

STANLEY JOHN MAIZEY 1931 - 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen, 5RAR's Provident Tiger has passed on and it is a great honour & privilege to have been asked to deliver the first of two Eulogies to a remarkable man.

In the words of John Taske "It's not only the passing of a great man, but the feeling that his passing is a tiny prognostication of the passing of a time in society that we knew and loved"

And so it is that "Our" world is rapidly becoming unrecognisable in the fast changing present times.

But let us not be too gloomy, after all, this service is to both say our final farewell to an outstanding soldier, and to celebrate his life.

Stanley John Maizey was born as the youngest of 3 children on 24th August 1931 in Gladesville Sydney to Wal and Arl Maizey. Stan's father was a NSW Police Prosecutor. Stan attended a primary school in Balmain and then high school at Fort Street Boys. He was a member of the school cadet force and that experience persuaded him to enlist in the army in 1948. He graduated as the youngest of his class at RMC Duntroon in 1951. Because of his achievements in the RMC's science curriculum, he graduated against his wished into the Signal Corps. It took him several years to transfer to the Infantry which had been his 1st choice. He never forgave Professor Sutherland for what Stan considered to be an outrage!

During his 30 years of service, Stan served in Japan, Korea and twice in Malaya in staff, training and operational roles with both 2 and 3 RAR. After his service in Vietnam, Stan became Chief Instructor at OCU Scheyville, CO of 2RTB at Puckapunyal and senior staff postings in Eastern Command in Sydney.

After service in Japan & Korea, Stan met & married the love of his life Janette Sykes. Life for the Maizey's was never dull with Janette's gentle but firm nature the perfect foil to Stan's big personality. Over a period of eight years, they had 3 children - Kim, Judy & Sally.

Stan was a dedicated Freemason and after army retirement he used his leadership talents & managerial skills at Randwick Racecourse, the Royal Motor Yacht club and the Challenge Foundation. Stan also did voluntary work for Legacy, dipped his toes into politics and was Board Chairman for an aged care facility. When not engaged in these activities, he revelled in being a loving Grandfather and great grandfather.

Returning to the 1960s -

After Staff College at Queenscliff, Stan was posted to the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra and it was from there that he brought his family to Holsworthy in January 1966 to take up his appointment as Second in Command of 5RAR.

5RAR had been formed from the residue of 1RAR when it reformed to deploy to Vietnam in May 1965. When Stan joined us in January 66, we knew we were to become part of a 2 battalion Task Force and deploy in April – just 4 months away. In truth, the Australian Army's logistic system was ill prepared to deploy 5,000 men and their equipment to a non-existent base in Vietnam within four months.

Whilst CO John Warr concentrated on getting the battalion physically fit and trained for war, he left Stan to ensure we were properly equipped and actually arrive in theatre in as good order administratively and logistically as was humanly possible. If any one person can claim the credit for getting 5RAR to Vietnam despite the Army's shambolic logistic situation, it was Stanley John Maizey. Determined, untiring, unflappable and unconventional, his methods must have caused John Warr's heart some palpitations, but Stan got us there in good order.

By January 1966, I had been the battalion's Adjutant for a few months only and at first was a touch wary of this newly arrived 2i/c whose reputation as a no-nonsense, energetic and tough individual, had preceded him.

I need not have worried; Stan became my mentor and lifelong friend. I served with him again at the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville where Stan was Chief Instructor and I an instructor in tactics and leadership. I learned much from Stan's example.

I had arrived in Australia from the UK in early 1963 and joined 1RAR. My intended wife arrived in late 64. When we married at Avalon Beach, I was the only person she knew at the wedding. Stan & Janette looked upon my young wife as a sort of step daughter and Penny has ever since, been enormously grateful to Stan & Janette for their kindness. Penny wanted to be here with me today to say her farewell too but she has spinal problems and I persuaded her not to.

Max Carroll is physically frail and can't be here today. I asked him if he would help me in paying tribute to Stan. I'll read his response in full:

"Stan was on the course before me at the Staff College Queenscliff from where he graduated in 1964, whereas I joined 5RAR direct from my class in 1965. I found the following gem in "Tookarook" the College magazine for Stan's class under Tookarook Reports on Future Staff. It is produced on each course by student editors taking the piss out of their classmates with some astute observations by the DS.

Quote: Stan Maizey – otherwise Dino the friendly Dinosaur. An experienced infantryman from Sydney & Saigon. Stan's practical direct approach to a problem invariably produced the right answer in the shortest time. A keen gambler who organised some most enjoyable games nights. Stan will always be remembered for his assistance in quenching many thirsts at fifteen thousand feet. Unquote. (PJI - I have no idea at all of what the latter refers to!)

These prescient views of his talents will I'm sure be endorsed by those of us who served in the fifth of Foot.

I personally first met Stan when I joined 5RAR in January 1966 although I knew of him by reputation. We clicked on meeting and remained the best of mates throughout our service and then through the 5RAR Association. We were also neighbours in the Married Quarter complex at ANZAC north in Holsworthy before leaving for Vietnam, and our young families knew each other.

5RAR was lucky to have Stan as its Second in Command in that he was completely unflappable and his belief in the old infantry dogma that "Nothing is impossible, there are only degrees of difficulty" got 5RAR through some unbelievable situations of higher authority administrative shambles, both in Australia and in Vietnam.

We survived and continued to function efficiently as a fighting unit because of Stan's sometimes unusual methods of getting things done as 2i/c. He was also a most efficient combat commander and stood in as A Company's commander when Bert Cassidy was MEDEVACED and as Operations Officer during Operation Hayman when I was on leave. His subsequent posting as GSO 2 Operations at HQ 1ATF in December 1966 enabled him to then work very productively with Brigadier Stuart Graham the new Task Force Commander. They were a good team who were in later years most unfairly maligned by many "Academic Armchair Warriors" regarding "The Fence".

I would make the point that no-one in Higher Authority, either Australian, American or Vietnamese objected to the original plan when it was presented to them for approval and if the Vietnamese had kept up their agreed side of responsibilities including raising a new unit to patrol and secure it, the "Fence" would have later saved us a lot of casualties.

(PJI - I must add here, that later on, 1ATF was also guilty of not doing enough to patrol the obstacle and prevent the VC from removing mines to use against our own Australian troops).

Brigadier Stu Graham, like David Jackson before him, was always critically short of infantry and both had made the point that the initial 2 battalion Task force was inadequate for the threat faced in Phouc Tuy Province at that time. We on the ground in 5 & 6 RAR needed no prompting to endorse this view. Stan did the appreciation for the plan for the Fence that was built by 5RAR and with anti-personnel mines laid by the Sapper Field Squadron. On completion, it was to be patrolled by Vietnamese (ARVN) troops. The aim was to release Australian battalions for more aggressive operations. They were let down by the ARVN and the academic criticisms by those who have never heard a shot fired in anger caused widespread outrage amongst those of us who knew the truth. Eventually the misguided critics retired muttering into their holes, but they had caused unnecessary hurt to good officers like Stan who was I believe, haunted by those young Diggers lives lost or maimed, for the rest of his life.

On a lighter note I still have wonderful memories of a formal dinner held at a hotel in Vung Tau in May 1966, when we – dressed in tropical Mess Kit to the utter surprise and delight of the US Army's 68th Aviation Company, entertained those fine American helicopter flyers who had assisted us with our initial in-country training and were to fly us in on Operation Hardihood.

It was a great night at the ex-French Colonial Grand Hotel and we were disbursing outside into our waiting vehicles at 2345hrs for the 5 minute drive back to our temporary base camp ALSG. Curfew applied from Midnight and we had plenty of time.

Then a bumptious little nerd of an Australian Military Police Lieutenant confronted me and said that he & his supporting squad of a Sgt & 2 Cpls intended to arrest us for breaking curfew. First off I thought he was kidding, then he became more officious, so I gave him a few words of advice regarding our difference in rank and the time and space involved in our movements and that he should wind his neck in, get lost and earn his pay elsewhere, or words to that effect. He persisted in this nonsense, which was making his supporting squad uncomfortable as they being sensible soldiers saw the reasonableness of my argument. Anyway, I had had enough and was about the deck him when Stan the Man suddenly & quietly moved between us and picked up the Provost Lieutenant by the throat and sat him on the bonnet of my land rover and quietly addressed him with their noses touching. He had the half strangled Provost officer's undivided attention as he reinforced my points and then lifted the by this time most unhappy man from the bonnet and dumped him unceremoniously in the dirt at the feet of his squad, whom he told to look after him and try to keep him out of trouble. We then went home unmolested and heard nothing more of the incident. Stan had style!

There are many more accounts that can be told of this highly efficient, quiet but remarkable man, with a wonderful, mischievous sense of humour whom I am privileged to call a mate. Stan Maizey was indeed, a one off.

Farewell old Mate. By this time I'm sure you have a poker game well established and have St Peter in hock for the pearly gates!"

Let me add one well known story about our first arrival in Vietnam:

We were short of just about everything necessary to build & defend a base camp at Nui Dat - tentage, timber, wire, even weapons. Stan decided that the huge US Army Supply Dump at Vung Tau probably wouldn't miss a few of the items we needed, so together with Ralph Thompson as driver (here today in the Congregation) and a couple of Admin Coy Diggers, they set off on in a large "borrowed" US Army truck. On arrival at the supply dump main entrance, Stan managed to persuade the Top Sgt on duty that theirs was an authorised visit. They then spent an hour driving around the base helping themselves to several tons of "that'll be bloody useful" kit. Once they truck was fully laden, they set off for the exit - but to their consternation, the guard Top Sgt had changed. This one was not at all convinced that this Australian party was entitled to help themselves at his supply dump. Realising that big trouble was imminent, and Ralph maintains, the sound of a .50 Cal machine gun being cocked, Stan thrust a bogus sheaf of papers into the hands of the sceptical Top Sgt and roared "**DRIVE**" to Ralph. They shot down the road and nothing more was heard of that incident either!

Colonel Maizey, you have done your duty, Rest in Peace

Finally, I know that at this very minute, Darryl Lovell, Greg Negus and Harry Neesham are in a pub in Perth remembering Stan.

They have with them, a copy of the Racing Post, a Randwick Race card, a packet of fags, a deck of marked cards and this,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,a Maizey brand 5RAR CRAVAT. You can't go without this Stan so I'll place it on your coffin.

Peter Isaacs