

Tony Sonneveld (1/70). (Dick Adams, 3/72, Geoff Houghton, 3/71 and Neil Leckie, 3/68)



Anthony Leonard Sonneveld was born in Holland in 1946, one of eleven children, and completed his secondary education at Christian Brothers College, East Melbourne. He attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and graduated as a Diplomat of Secondary Metallurgy in 1969. Before entering the Army as a National Serviceman he was employed as a Consulting Metallurgist.

From a young age Tony had a fondness for the military way of life and was a member of the Cadets in 1961. Although conscription put him into the Army it was Tony's desire to succeed and rise above the difficult childhood times that drove him to find his true depths and resourcefulness. He became the BQMS in Class 1/70 at Scheyville, which in itself is no small achievement.

On graduating as a 2nd Lieutenant, Tony was allocated to the Royal Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and posted to the RAEME Training Centre at Bandiana for Corps Training from 28 July – 25 August 1970, along with Brent Couper, William Doman, Anthony Harding, Malcolm Nicholle and John Urquhart. On completion of Corps Training Tony was posted to the Puckapunyal Area Workshops where he would later serve with Owen Williamson of Class 4/70. In 1972 after two years in the Army Tony completed his NS with the rank of Lieutenant.

Following his discharge from the Army and returning to his civilian employment in 1972 Tony had no real contact with the Army, nor the fledgling association, until he participated in Defence Industrial Mobilisation Course in 1987. It was during this course that the director, Rear Admiral Fred Lynam, encouraged him to renew his association with the military. This prompted Tony to join the association that year.

Tony immediately became an active association member. He was National Chairman of the Association from 1991 – 93 and organised the first national reunion (the 20th Anniversary of the closing of OTU), at Windsor, in 1993. The reunion was attended by 450 graduates and partners. Tony's first period as National Chairman was characterised by the membership growing from about 40 to 250 members; the adoption of a constitution and the establishment of state chapters; a quarterly published *The Scheyvillian* newsletter; and the establishment of regular lunches in the NSW Chapter.

In 1994 Tony was instrumental in the erection of a commemorative bronze plaque at Scheyville, to recognise the eight Scheyville Graduates who were killed in South Vietnam.

Tony was National Chairman again from 2002 – 04 and organised the 2nd National Reunion (the 30th Anniversary of the closing of OTU) in the Sydney and Windsor areas in 2003, which was attended by 550 graduates and partners. His second period was characterised by growing the membership from 400 to 750 members; erecting a second commemorative plaque to the deceased commandants at Scheyville; and introducing colour into an expanded *The Scheyvillian* newsletter.



Dick Adams' OTU 372 with Tony Sonneveld's OTU 170

In 2011, during the Scheyville Centenary celebrations, Tony worked with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to erect a commemorative bronze plaque to deceased commandants.

Just what part did Scheyville play in Tony's life? As he was growing up Tony had a rather tough time, and with strict Dutch parents he was not to have an opinion. This led to low self-esteem, and to quote Tony directly "Scheyville taught me how to cope in life and to realize that one's physical and mental capacity was not limited to 20% of brain function and with application many things were possible."

Tony went on to draw parallels with the movie limitless; and (on the next page) a poem tying all together.

Tony was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent external beam radiation treatment in 2003. In 2006, a rising PSA and bone scan confirmed existence of metastatic disease. Tony lost his father and father-in-law to prostate cancer in 1992 and worried about the future of his sons and grandsons. In 2012 two brothers underwent prostate cancer surgery. In 2007, Tony joined the NSW Board of PCFA as a Consumer Advocate and Ambassador Speaker to actively promote prostate cancer awareness, education and fund raising for support and research. He was appointed NSW Fundraising Chairman in May 2009.

Tony continued to work with the NSW Chapter of the OTU Association until he was forced by the effects of his prostate cancer to cut back his activities. Tony went into palliative care on 10 November and passed away peacefully early on Sunday 13 November 2016.

The Last Hurrah (Dick Adams, 3/72)

On Monday 29 August 2016, 80 people joined with popular association member, Tony Sonneveld (1/70), to give him a 'Last Hurrah' on his final journey with prostate cancer. The function was neither a pre-emptive wake, nor a final farewell – it was a celebration of Tony's contribution to the association and a gathering with friends he had made over many years.

The function, held at the heritage Cellos Restaurant at the NSW Masonic Club in Sydney, was an initiative of the association and was organised by NSW Chapter Chairman, John

(Booka) Bushell (4/69). Tony and Viv were 'piped in' to the dining room where they joined with 48 Scheyvillians, partners, members of Tony's family and a few close friends.

Following on from a successful class reunion in Melbourne earlier this year, where Tony was able to attend, Malcolm Boyd managed to muster 17 members of Class 1/70 to attend the function. They were joined by National Committee Members Frank Miller, Ray Elder and Neil Leckie.

At the function Dick Adams (3/72) acted as MC and provided an overview of Tony's long service to the Association. Malcolm Boyd (1/70) spoke about Tony's long involvement with



a close-knit class, lasting some 46 years; Ray Elder (2/67) entertained the gathering with a few gems about Tony; Phil Drake-Brockman (DS) shared some anecdotes in respect to Tony's skiing prowess; Geoff Houghton (3/71) read a poem he had written in Tony's honour several years ago; and Tim Fischer (3/66) spoke about Tony and the 'Dargo Warriors', as well as the campaign to have John Monash elevated to the rank of Field Marshall.

Left: Tony and Gary Vial (3/69) a few weeks after 'The Last Hurrah'. It was Tony that inveigled (or persuaded) Gary to take an active OTU role MANY years ago.



Tony's brief but emotional response was followed up by he and Viv being 'piped out' of the dining room, where they joined their guests in the bar to follow that time-honoured Scheyvillian tradition of

sharing a few beers with a few reminiscences (and some 'war stories') of times long ago.

Above: Tony and his three children. Right: With Ray Elder (2/67), Tony and Dick Adams (3/72)



Thank you, Tony, for your service to the Association and we wish you all the best in your continuing treatment.

Inspiration

Breathing is one of the few automatic processes over which we have little control,
Almost everything else we can chart and set course, to ensure we reach our goal,
Adversity and pain, suffering and anxiety, are just hurdles in life to test our metal,
The brain is a wonderful tool; just switch it on to full and let your problems settle,

Start each day fresh with a clean and open mind, never let yesterday set you behind,
Never waste a precious moment to think; in anger or envy just get on with the grind,

We are all much better than we realise and seldom do we reach our full potential,
Forego the harmful and immoral and watch your self-esteem rise as if exponential,

Think of others kindly and offer help where you can but never leave in conflict,
If all of us combined our unused power what a wonderful world we could depict!

Dedicated to Tony Sonneveld for his ongoing fight for the Prostrate Cancer Foundation of Australia: Ted Belly

Obituary - Tony Sonneveld 1946 – 2016 (Malcolm Brown, 3/69)

They called him the “pocket dynamo” and indeed he was, setting out as one of 11 children in an impoverished family, delivering milk as a nine-year-old to help the family make ends meet, and finishing as a highly successful industrialist with a personal estate worth millions. But there was a lot more to Tony Sonneveld than that. He embraced every field he entered, including the military where he was a commissioned officer during the National Service. Everything he touched, whether it was non-destructive testing, construction and termite control, became his own domain. When, at the age of 57, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, he rose to become a NSW chairman of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, waging such a war on the disease that the malevolent deity – should there be one – which had singled him out must have realised it had chosen the wrong victim.

Anthony ‘Tony’ Sonneveld was born on a ship as it entered a Dutch harbour in 1946. His father, Hendricus Sonneveld, had served in the Dutch East Indies early in World War 11 and, retreating with other Dutch forces to Australia in the face of the Japanese onslaught, had met a nurse, Eileen Mary Ferguson. The couple married in Melbourne in 1943. Their first child, Michael, had been born in 1944. At the end of the war, Hendricus and his wife travelled to Holland. Tony Sonneveld was born on May 3, 1946 and was nine months old when his parents returned to Australia. He was schooled in Melbourne but because his parents were so poor, he worked throughout his schooling at a variety of jobs and left school in 1962, with his Leaving Certificate, to work as a trainee metallurgist.

Sonneveld completed his schooling at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and continued at the institute, studying part-time, for a diploma in metallurgy. He qualified in 1969 and continued with a company that had already engaged him, Metlab– X–Ray, which specialised in non-destructive testing (NDT) of pipelines, power station, oil refineries and aircraft. In 1970, Sonneveld was called up for National Service. Graduating from a course at the Officer Training Unit, Scheyville, outside Sydney, he went to the Royal Australian

Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at Puckapunyal, Victoria, servicing all manner of military vehicles, from tanks to jeeps.

After completing his National Service in 1971, Sonneveld returned to Metlab. Transferred to the Brisbane office, he took responsibility for the company's operations in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Bougainville. In 1973, he moved to the Sydney office and took in New South Wales as well. He also married a teacher, Vera ("Vivienne") Albantow, bought a block of land in Seven Hills, in Sydney's north-west, and built a house. Two sons arrived: Mark, born 1976 and Michael in 1977. In 1978, Sonneveld became Metlab's general manager. The following year, he and Vivienne were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Rebecca. At work, his company, then called Metlab MAPEL Pty Ltd, had operations in Singapore, New Zealand, and across Australia. At one point, he personally dived at an oil rig off the New Zealand coast to do testing. In 2004 he published the "History of Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) in Australia".

In 1986, following a takeover of Metlab by a British company, a subsidiary of Amec plc, Sonneveld became deputy managing director of the parent company's diverse construction operations throughout Australia. In 1990, he joined Transfield Constructions as General Manager of the company's electrical/instrumentation subsidiary. In 1995, Sonneveld left and took up a franchise for a new product, Termi-mesh, a physical barrier to subterranean termite infestation of buildings, which had a ready market following the phasing out of chemical controls. Because he was one of the first in the field, the return exceeded all expectations. The company turned over \$1 million in 11 months and repaid the initial investment four-fold. Sonneveld then bought a run-down Blacktown factory for \$500,000, renovated and extended it to provide a permanent nest-egg for the family.

The 2003 diagnosis of prostate cancer was a terrible blow. In 2006, he received the grim news that the disease had become metastatic – it had gone into his bones and was terminal. But Sonneveld, whose extra-curricular activities had included building a network of military contacts and chairing the OTU [Officer Training Unit] Association nationally, quickly took up the cause of prostate cancer sufferers. He joined the NSW Board of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, became its chairman and a national director, and successfully lobbied the Howard Government to approve the drug Taxotere, an end-of-life chemotherapy for sufferers, to go onto the Prescription Benefits List. Also a national director of the foundation, he became its ambassador, giving public presentations, chaired meetings and attended many fund raising functions each year. Using the media and venues such as football matches, he set out on a campaign to make the general public aware of the disease.

Wanting to pack as much life into his remaining years, Sonneveld initiated a music and fun day in 2006 for many of his friends, which has continued to this day on a biennial basis and has over the years attracted the likes of Mike McClellan and Marty Rhone. Awarded an OAM in 2010 for his services to NDT, Sonneveld handed over his business to his sons and went on an energetic program that included overseas trips and skiing, as well as supporting and mentoring fellow prostate cancer sufferers. But Sonneveld's own disease took its inevitable course and he died on November 13, 2016. Tony Sonneveld is survived by his widow, his three children, five grandchildren and 10 siblings.

The Funeral of Tony Sonneveld (1/70) (Frank Miller, 4/67)



Tony's funeral was held at Mary, Mother of Mercy Chapel, Rookwood NSW on 21 November 2016. That the building was full to overflowing said so much of the high esteem in which he was held by so many people. Over thirty Scheyvillians were in attendance. Some had come from interstate to pay their last respects to a man who had been a major driver in the Association over the years.

The Service commenced with a welcome and prayer given by Barry Denton – a good friend

of Tony's.

Older brother John Sonneveld DFC (2/68) delivered the Eulogy. Following that, a series of tributes was delivered by speakers who had known Tony through many aspects of his life. Included in these was Dick Adams APM OAM RFD (3/72) (photograph) who also read out a piece written by Owen Williamson (4/70).

Another of Tony's friends, Mike McClellan, sang a special song "Hand to Hold" after which Tony's wife Viv, sons Mark, and Michael and grandson Jake each gave a tribute. (Viv said that her piece had been written for her by Tony. She did add, however, that each time he travelled overseas he brought her back an ornamental bell to add to the personal collection that she had started many years ago. Many were not altogether to her liking and were made available to whoever wanted to take them after the Service).

The picture of the Tony we all knew emerged strongly throughout the Service. He was a driven man, always ready to take charge and make whatever was in hand a huge success. He was a risk taker who thrived on a challenge. His endearing personality made him friends wherever he went. He was larger than life and was well deserving of the "Pocket Dynamo" title which aptly described his boundless energy.

Mention was made by more than one speaker on his lifetime of smoking which had taken up with characteristic enthusiasm at a very young age.

At the finish of the Service refreshments were provided in an area adjacent to the Chapel. Scheyvillians were able to catch up with each other and to reminisce. They also shared fond memories of our fine comrade - "Pocket Dynamo" Tony Sonneveld. The day was a fitting celebration of Tony's life. Our sincere condolences go to Viv, John and the family.

The Victorian Wake (Robin Hunt, 3/69) In Melbourne, a dozen OTU graduates (including three from Tony's OTU class) gathered together after work at the Toorak Heroes on the day of Tony's funeral to join together to recognise Tony's life. Robin Hunt led off with some observations about Tony's contribution to our Association, Ray Elder (2/67) and Peter Whitelaw (3/66) expanded our knowledge about Tony's work with various prostate cancer projects and three of his 1/70 classmates - Owen Morgan, George Guimmarra and Jon Bate – spoke about Tony's life at OTU and his



contributions to Australian society in general. A glass was raised to a “good bloke and a fine Australian”. Other attendees were Ian Kelly (2/67), Mick Stone (1/68), John Parker (1/70), Chris Coates (3/71), Hondo Gratton (3/69) and Peter Hateley (2/71)

Apologies were received from Brian Cooper (3/69), Neil Leckie (2/68), Rob Youl (2/65) in St Arnaud on Art Business, Frank Miller (4/67 - at Tony's funeral in Sydney) and from Wayne Bruce (2/70) who, with his two daughters, walked the Kokoda Trail with Tony

in 2003 (just after he was diagnosed). He fought the long good fight - Although he did need to take a “smoko” at locations on the track”.