

William (Russ) Henderson was born in Perth, WA, on 7 January 1947 and completed his secondary education at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School. He attended Queensland Agricultural College and graduated as a Diplomat of Animal Husbandry in 1966. Before entering the Army as National Serviceman 1733455 with OTU Class 4/67 he was employed as a Clerk with Imperial Chemical Industries. Whilst at OTU he was appointed Under Officer and Battalion Quartermaster Sergeant. Russ was allocated to the Infantry Corps and posted to the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra.



The association received notification that Russ, as he was known to most (and as Sooty to close family), passed away peacefully in the early hours of Saturday 21 September. His partner Susan and daughter Claire were with him the whole time. He had been having a long battle with cancer and was undergoing immunotherapy; however, some side effects took their toll. On Friday 27 September, sixteen Scheyvillians from the OTU NSW Chapter assembled at the North Chapel of The Northern Suburbs Memorial Gardens and Crematorium to farewell a much loved and respected member of our Association.

As well as the strong turnout by OTU, a number of emails and phone calls were received by me from ex-service members, all giving testament to how much Russ was admired and respected. He was a man of integrity, good humour, and simply fun to be with. He loved life, and he loved those family and friends with whom he shared many memorable moments. During the Service, his daughter Claire delivered a wonderful eulogy, delighting in the positive personality and aura that was Russ.

After graduating from OTU in April 1968, Russ was appointed to the Royal Australian Infantry, and sent as a platoon commander to Battle Wing at JTC Canungra. From there, he moved through the reinforcement system to South Vietnam, arriving on 9 December 1968. At the time, both 1RAR and 4RAR were towards the end of their deployments in SVN, and Russ was to serve with both until their departure. He was then transferred to command D&E Platoon at Nui Dat. Russ received a command handover in August 1969 from the outgoing platoon commander 2Lt Mick Woolan MC(2/67). Mick was in attendance at Russ's Service and spoke of those times when he was serving with Russ. Mick arranged for an ex-member of Russ's platoon, to present the family with the National Flag, and the sounding of the Last Post. Dick Adams also spoke during the service, giving some insight to the task of getting through OTU. Dick was also able to pass on a humorous anecdote from Russ's classmate (and OTU National Chairman) Frank Miller.

A measure of how well Russ was respected was the large number in attendance, and for good measure a handful of Maori ex-diggers from across the ditch, who had served in SVN at the same time as Russ, joined the Service. (They had just finished farewelling one of their mates in the next chapel). Also in attendance was our retired Governor General, Major General Peter Cosgrove, who after graduating from RMC in 1968, was sent to SVN, where his first appointment was to take over from Russ as D&E Platoon Commander.

Russ Henderson was a regular attender at our NSW Chapter functions, and at mixed events, was always accompanied by his beautiful partner Susan. We hope that she can maintain a connection with the OTU as Russ will be sadly missed. (John 'Booka' Bushell, 4/69)

