). At this late stage in the course CB activities would take so much of my time that I would certainly fail. I was crest fallen. The gruff voice then said, “If you were to be charged the day before the 10-day exercise, the 10 days CB would run over the exercise period and would become null and void. Do I make myself clear?” All the lights came on and I replied in a strong and hearty voice, “Yes Sir, fully understood!” With a huge grin on my face and knowing that there is a God out there, I took my perfectly good documentation and put it away until the day before the exercise was to begin.

That day I presented myself, papers in hand to the (CI) Chief Instructor and convincingly charged myself. As expected, I was found guilty, given 10 days CB, fully pardoned, due to the 10-day exercise period and ordered to stand down. As I sauntered down the hallway of the headquarters building, I heard footsteps catching up with me. Horror of horrors, what had I done now? When I turned around there was CI with a big smile on his face, who said, “I might have given you 10 days CB, but I forgot to congratulate you on your incredible initiative. Good afternoon Mr. Williamson.” The CI was none other than the late Brigadier Dick Flint who, over the last 15 to 20 years, become a great friend, colleague and mentor.

Right: Dick Flint receives the AM

