

EULOGY FOR COLONEL STAN MAIZEY

There are times in our lives when we encounter someone who has a very significant impact on us – and we may not, initially, accept it as a favourable impact.

Colonel Stan Maizey is such a person, and I speak, not only for myself, but for others who met him in similar circumstances.

I first encountered the Colonel in April 1969 at a place called Scheyville. I need to put that in some context but, in doing so, will seek to follow the exhortation of Winston Churchill: a speech should be like a woman's skirt – it should cover the subject but not be too long.

In 1964, the then Government of Australia legislated a National Service Scheme. The motivation for it, initially, was the fear of communism in neighbouring Indonesia which was led by President Sukarno. However, at about the same time as the introduction of this National Service Scheme, General Suharto overthrew President Sukarno – and that was the end of the communist threat from Indonesia.

What followed was that, one way or another, the Australian Army was made available to assist the United States Forces in Vietnam.

The aim of the National Service Scheme was to increase the strength of the Australian Army from approximately 27,000 servicemen to approximately 50,000 servicemen.

The army didn't need, and the country could not afford, a force bigger than that.

So how was this to be done:

- As each Australian male reached 20 years of age, he had to register under the Scheme.
- A lottery of birth dates was held four times a year.
- If your birth date was selected in the raffle, you were in the army – subject to passing medicals.

For most of us, it was the only big raffle we ever won.

However, the most salient point was that, if you did not turn up, you were put in jail.

With 30,000 more soldiers, there was a need for more junior officers – of the second lieutenant kind.

As it turns out, only 8% of Australian males were called up; of that 8%, a little over 3% were selected for officer training at a place called Scheyville; and of those selected, approximately 60% graduated.

The aim of Scheyville, we were told, was to produce, in 22 weeks, second lieutenants who could command a platoon of infantry soldiers (or equivalent) in battle – usually, with more specific training after graduation.

The Scheyville Officer Training Unit is acknowledged by those who devised and ran it as one of the most exhausting and testing courses – Special Forces apart – conducted by the military over many decades. It was designed to test participants, both physically and mentally. It has been described as "an institution which is now unique in Australia's modern military history" (Gary McKay MC – "In Good Company").

I, and some others here today, were members of what is known as Class 2/69, that is, the second class "marched in" in 1969. The Scheyville Establishment, at that time, consisted of Colonel Jack Studdert as Commanding Officer; Lieutenant Colonel Maizey as Chief Instructor; and a cohort of officers and non-commissioned officers below him. All staff had considerable experience, including, in most cases, relatively recent experience in Veitnam, and were of a very high quality – as we came to learn.

Colonel Maizey was a fearsome character, as were many of those within his cohort. In the first week, we were told, that Scheyville would break us down and build us up again.

Fear, it seemed to us, was an important part of the program, and Colonel Maizey was in charge of dispensing that. He was tall, well built, as upright as any man could be, and exuded a sense of command. It seemed to us that he was physically and mentally tough but, after a while, it also became clear that he was mainly fair. As with many men called Stan, the epithet of "Stan the Man" was applied to him. In his case, it fitted the man – Stan was the man!

They pushed and tested, and tested and pushed, us constantly over a normal day of 6am in the morning to 10pm at night; there were many days longer than that. They tested us on various characteristics including assertiveness (often called aggressiveness), physicality, and reactions under pressure.

The rugby field on which the Colonel participated was also a testing ground for these characteristics.

We had the benefit of what were called guidance officers who met with us, periodically, to tell us how we were going and how we measured up to the characteristics.

A funny story comes from Peter Don (known as PTI Don), in a meeting with his guidance officer, Captain Lunny of the SAS (one of our 2/69 Colleagues suggested that having Captain Lunny coupled with the term guidance was an oxymoron).

Peter Don wrote to me in recent days:

"Captain Lunny (SAS) seriously advised me that, if I was able to do a damaging tackle on the Colonel in a rugby game, my aggression rating would improve from somewhere near 0 to something I could be proud of. He did acknowledge that there might be other repercussions of such an act upon the Colonel.

For some reason I was never able to carry out his recommendation"

Peter *did* graduate as a second lieutenant.

Another 2/69, Graham Charge, who was recognized by Stan as a very good rugby player, wrote:

"As much as I would like to pack down one last scrum for Stan, I can't get there. He was very kind to me subsequent to Scheyville in ensuring that I was busy playing rugby for next the 18 months and very unfortunately had to miss most of the field exercises with A Sqn 2 Cav Regt.

RIP GREAT RUGGER MAN"

The process designed and carried out by the Scheyville Establishment, including by Colonel Maizey as one of its chief instruments, worked!! It did deliver young men who, with help from various people (especially those whom they were intended to command), could lead the relevant platoon, or other group, in action. At various times and in various publications, the quality of the Scheyville graduate has been acknowledged – to the credit of the Scheyville Establishment.

A lot of the Scheyville graduates stayed in the army after the two years but most went back to civilian life. Scheyville concluded in 1973.

There were some OTU regroupings after Scheyville and, in fact, the OTU Association was inaugurated by Gary McKay MC and others early on – but the regular reunions did not occur until the early 1990's.

From the early 1990's onwards, there have been significant National and class reunions on a very regular basis.

In various State Capitals, periodic lunches and annual dinners have been operating, regularly, since the early 90's.

To the surprise of most of us, the ex-CO's, CI's, and other staff of , have been happy to join us in our reunions, lunches, dinners, and ramblings.

We like to think that they have done that because they have pride in what they produced and, for our part, we have gotten to know them as men, not just as superiors. They have been very welcome.

In some cases, we have become friends, and are still impressed by their qualities, especially their qualities of leadership and "manship".

Stan has been a regular at our Brisbane lunches over many years and he and Janette used to regularly attend our annual dining in nights.

I have had the privilege of being Stan's solicitor for more than 10 years and, as a result, I have had the opportunity to get to know him very well as a man.

Stan is not demonstrable!! He is calm, strong, listens and is fair – yes, he does listen.

He can laugh at himself, and, with others, laugh at himself. That is the measure of a good sense of humour.

I and others have enjoyed Stan's company over many years.

I'll recount one occasion, as his advisor. My wife, Trish, and I were at Lake Titicaca in Peru. In fact, we were recovering from altitude sickness. My secretary had let me know me know that Janette had died and that Stan had been calling me. I rang Stan and, for once, he departed briefly from not being demonstrable. When I finished the call, I could not help saying to Trish: "Who would have thought that someone, who terrorized us some 40 years ago, would seek one of his victims to be his confidant". I actually used more colourful words than that.

Others know more than I of his military pedigree but suffice it to say that a senior colleague of his, Brigadier Dick Flint (who took over from Stan as CI at Scheyville), recently indicated to me that Stan might have been a General had he not annoyed "the head shed" so regularly. Dick went on to say that Stan and he were close, and at one stage, held complimentary postings: Stan at training command (director of operations) and Dick at Army HQ (in charge of the doctrine and policy of training). Dick remembers one occasion when they agreed! They had a drink and talked about footy!

Both men, obviously, have significant intellects and hold strong opinions.

It has not been my intention to list Stan's military accomplishments (that is for others), but Robin Hunt 3/69 provided to me a copy of the December 1947 Fortian – the newsletter of Fort Street School, Sydney. 1947 was Stan's Senior Year. In that addition, Stan featured:

- As a student representative.
- As a prefect.
- In the cricketing news, both as a batsman (scoring 36 runs not out), and as a bowler (10 wickets for 87 runs).
- As a member of the first grade football team, which were premiers. It was written of him that he was a front row rugged forward and gave good support to the hooker.

Stan's leadership capacities were clearly obvious early on and, no doubt, were the foundations of an impressive military career.

I am honoured to have had the opportunity to present this Eulogy, and I do so on behalf of The National Association of the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville, the members of whom wish to pay their final respects to Colonel Stan Maizey.

Sir, we salute you.

I hope the skirt was not too long!!

Michael Hart