



# ***The Scheyvillian***

*Prepared on behalf of the OTU Association National Committee*

## **OTU Association National Newsletter, No. 1, 2021**

**Officer Training Unit, Scheyville, NSW 1965-1973**  
A Newsletter for all Scheyvillians



**Richard (Dick)  
Seaton  
Flint, AM**

**19.09.1928 - 15.03.2021**

### **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 90<sup>th</sup> 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.

## ***Another COVID Special Scheyvillian***

**COVID Virus or not, life goes on!**

## NATIONAL COMMITTEE 2020/21:

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**The Scheyvillian Editor:** Neil Leckie: Unit 3 / 519 Peel Street North, Black Hill, Vic, 3350.

## THE SCHEYVILLE TAPES – Still Available! A good watch!

The Association received from the late Tony Sonneveld a set of Video Tapes and DVDs on Scheyville that were recorded for the NSW National Parks Service. There were 17 tapes and all, and the interviews carried across a number of tapes. These 17 tapes have been re-recorded onto 10 DVDs with the one interviewee/s on a DVD.

The Recordings are of:

The First Commandant, Ian Geddes	Max Almond (RSM)
The Sonneveld Brothers John (2/68) & Tony (1/70)	Tim Fischer (3/66)
Vic Lampe (4/69)	Gary McKay (2/68)
Turk Ellis (1/70)	Various Interviews at Scheyville
A Windsor Church Parade & Return to Scheyville (2 DVDs)	

The DVDs are available from The Editor at \$10 each incl P&H – or \$60 the set incl P&H!

## OTHER DVDs AVAILABLE

**A must for all Reunion**

**Coordinators** or even for Scheyvillians.

National Service Officer and the Don Keyes (4/69) produced 'The Scheyville Experience' \$10 incl P&H

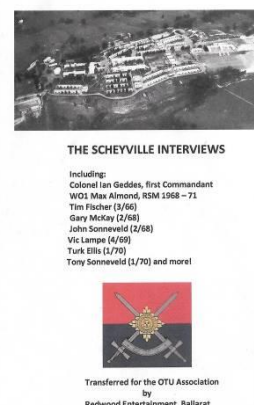
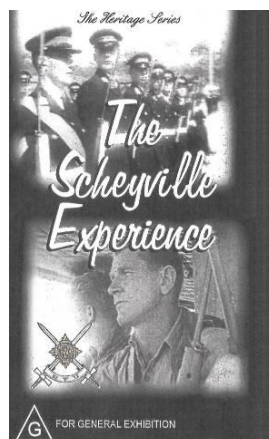
Available from The Editor!

**These can be provided on USB!**

## THE SCHEYVILLIAN NEXT EDITION

**Due Out August 2021:** It is planned to publish Edition 2 of 2021 of *The Scheyvillian* in August 2021. Submissions need to be received by 15 July 2021. If you have any contributions: current stories (eg. Reunions, dinners or other get-togethers) or memorabilia stories, please email them to The Editor, The Scheyvillian, at [nkaleckie@optusnet.com.au](mailto:nkaleckie@optusnet.com.au) or post to Unit 3 / 519 Peel Street North, Black Hill, Vic, 3350. **Preferably photographs should be sent separate to the articles.** If you have many large file size photos, please send individual photos by email, or with many photos, please send a disc/USB Stick. Photos are preferred in jpeg format and should be named! As seen in this and other recent issues, the Scheyvillian is about those who attended Scheyville in one capacity or another.

**We all have stories to tell! Please keep the stories coming and keep the standard of this publication high!**



## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS (Graeme Chester 2/67)

As at the **26 Mar 21**, a summary of our FY 20/21 membership was:

Number of Graduates	1881			
Number on Database (Incl DNG/Staff)		2016		
Number Financial			617	
Widows			9	
Number Life Members			26	
Number Deceased				248
Number Unfinancial (Contact Details - Not Renewed)				590
Number Unfinancial (No Contact Details)				336
Number Unfinancial (Do Not Contact)				190
Totals	1881	2016	652	1364

Of the names on database: 32.3% are financial/honorary/widows.  
12.3% are deceased.  
29.3% are unfinancial (not renewed)  
16.7% are unfinancial (no contact details)  
9.4% are unfinancial (do not contact)

At the end of the 19/20 FY we had **650** financial members and we have managed to maintain that number with **652** financial members to date this year. Interestingly, we have **61** members who were financial last year who have not yet renewed this year and it would be a great outcome if they could get back on board.

For those of you who are yet to renew your membership, if you are enjoying participating in the Association's activities, ie the Coffee Table book, Q Store merchandise, reunions, dinners, luncheons, ANZAC Day, possible National Reunion in October, please support our efforts to 'keep the blokes together' by becoming financial.

If you are uncertain whether or not you are financial, you can check via the website. Just enter the website and click on **Membership Renewal** on the Home Page and a statement will appear advising your financial status. Should you wish to join, a Membership Renewal form is attached to this newsletter, or you could renew using PayPal via our website.

Regarding the website, as any of your contact details change, please update your profile. Simply go into **Profile** on the Home Page and update your information. Don't forget to click on the '**Update**' button (bottom left of page) to ensure the database is changed. Keeping our database updated and accurate will greatly assist classes when organising future reunions, particularly as a lot of us are coming up to our 50<sup>th</sup>.

If you are no longer interested in supporting the OTU Association, please return the Membership Renewal Form (notated accordingly) to help us refine our database.

### From Edition 3 of 2020:

#### The Mystery Badge – no answer to the question, yet!

In late 2020 I had a call about the version of the OTU badge at right. A week later a friend bought one of the badges on EBay. He didn't tell me from whom, or how much it cost. The brightly coloured badge is not an issue version, or one produced for the OTU-A. No-one has come up with an answer as to when and why this version was produced so that the information can go into the association files – Ed.



## **WEBMASTER'S REPORT, 29 MARCH 2021** (Webmaster, Ian Kelly, 2/67)

National newsletters and emails distributed by the OTU website since the last Webmaster Report have included the Death and Funeral Arrangements for Brig 'Dick' Flint (DS – CI) and Terrence 'Peter' Simonds (2/68), a request for input to this Scheyvillian and a request for the 3/71 Graduation Parade Brochure. The Victoria Chapter has put out details on its post-COVID lunches and an award to one of its members.

A significant change has been made to security access for the OTU database for privacy reasons. Now Members will need to be Financial, Honorary, or Widows (F, H or W) to access every menu item on the OTU Website. Unfinancial members and non-members will no longer have access to private information.

### **The Menus and their availability are:**

#### **THE ASSOCIATION**

National Executive and State Chairmen	- FULL ACCESS
Honorary Life Members	- ACCESS limited to F, H or W only
Photo Gallery	- FULL ACCESS
History / Aims / Experience	- FULL ACCESS
The Scheyvillian	- ACCESS limited to F, H or W only
OTU Song	- FULL ACCESS
Constitution	- FULL ACCESS

#### **MINUTES**

AGM	- ACCESS limited to F, H or W only
National Council	- ACCESS limited to F, H or W only
National Executive	- ACCESS limited to F, H or W only

#### **MEMBERS**

OTU Members	- ACCESS limited to F, H or W only
Graduates, Repeats and Non-Graduates	- FULL ACCESS
Battalion of Officer Cadets Structures 1965 To 1973	- FULL ACCESS
Air Cadets and NS Pilots	- FULL ACCESS
Vietnam Service	- FULL ACCESS
List of Deceased Scheyvillians	- FULL ACCESS

**If you have any questions on the OTU Website, please contact The Webmaster. His contact details are on Page 2.**

### **OF INTEREST: 3 RAR REUNION & LAST POST CEREMONY FOR 2LT DAVID PATERSON**

OTU Association: I wish to notify you that the 3 RAR Association are preparing to commemorate the Battle of Long Khanh in Vietnam in Canberra around 7 June 2021. Associated units involved in Operation Overlord in 1971 will also attend. In this 2Lt Ian Mathers (1/70) and 2Lt David Paterson (1/67) will be remembered at the Commemoration Service and in the case of *2Lt David Paterson in the AWM Last Post Ceremony programmed for 5 June 2021*.

This email is to provide awareness that members of OTU will be honoured in June 2021 and possibly your association members maybe interested to participate as a group or individually.

I refer to my internet site page <http://www.3rar.com.au/reunion2021.html> that will provide updates for that event. If active group participation is desired please let me know and we will be pleased to have you join us.

*Regards, Tony Cox, Organiser/Coordinator, 50th Anniversary Reunion 3RAR Vietnam 1971:  
50 Years Operation Overlord, Commemoration of the Battle of Long Khanh  
Telephone: 0412 377 884 Email: [tony.cox@3rar.com.au](mailto:tony.cox@3rar.com.au)*



## VALE – BRIGADIER ‘DICK’ FLINT

**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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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

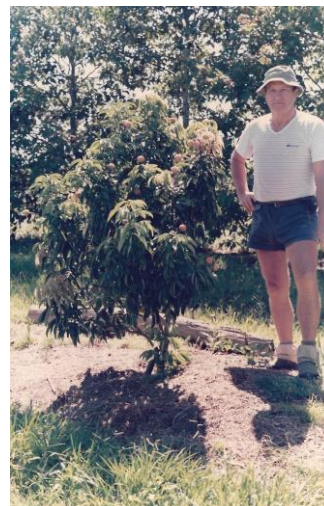


(now deceased) and later Lorraine and Sue would marry Bob. Grandchildren then followed. While in Hawaii in 1961/62, Dick contracted a virus that took a toll on his health. (Right: Dick in Hawaii with US Col Malxner) The virus reappeared in 1976 and for 2 years it again affected his health.

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.



Right: 'Farmer' Dick at Emundi



Left: The Flint family at Government House, Yarralumla, Canberra after Dick had received the AM.

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.



## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### OTU National Reunion 2020 postponed due to COVID Restrictions until 2021

With the COVID-19 virus and its implications causing the postponement of last year's National Reunion it has been agreed to reschedule the event to October 2021. It will still take the same format and be held in the same location as the postponed function.

There will be a formal mixed dinner at the Hawkesbury Racing Club on Friday 15 October 2021. Saturday 16 October will be set aside for individual class reunions and there will be a picnic luncheon at Scheyville on Sunday 17 October.

Further details will be made known mid-year once the COVID situation becomes clearer and a full assessment made. Please put these dates in your diaries!

### Class 1/71 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Graduation Reunion 14-18 October 2021 - Postponed

In the last edition of The Scheyvillian we advised that Class 1/71 was planning its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Graduation Reunion to include the National Reunion. However, with the uncertainty caused by COVID, the committee has advised that the reunion is to be postponed for a year. The Reunion Committee will do all it can to ensure an even more spectacular '50th plus one' celebration next year.

For further information contact 3800697 RD Col Sgt Class 1/71 Doug Miller on 0419 166 557 or at [douglasmiller09@bigpond.com](mailto:douglasmiller09@bigpond.com)

## ANZAC Day

**ACT** (Les Boag, 4/68)

**March:** ACT Health has approved the National ANZAC Dawn Service and ANZAC Day Ceremony with March to proceed for 2021, to be that organised and the ACT RSL. We do not yet know how many will be allowed to march. If allowed, we will have an ACT OTU contingent that includes those here for the 1/70 reunion so expect about 60 to march behind the Banner kindly provided last year by the National Executive. We do have Plan Bs, but hope they are not needed.

**Lunch:** About 20 of the ACT members and their partners will have an ANZAC Day lunch at the Southern Cross Yacht Club at Lotus Bay Yarralumla, as we did so successfully two years ago.

**NSW Chapter** (Gary McKay, 2/68)

For ANZAC Day the NSW Coord is Dick Adams who has provided this brief:

This year, due to COVID restrictions, the NSW RSL has advised that the Sydney ANZAC Day March will be limited to a total of five hundred (500) veterans, to be determined by ballot. Registrations of interest in the ballot may be made vide [rslnsw.org.au](http://rslnsw.org.au).

**March:** As our Association will not be able to march as a group, we have decided to cancel our formal participation, for this year only. Hopefully, we will be back in action, as usual, next year.

**Lunch:** Given that we will not have a marching contingent this year, our usual OTU Association ANZAC Lunch arrangements have been suspended. However, the NSW Masonic Club will hold their traditional ANZAC Day Luncheon in Cello's Grand Dining Room, on level 4, at midday; followed by a Commemoration Service conducted by the Masonic RSL Sub-Branch at 2.30pm, at their Memorial in the Reagh Bar on the Ground Floor. Bookings for the ANZAC Day Luncheon should be made direct with the Club's administrative officer, Rita Surio, on 02 9284 1006. Arrangements have been made to seat OTU Association members together – so please inform her of your affiliation when you make the booking. Payment for the luncheon may be made by credit card (over the phone), cheque, or by EFT: BSB: 062 000; Account No: 1071 8426; Name: NSW Masonic Club. If paying vide EFT, please include your name and 'OTU'. The Club has offered a 10% accommodation discount for OTU Association members.

**Queensland** (Geoff Daly, 4/69)

**March:** The ANZAC Day March has been approved by the Qld Govt. with very few COVID related restrictions, and we are hoping for a good turnout. Trish Hart and her son Anthony, a RAAF pilot, will be marching with us, on the condition that he practices his marching in step prior to the day.

**Lunch:** The after-March luncheon will again be at the Pig'n'Whistle.

### South Australia (Gary Vial, 3/69):

Clarified from the RSL about ANZAC Day is:

**March:** Despite interstate cancellation of ANZAC activities the Adelaide ANZAC Day Committee reinforces that this is not the case in the Adelaide CBD and it is our intent to conduct the RSL Youth Vigil, Dawn Service, March and Service of Remembrance, with limitations to meet COVID-19 requirements. Subject to COVID-19 Regulations, the Adelaide ANZAC Day March traditionally commences at 9.30am from the SA National War Memorial, North Terrace, Adelaide, and moves west, turning right onto King William Road. The march concludes in the streets surrounding the Cross of Sacrifice in Pennington Gardens, North Adelaide. Veterans, ex-service personnel, allies and Australian Defence Force units participate in the ANZAC Day March and contact tracing records will be required for all marchers. Participants are recommended to load the mySAGOV app onto their smart phones for smooth COVID QR check in. Veterans requiring mobility assistance may have a family member or friend to accompany them. So, it is intended that OTU SA will participate in the March as in previous years. More details should be advised by early-April.

### Tasmania:

As in previous years, as members are widely dispersed, the Tasmanian chapter will not be participating in the ANZAC Day March in Hobart. The restrictions on the March in Hobart make it very difficult to march and then attend the service at The Cenotaph as limits are being implemented at the service. Member will attend their local services.

### West Australia:

**March:** The WA Chapter will form up at the rear of Group J, just in front of the Red Cross in St George's Terrace. The lead groups begin marching at 9.00am, with Group J probably Stepping off at about 9.30am. Usually, drinks are available at ANZAC House, Level 6, however service will be critical. Most attend Rigby's near Mill Street and St George's Terrace where queuing has some relief.

**Lunch:** to be decided after completion of the march.

### Victoria:

**March:** The Victorian Chapter has decided that as the attendance at the Melbourne ANZAC Day March is capped and members need to go into a ballot, the chapter will not to march as a formed body this year. It has left it to individuals who wish to march with their unit associations to apply through the ballot.

<http://www.rslvic.com.au/anzac-day/anzac-day-melbourne-cbd/>

**Lunch:** A mixed luncheon booking for 30 diners has been made for 12.30 pm at the RACV Club Bistro on ANZAC Day. Being a Sunday the usual Carbine Club bar is not open but it was felt the opportunity to meet with the ladies for the first time in over a year could be appreciated. If you wish to attend, please let Brian Cooper ([bctcooper@gmail.com](mailto:bctcooper@gmail.com)) know. Acceptance will be on a first reply basis.

### VISIT TO VVAA MUSEUM AT PHILLIP ISLAND - Magpie 91 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Canberra Bomber A84-231, Callsign 'Magpie 91', disappeared from radar while flying a typical night bombing mission near the border between Vietnam and Laos on the night of 3 November 1970.

Following a thorough search, Flying Officer Michael Herbert and Pilot Officer Robert Carver were declared 'Missing in Action'. It was not until 31 July 2009 that an Air Force Recovery Mission found their bodies in the wreck of their Canberra bomber on a remote hillside in Quang NamP province in Vietnam. Their RAAF Canberra aircraft had crashed in dense jungle on a hillside near the border with Laos.

Michael and Robert were the last two Australian servicemen of the Vietnam War to be found and their remains repatriated to Australia. A commemorative service marking the 50th anniversary of the loss of the two RAAF aircrew was held at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, Phillip Island, on Tuesday 3 November 2020. Paul Ford and Neil Leckie (right) attended on behalf of the OTU Association and their other associations.



## RECENT NATIONAL ACTIVITY

### Class 3/70 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion 4 – 6 December 2020 (Geoff Davis)

Members of Class 3/70 held their 50th Reunion at Coolangatta and Tweed Heads from 4 to 6 December 2020. We had 22 graduates along with many wives/partners attending. This was despite the challenges presented by the Coronavirus restricting a number of the guys from coming, with Victorians and Western Australians the worst affected. The dates chosen were as close as we could get to our graduation date of 18 December, when our Graduation Parade was washed out by a violent storm. Fortuitously, the weekend coincided with the lifting of border entry restrictions to Queensland and preceded the following weekend, which saw torrential rain and flooding in southern Queensland and northern NSW. I would like to say it was well planned, but really it was pure luck. Class members who joined me at the reunion were:

Peter Bagshaw, John Baker, Terry Daley, Greg Fraser (aka Officer Cadet Frasier), Jim Gibb, Peter Grills, Geoff Hose, Greg Jenkins, Rob Legg, Stephen Lucas, Peter Matters Allan (Macca) McCallum, David Phillips, Stephen Pope, Geoff Sampson, Bruce Argent-Smith, Garry Smith, Hugh (Hugga) Urquhart, Colin Walker, Garry Warwick and David Zundel

Reunion activities began on the Friday afternoon, with most of the group partaking of ‘sundowners’ and local pizza at St George’s Defence Holiday Suites, Rainbow Bay, where a number of Class members stayed. This was a great catch-up activity that went well into the night.

The following evening, fifty of us went to the Coolangatta Sands Hotel for dinner and drinks. This was a great venue with wonderful staff and an excellent meal. During the dinner we had a number of speeches and viewed old photos on the big screen, with hits from 1970 playing in the background. Notable among the latter was The Animals’ iconic song: “We Gotta Get Out of This Place”, sung many times by us when at Scheyville. Terry Daley had arranged for a ‘Zoom’ hook up to interstate and overseas members, but unfortunately, technical issues intruded and we weren’t able to do it. During the dinner, our BSM, Stephen Lucas, gave an excellent speech that took us back to OTU days and emphasised that Scheyville was indeed a life changing experience for most of us. Stephen was followed by our DS guest, Kel Ryan. Kel was a Lieutenant Instructor when we were there and an ex-National Serviceman who later graduated from OCS Portsea. Kel’s speech also hit the spot with his reminiscences and it was nice to have him and his wife Jan with us for the evening. Also attending the dinner were two members of our junior class (4/70) and their wives, Peter and Helen Pursey together with Mike and Jo Hannan.

On the Sunday, we had a lunchtime recovery at Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads. This was a very pleasant afternoon with a good roll up. Sadly, at the end most of the troops headed off back home and we will miss the camaraderie and bonhomie until next we get together. Class 3/70 has always had particularly good attendances at reunions over the years and we have a strong bond between us that has lasted over time. Nil Bastardum Carborundum!

I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions made by several classmates, particularly Garry Smith, David Phillips, Colin Walker, Terry Daley, Stephen Lucas and David Zundel, without whose assistance the reunion would not have been the success it was. Special thanks to Greg Fraser for his meticulous effort in photographing the reunion over the three days.

Following the reunion, Geoff Davis emailed his classmates:

I have been advised by the Scheyvillian Editor that he has uploaded the latest group of photos, kindly provided by Bruce Clisdell, to the OTU Association website. There about 70 or so ‘new’ photos that most of us wouldn’t have seen before, so they are worth a look. Neil has integrated them within the existing photo data base that has Bruce’s original photos, plus many taken by Steve Merralls and my late father.

Gary Cameron emailed in response: Great gallery. My first reaction was *look at all those old guys*, but then suddenly remembered I’m 76 in a couple of days which makes me even older! Pretty obvious

## Class Act

Officer Training Unit Scheyville's  
Class 3 of 1970



By: Geoff Davis





everyone had a great time and the Aussie wine industry definitely does not have to worry about loss of sales to China with the support you appear to be giving to the grape (and brew). Really sad we couldn't make it but perhaps in a year or so we will all be able to get around more freely. Kindest Regards, Gary and Liz Cameron, Lochiel Estate, Mangawhai, Northland, New Zealand.

Note: Geoff Davis (with quite a bit of help from fellow class members) has produced a Class 3/70 history; 'Class Act'. Despite a good take up rate within the Class, there are still some copies left from the second print run. These are available for sale to association members at \$40.00 per copy (including postage). Please contact Geoff if interested at [gbmld@powerup.com.au](mailto:gbmld@powerup.com.au) for details.

## **STATE ACTIVITIES:**

### **ACT Chapter** (Les Boag, 4/68)

We currently have 39 Graduates, two staff and seven widows on our mailing list. We lost, Peter MacFetters (2/65) (formerly Peter Collas) who moved to Tasmania and passed away last December.

Bruce Selleck continues to organize the Luncheons and Annual Christmas Function. The Christmas Lunch was held on 19 November 2020 and well attended by members and their partners as well as three of the Canberra widows. We usually have about a dozen attend the monthly lunches at RCGC and resumed on 18 February this year with 11 attending (photo). Our latest lunch was held on Thursday 18 March.



We agreed late last year that our ACT Youth Leadership Support Project will support the local the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). It was agreed that we would fund up to a maximum of \$3,000 pa, for up to two youths per year to attend the locally conducted Rotary Youth Leadership training. We agreed that we seek to ensure with Rotary that the youths we fund are those with leadership potential whose parents would not be able to fund their attendance. Further, we look to have them identified to us and hopefully an opportunity to meet with them (which is what Rotary usually does here). The Youth Leadership training was stopped due to COVID but is expected to resume later this year. Our physical Activities with RMC stopped due to COVID-19 and have not yet resumed. We look forward to resuming them when possible.

### **NSW Chapter** (Gary McKay, 2/68)

The NSW Branch had their first lunch in over a year at the Kirribilli Club in February and was a great start to what we hope will be a better year for our alumni. The second lunch was held on 18 March at the Club.



### **NSW opens a new ‘paragraph’!** (Phil Marley, 3/68)

Why a Paragraph you might ask? Well our fearless state leader, Gary McKay (2/68), said we were not big enough to be a ‘Chapter’ and therefore should be referred to as a ‘Paragraph’. The original inaugural lunch was planned for early last year, however COVID got in the way. However, finally, on Friday 26 February I organised the inaugural lunch for the ‘NSW Far North Coast OTU Paragraph’ in Port Macquarie. We had 19 attendees, graduates and wives/partners. A good time was had by all, as is always the case when Scheyvillians get together. Attending graduates (wives/partners) were:

Rod Hatcher (1/65) and Win, John Patterson (1/65) and Roxann, Terry Pitkin (1/67) and Anne Maree, Ian Freeman (1/68) and Helen, David McKay (2/68), Ron Skeoch (3/68) and Luda, Rod Margetts (2/69) and Kate, John Bushell (4/69) and Denise, Ian Bartholomew (2/70) and Annette and Phil Marley and Marg.

The ‘Far North Coast Paragraph’ will be holding its next lunch on Friday 27 August at 12noon at The Westport Club, Port Macquarie. Anybody interested and wanting more details should contact Phil Marley at [scheyvilleotu@gmail.com](mailto:scheyvilleotu@gmail.com) All Scheyvillians, together with wives/partners, are most welcome.



Rear: Ron Skeoch (3/68), Rod Hatcher and John Patterson (both 1/65) and Ian Freeman 1/68  
Front: Rod Margetts (2/69), Rod Margetts (2/69), Terry Pitkin (1/67), Phil Marley 3/68, Ian Bartholomew (2/70) and John “Booka” Bushell 4/69

Dave McKay (2/68) was AWL when the photo was taken.

### **Queensland Chapter** (Doug Oliver, 4/71)

We have resumed our monthly luncheons on the second Thursday of the month at the Pig 'N' Whistle at Riverside in the Brisbane City. The previous lunches were held on Thursday 11 February and 11 March..

### **Annual Christmas Luncheon**

With Queensland keeping COVID19 at bay, the annual Christmas Luncheon in Brisbane on 10 December 2020 was a roaring success. Thirty-seven Scheyvillians came together at the Pig ‘N’ Whistle in the City for one of the biggest Christmas luncheons in years. Amid relaxed COVID19 restrictions, there was plenty of opportunity for catching up and compare notes about how we had all survived the coronavirus emergency. The Luncheon was especially memorable as commemoration of the life of our long-time leader, Mick Hart (2/69). We were honoured by the presence of Mick’s widow Tricia, daughter Allison and son Brett. Geoff Daly (4/69) made a short speech in honour of Mick and glasses were raised in his memory.

As is our custom, we also presented the \$2,500 donations collected with the annual fees of our Queensland members of the Association to our charity of choice – VITAE (see below). To top-up the donations, we conducted our usual raffle at the Luncheon that contributed \$525 to VITAE, bringing the total donations to \$3,025. On hand to accept the donations was Father John Butler, representing VITAE. The new ‘kitchen cabinet’ was introduced at the Luncheon: President Geoff Daly, Treasurer Owen Williamson (4/70) and Secretary Doug Oliver (4/71). The Luncheon also saw the official handover of duties to Doug from Melanie Griffin, the late Mick Hart’s Assistant at the legal firm of Cleary Hoare. Melanie attended the Luncheon and the Scheyvillians thanked her for the several years she had coordinated our monthly luncheons. All-in-all, a great day was had by all.

Attendees were:

Michael (Chook) Fowler 2/65, Jim Box 1/66, Peter Watson 1/67, Peter Moody 2/67, Terry Gygar 3/67, Bob Minnikin 4/67, Warwick Goode 2/68, Gary Basford, Bernie Carney, Neville Patterson and Darrel Steer 3/68, Rob O'Donovan 1/69, Dave Griffiths 2/69, Glenn Smith and Robin Apted 3/69, Peter Blackwood, Geoff Daly, Geoff Gardener, Don Keyes, Terry O'Shea and Warwick Setttee 4/69, Ian Alexander, John Dun, Richard Knight, Geoff Richardson and Robin Webcke 1/70, Nick Israel 2/70, Terry Daley, Geoff Davis and Dave Smith 3/70, Ross Ambrose and Mike Hannan 4/70, Owen Williamson 4/70, Al Sparks 3/71, Doug Oliver 4/71, Graham Wilson 1/72 and John Knack 4/72.

**Charity of Choice – VITAE:** Vitae is the charity of choice of the Queensland chapter of the OTU Association. Vitae (translated from Latin as 'for life') came about because of a concern over the death-centred rather than life-centred symptoms seen in young Australians. These symptoms are exhibited in anti-social behaviour, violence, crime, substance abuse and suicide. Since 2006, Vitae has been offering male youths the opportunity to make significant changes in their lives through sponsorship onto outdoor interventions. It is well known that for males an activities based program is the most effective means of changing attitudes and therefore changing behaviour. In recent years Vitae has added to the Bush Phase a significant mentoring program, the Mateship Phase. The total program is known as the Vitae Challenge. The core value of Vitae is mateship.

In accepting the Scheyvillians' donations, Father John Butler thanked the Association for our ongoing support. He told us about two lads who were products of the total program. The first was on the first Vitae Challenge. He recently stood as a candidate for a minor party in the State Government elections. Not with any success, but it showed us that he has integrated into the community as a contributing member. The second was a product of the Vitae Challenge which concluded in 2019. He was a lad with an extremely anti-social attitude and easily descended into nasty anger. His mate arranged finance to pay for him to do martial arts training. He has since got a job with a sporting goods retailer.

Vitae is always on the lookout for volunteers. We Scheyville graduates have special skills and lifetime experience that would be invaluable. Details can be found at: <http://www.vitae.org.au/index.php>

#### **Annual Black-Tie Dinner (Doug Oliver, 4/71)**

The dauntless South East Queensland Scheyvillians held our annual Black-Tie Dinner on Saturday 27 March 2021, just two days before the South East locked down again for COVID-19. We had a great night under the OTU Banner! Nineteen Scheyvillians plus spouses, partners and special guests – forty in all – enjoyed a sumptuous dinner at the United Service Club in Brisbane. It was our annual opportunity to turnout in our dinner suits and miniatures, enjoy fine food and wines, and each other's company. Many tall tales and true were told, and the problems of the world were solved.

Our special guests were Trish Hart, widow of Mick Hart (2/69), with their daughter Allison and son Anthony. Trish paid a moving tribute to Mick. He was the mover and shaker of the South East Queensland Scheyvillians for more than 30 years. His passing in 2020 left a big gap in our little group. When we later toasted our departed comrades at the dinner, we made special mention of Mick, as well as Chief Instructor Brigadier Dick Flint. Our President Geoff Daly (4/69), with Chris Madden (1/70) and Geoff Richardson (1/70), represented the OTU Association at Dick's funeral on the Monday before our Dinner. Dick had a long association with our South East Queensland Scheyvillians while living on the Gold Coast. He attended many luncheons and our annual black-tie dinners. He was fondly remembered by all, especially those who attended OTU while Dick was Chief Instructor.

Our guest speaker was Lieutenant Colonel Bob Aley (Retired). Bob, a 1970 Duntroon graduate, was Aide de Camp (ADC) to Governor General John Kerr 1875-76. His selection panel was held on 11 November 1975 at Government House, Canberra. Bob recounted that momentous day for a very attentive audience at our Dinner. There's nothing like having a man on the inside to get the true story of what happened as Gough Whitlam went out one door and Malcolm Fraser came in another. Bob went on to expose the



behind-the-scenes tales of protecting John Kerr during the violent demonstrations of 1976, especially at the Australian National University. Of some interest was Bob's explanation about why some of us received our Queen's Commission signed by John Kerr and Jim Killen, while many OTU graduates missed out. His talk was entirely extemporaneous, straight from his personal experience. It was universally appreciated by all present at the dinner.

We finished the Dinner by the toasting the Queen, the ladies and the Officer Training Unit. We literally shook the building with a powerful rendition of the OTU Song. I'm surprised that there were no noise complaints from nearby residents. The rear party held out at the bar until we were kicked out at midnight, just like in the good old days!

#### **South Australian Chapter** (Gary Vial, 3/69)

The last social activity held by the SA Chapter was the combined Remembrance Day and Christmas lunch on Thursday 3 December 2020 at the delightful Uraidla Hotel, set in the Adelaide Hills just 30 minutes from the city. They must have anticipated some trouble as they corralled us into a room all on our lonesome. Trevor Ranford was particularly happy with the venue selection as for a change, at a pinch, he could almost walk home. We had hoped for 18 but sadly on the day, Claire Verco and Margaret Williams were on the sick list.



At left: attendees were: Back Row: Geoff Williams (2/70), Neil Curnow (2/68), Ash (wild print) Steel, Craig Steel and Malcolm Nicolle (1/70), John Sierakowski (1/69), David Morgan (3/72), Ken Wagnitz (2/71) and Phil Verco (4/71). Middle Row: Lee Nicolle, Trevor Ranford (2/72), Annie Sierakowski, Kym Ninnes (3/68) and Libby Vial. Front Row: Michele Wagnitz and Gary Vial (3/69).

The next function (we hope) will be the 2021 ANZAC Day March followed by lunch.

#### **Tasmanian Chapter** (Ray Williams, 2/71)

The Tassie Chapter had our quarterly lunch on Friday the 5 March 2021. This was organised jointly by Paul Ferguson and Peter Dalkin. The venue they selected was the Old Kempton Distillery, situated most surprisingly, in the main street of Kempton (approximately 50 km north of Hobart)! Prior to lunch a tour of the Distillery was conducted, and some 'raw' gin tasting was tried – powerful stuff. Lunch was organised for a 1300hrs start however this was preceded by a 'Gin and a Whiskey' tasting (for those that wanted to partake). Both the Gin and Whiskey tasting glasses were generous in content and covered a range of the Gins and also a range of single malt Whiskey. The fare was excellent and ample quantities of each course. Those that wanted to were allowed to bring BYO drinks at no charge for corkage! – a very generous offer by the Distillery. Otherwise, there was a selection of wines and other drinks available from the bar. A vote of thanks goes to both Paul and Peter who liaised with Erin at the Distillery to put on a rather memorable lunch at a unique venue. Well done!

Our plan is for the next lunch to be held in the Launceston area on Friday the 4 June, the following in Hobart on 10 September and then back to Launceston for 26 November 2021. Details will be advised to the chapter. Interstate visitors are most welcome.



### Victorian Chapter

With Victoria getting its COVID problem under control, while most Chapter activities were cancelled in 2020, the Victorian Chapter resumed its second Wednesday of the month lunches. The average attendance at the RACV Bistro in Bourke Street in the CBD is about twenty. The photo at right was taken on 9 December 2020. It is hoped that some of the usual activities can once again be organised in 2021.

### Western Australian Chapter (Frank LeFaucheur, 1/71)

We continue with our Quarterly Lunches for the balance of the year – our venue for these changed from *The Romany*, when it closed several years ago, to another Northbridge institution, *The Sorrento*, and now it too is under fiscal pressure and facing imminent closure. Fortunately the brand new ANZAC House has recently been completed in St Georges Terrace, Perth, has appropriate rooms available, and is prepared to embrace our group to utilise the modern and excellent facilities. (The rule is one RSL Member can ‘sponsor’ 5 guests at any gathering, and we now have sufficient members who have joined the Highgate RSL to enable the requirements to be fulfilled).



With our recent receipt of Funds from the National Association the decision was made to contribute \$1500 to Legacy and \$1500 to Leeuwin Sail Training Foundation. Some subsidies to our Lunch bill is also anticipated, to benefit paid-up Members of the OTU Association. Otherwise all remains well with the WA Chapter - we acknowledge we have “*done it a lot easier*” over here in these recent COVID times, than most of you in the East – our best thoughts have always been with you all ! – here’s hoping for a much brighter 2021 and may 2022 bring “normality” (!?!).

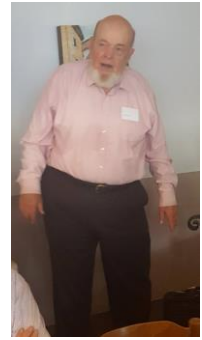
**Christmas Lunch 2020** (Bernie Houston, 1/65) The WA Chapter held their Christmas Lunch at the Sorrento Restaurant in Perth on Friday 11 December 2020 and what a grand luncheon it was! A total of 32 attendees promised one of largest gatherings we have had and in the shadow of COVID-19 protocols all attendees were required to register their attendance in the new WASAFE registration process. Being a Friday and close to Christmas the restaurant was close to capacity with other members of the public, office gatherings, etc but the Sorrento Restaurant Management were very generous in ensuring our group of 32 were comfortable and at liberty to enjoy ourselves. Michael Darby (2/66) enriched us all with a stirring rendition of “The Fire at Ross’s Farm” – a poem by the great Australian poet Henry Lawson.



What also helped to make the luncheon more enjoyable was the rebate from the National Body of the OTU Association which was utilised by Treasurer David Ward to offset the cost of the luncheon by Financial OTU Members. At right Michael Darby in full voice.



As a reminder of some of our wild Dining-In Nights of the past, members John Sharp and Lawrie Stanley brought along some port to be passed amongst the Members at the completion of the meal for the “Royal Toast”.



The photo at left is of Secretary/Organiser Frank LeFaucheur (1/71) looking like he anticipates a long lunch. Well done to Frank!



WA Christmas Lunch: LHS from foreground: Frank LeFaucheur, Lawrie Stanley, Richard Baird, Harry Neesham, Joe Martin, John Sharp, John O'Halloran, David Ward, Graham Mathieson, - end of table - David Eyres. RHS from foreground: Michael Darby, Dennis Barton, Paul Conti, Andrew Martindale, Lawrence Appelbee, Gary Bryant, Neville Gale.



Right: Four 1/65 Graduates were in attendance – John O'Halloran, Harry Neesham, Bernie Houston and Iain (Joe) Martin.



Following the meeting of four Scheyvillians from Class 1/65 at the WA Christmas lunch, on 14 January 2021 a couple of our ‘founding fathers’, John O'Halloran (born 20 April 1945) and Bernie Houston (born 26 April 1945) and got together for a few beers and reminisces. Bernie advised that he did not know until that day that one of the occupations John took on after his Army years was as a Bookmaker in Cairns. Hence, the older bookie's satchell with John's name on it in the photo at left.

## OTU WA SOUTH WEST WEEKEND (Jay McDaniell, 3/69)

Friday 29 to Sunday 31 January saw 15 OTU alumni and their 15 partners attend all or parts of the annual South West Weekend. Unfortunately, Jo and Graham Mathieson (1/70) suffered a front tyre blowout on their way and had to retire before arrival, fortunately not hurt, except in the pocket for repairs to their motor home.

Held as the first of WA's annual quarterly functions (the others being the famous Northbridge lunches for members only – 'bring an interesting bottle of wine'), this event has seen increased numbers each year. Held in Busselton in the South-West wine region (Margaret River etc), the city boasts extensive sheltered beaches and the longest wooden pile jetty in the southern hemisphere, being 1.8km long.



Above: L'Agression and Jean Jeanie

The program started with a Friday twilight sail on the calm Geographe Bay waters from and to the Geographe Marina, where 'The Deck', the tavern which hosted that night's A La Carte dinner is situated. The dinner included, thanks to China, Geraldton crayfish. Three yachts were supplied by Ken Waller, David Eyres and guest Barry Brown, with refreshments supplied by their willing crews. Glenn and Janny Williams joined for the Friday sail and dinner but unfortunately had to relinquish the balance of the program.

Saturday dawned bright and warm as had Friday, and all enjoyed a range of local food and sightseeing attractions including vineyards, the jetty train and underwater observatory, the art galleries and museums, and some catch up nanna naps, before arrival at 'The Goose', the venue for dinner. Situated right on the foreshore, a private room was the venue for a three course meal of alternately served entrees, mains and desserts, all enjoyed with a variety of liquid refreshments. The WA Association provided a modest subsidy which reduced the cost of the meal (thanks Treasurer Dave Ward).



The  
Saturday  
Dinner  
Left  
Table



- clockwise from bottom left: Maureen McDaniell, Elaine Eyres, Steve McDonald, Sue Cornwell, David Atkinson, Kathy Kusinski, our 'Smiling waitress'! **RHS** – Ben Blake, Bev Atkinson, Turk Ellis, Mindy McDonald, David Eyres, John Barnes, Jill Barnes. Right table – LHS: Frank LeFaucheur, Chris LeFaucheur, Barry Cooke, Michelle Cooke, Sue Forwood, John Forwood, C.J. Waller, Same 'smiling waitress'!!! **RHS**: Ken Waller, Pip Edwards, Wendy Edwards, Merome Stanley, Lawrie Stanley, Lea Bingeman, Ron Packer.

Sunday promised to be warm as those still in need of sustenance attended brunch at the waterside venue 'Sensations Café' in Geographe where an assortment of delicious breakfast dishes were served together



with barista coffees and assorted teas and cool juices. This marked the end of the organised weekend activities, although some stayed in the region to enjoy an extended holiday – until late on Sunday when an announcement was made by the State Government that the South-West and Perth regions were to go into ‘lockdown’, a very rare occurrence in WA.

The stalwarts who ‘endured’ the whole event were Bev and David Atkinson (2/65), Jill and John Barnes (2/67), Elaine and David Eyres (3/67), Maureen and Jay McDaniell (3/69), Turk Ellis (1/70) and Sue Cornwell, Mindy and Steve McDonald (2/70), Ben Blake (4/70) and Kathy Kusinski, Michelle and Barry Cook (3/71), Ken and CJ Waller (2/72) and 1/71’s Sue and John Forward, Wendy and Pip Edwards, Ron Packer and Lea Bingeman, Merome and Laurie Stanley and Chris and Frank LeFaucheur.

#### **Next WA Chapter Lunch** (Frank LeFaucheur, 1/71)

ANZAC House (28 St Georges Terrace, opposite Government House) is booked for **Friday 7 May at 1pm** – First Floor – rooms are on the west side of the bar area (to those geographically challenged – to your right as you come out of the lift or off the stairs!) The “*deal*” is that we have the room for free for 2 hours and a “*meal package*” comprising antipasto platters and a choice of two main courses will be provided. A fine bar space is located just as you enter the First Floor, which is available for use before, during and after lunch. The plan is that we buy wine/beer, etc from the bar, on an ‘as required’ basis.

Honorary Treasurer David Ward (2/66) has confirmed that a generous subsidy from “Regimental Funds” results in the cost to Members being \$20 per head. (Plus buy your own drinks, as outlined – be assured, work is on-going regarding the Wine List!!!) Additionally, several more of our members have now joined the Highgate RSL, (where a number of us were already members), so our attendance with Member to Non-Member ratio of 1:5 should not be a problem to achieve. Easiest Public Transport access, if arriving at Elizabeth Quay Train Station, is bus from Elizabeth Quay Bus Station abutting, taking any number of buses that run along St Georges Terrace to No 28 (opposite Government House) – alight just before Irwin St. Otherwise it is a pleasant 1 km stroll from the Station (slightly further from Perth Underground and a CAT Bus from there does run to ‘nearby’.)



WA Chapter Christmas Lunch 2020.

Above left: Elliott Neilsen, Michael Darby, David Eyres and John Sharp

Above right: Greg Elliott, Glen Longmire and Pip Edwards.

Left: Neville Gale. Gary Bryant. Lawrence Applebee.

Michael Darby photos

## **FEATURES:**

### **The Technical Services Unit (TSU)**

Edition 3 of 2020 featured one of the units where just a handful of Scheyvillians were posted – 32 Small Ships Squadron. Another of these small units was RAEME's TSU. TSUs were located in a number of areas. In Melbourne there was a TSU at the Albert Park Barracks (gone many years ago) and Broadmeadows, along with Moneegetta located north of Melbourne.

Ken Chegwiddden (1/71) wrote: 'On our completion of National Service (all of our group in RAEME TSU saw out the full two years (rather than the reduced eighteen months). Our Commanding Officer Temp/Lt Col Allan Nolan from RAEME TSU Albert Park, Melbourne, said to us that our group of Nashos (generally being older and more qualified) would never fully realise or understand just how much we had changed the Regular Army for the better. He based his comments on the standard of workmanship and thoughtfulness that we had provided, the fact that we obeyed his orders but asked lots and lots of questions to clarify the why, what and where of them. He was very impressed that we would give him great feedback based on our 'outside' skills and external experience when asked. He said it made his job both challenging but also very rewarding as it helped him become a better leader of his men.

Our small RAEME group: Payne and Chegwiddden (both 1/71) along with Alan Stevens (4/70), Geoff White (2/71) and Richard Casey (Portsea) was a mix of engineering skills ranging from mechanical and environmental to trade backgrounds, which Lt Col Nolan said made him better able to service his customers with quality answers. He offered each of us a permanent position if we would like to take him up on it. The experience we had also had far-reaching effects on our careers and lives after our Nasho service, so the benefits to both sides of the camp were mutual.'

Alan Stevens (4/70) added: 'After graduating on 21 April 1971, I was initially posted to the "Technical Services Unit RAEME, Albert Park Barracks, Melbourne. I was located in Victoria Barracks in St Kilda Road, however, I do remember that there were some members of the TSU that worked in some semi-circular corrugated iron buildings (Nissan Huts) that were located at the southern end of Albert Park. I think these were subsequently removed and the land was transferred back to the City of St Kilda as parkland. For the time I spent in Victoria Barracks I was told to wear civvies due to the anti-Vietnam war protests occurring. However, given my haircut and wearing a tie, I was perceived as either in the military or a policeman!

On 28 June 71 I was made up to Lieutenant and took up a Captain's posting with the Army Design Establishment (ADE) at their Trials and Proving Wing (TPW) at Moneegetta. This establishment still exists and is the Army's Vehicle Proving ground. Ford and International Harvester were vying for the 1-ton General Service (GS) Truck contract and the staff at TPW were testing and evaluating each company's prototype vehicle. An incredible experience for my work when I rejoined Paton's Brake Replacements (PBR) after leaving the Army. I remained at TPW until completion of my National Service on 30 Mar 72. The most important part of the experience though was not technical. TPW was a facility with a mix of Army and very experienced technical civilian personnel. "The Mess" was Sgts-and-above on one side and "Other Ranks" on the other side with a bar in between. It was the best experience for learning to deal with a very diverse group of people without relying on your rank.'

Alan added that David Russel (1/71) also spent time at TPW.

David Payne (1/71) With Ken Chegwiddden, David attended Corps Training at Bandiana for six weeks then both spent the remainder of their NS with the TSU. They are unaware of working with any other Scheyville graduates and their experiences of where they worked and what they did are very similar. 'We did start out in the ex-WW2 huts at the south end of Albert Park Lake until we were moved to Broadmeadows. I think the site we worked in at Broadmeadows was ex Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (they may have been part of CSIRO at the time) buildings on the south side of Camp Road opposite the main Broadmeadows barracks. I remember looking around some outbuildings there that



used to house their test animals and thinking "Scheyville didn't have cages and restraining chains bolted to the wall so it wasn't so tough after all".

TSU was made up of Army personnel and some Commonwealth public servant staff. I was "in charge" of a section called "weapons and workshop equipment" with a staff of two Warrant Officers and a public servant. Some random recollections of the time are:

- 1: Our main tasks were manual writing for the service and repair of equipment plus special projects/fault investigations as required.
- 2: The immensely experienced Warrant Officers in our charge were very understanding of their "wet behind the ears" bosses and were terrific blokes to work with.
- 3: We wore "civvies" most of the time except once a fortnight when it was required to wear uniform so we could salute the paymaster and state "Pay correct, sir!".
- 4: Ken had a similar sized group that I think covered transport and watercraft. I seem to remember Ken had a project at one stage to find out why the mudguards tended to fall off Diamond Reo prime movers.
- 5: I was also involved in the One Ton GS truck trials at Monegeetta looking at the candidates from a maintainability point of view. Being a commissioned officer I used to get driven there in an Army or Commonwealth vehicle with a chauffeur!! Little did I realise at the time, but this turned out to be the pinnacle of my entire working life in terms of other people fawning around looking after my every need.
- 6: My most treasured possession from this time (which I still have) is a beautiful wooden engraved desktop nameboard given to me by "my troops" and made for me in I think the Bandiana workshops.

I stayed in the Army the full 2 years even after Gough wanted to throw me out. I then did a 2-year Master of Environmental Science Course at Monash Uni (because we had just discovered the environment and I needed to save it). This was to "rehabilitate me" back into civilian life at the Federal Government's expense and included a living allowance which helped me establish my wine collection. My reasoning in all this plundering of public funds was that if the Federal Government wanted "the top people" as conscripts they needed to pay "top dollar" for them over the long term.'

Below is a photo of the Corps Training Course Members at Bandiana.



## A Brief History of Albert Park Barracks, Melbourne

The 7 August 1943 edition of the Advocate (Burnie, Tasmania) reported:

### 'Huge New Barracks at Albert Park'

**MELBOURNE.** Friday. Equal in size almost to Victoria Barracks on St. Kilda Road, a giant new services barracks to accommodate thousands of personnel of the Army, Air Force and Navy is being built at Albert Park. The barracks will cover 20 acres of a 40-acre site when the full plan is completed. The total cost will be more than £250,000, although the buildings will be of the most economical type of construction. Albert Park Barracks was built by the Allied Works Council in two stages. The works were carried out under the instruction of the Engineer Services Branch of the Australian Army. The first stage comprised 7 large buildings, 5 of them for the Australian Army and 2 for the RAAF. The second stage comprised 8 buildings, 4 for the RAAF, 3 for the Navy and 1 for the Army.

The Military were able to vacate Wesley College and Melbourne Grammar once Stage 1 of the Albert Park Barracks was completed and return them for school use. The military also were able to vacate the Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institute building. The Master-General of the Ordnance Branch of Land Headquarters relocated from Wesley College to Albert Park Barracks in January 1944. Once Stage 2 of Albert Park Barracks was completed, the pupils of Melbourne Boy's High School at South Yarra and Merton Hall were able to reoccupy their schools. Navy



Office Staff had occupied Melbourne Boy's High School. Right: the location of the Albert Park Barracks (in yellow) and below, an AWM photograph of Albert Park Barracks.

Note: Even before WW2 the Army had huts and training facilities on the northwest side of Albert Park Lake— the old red brick Signals Training Depot dating from 1935 still fronts Albert Road.



From 1941 the Army acquired almost the entire southeast of the park for military barracks. This arrangement was supposed to be temporary, but it was 30 years before the Army relinquished this land.



### **COVID-19 Lock Down activities (Neil Leckie, 3/68)**

As we have had more free time in the last twelve months, more of our members have had time to 'dig out' their OTU Memorabilia and photographs. Readers should look at the OTU Website and see the new and revised galleries. There is a lot to see there!

The photograph below was shown in edition 3 of 2020, but no-one has come forward to claim the photo below as 'theirs'! If anyone can identify the Church Parade shown below, it too can be added to a gallery. It is Post-2/67 as the Governor-General's Banner is 'On Parade' in other photos of that parade!



### **OTU Contribution to the RAAMC During the Vietnam War Era - Pt 2 (Dr Paul Burza 3/69)**

Paul has had some recent health issues but is well on the way to recovery. He apologises for not having Part 2 on the RAAMC completed, but he is now 'back on the job' and he assures us that Part 2 will be in The Scheyvillian 2 of 2021.

### **Australian Army Museum – Duntroon (Paul Mitrovich, Curator)**

Over the last couple of years, the RMC Museum, now known as the Australian Army Museum – Duntroon, has been revamped and extended. The museum is 'no longer a repository for retired General's uniforms!' It now displays the history of officer training from all the former officer training establishments: RMC Duntroon, OCS Portsea, OTU Scheyville and George's Heights WRAAC School. The museum's collection dates back to the founding of the MC Duntroon in 1911 and includes memorabilia from OTU Scheyville. This museum is located in the Bridges Memorial Library (Building A34), and is open on Fridays 0900 - 1500 (except public holidays); RMC Ceremonial Parade Days including Graduation Parades, Queen's Birthday Parades and Lanyard Parades; on request including



reunion and tour groups (coordinated through RMC-Duntroon Protocol office); and as requested by Army HQ.

The museum has a good display of 1960s uniforms and equipment (left) and recently assisted RMC with the provision of uniforms and equipment from the 1960s that was worn by the RMC Cadets during Obstacle Course training. (See 'The Back Pages'.

## Scheyvillian's Vietnam Experience

In Edition 3 of 2020 of The Scheyvillian we had 3/67s Andy Guest's article on his time in Vietnam. In this edition we see that Vietnam War from a different Scheyvillian's experience. **John Lochore** was asked to write about his time in Vietnam for a friend's grand-daughter, who had asked her 'pa' if he had any friends who had served there. This is his reply: Looking back, the Vietnam War and the period of National Service was a notable time in our history. Before I write about Vietnam, I will give some background about the National Service scheme and the path that soldiers typically took before going to Vietnam.

The government legislated late in 1964 to boost the size of the Army to support Australia's involvement in the war in Vietnam. Selected young men were required to serve two years of 'National Service' in the Army, and the selection was accomplished by a ballot of birth dates, conducted in the year in which each man turned 20. The first such ballot was conducted in March 1965, for men who were born in the first half of 1945, and these ballots were conducted each six months thereafter, the last one being in September 1972. Those selected in each ballot were usually inducted into the Army in four intakes each year. Thus, those selected in the first ballot entered the Army in July and September 1965. However, those who were in a course of study could defer their Army service until after the completion of their study. There were also some other grounds for deferral.

I was born on 4 October 1945 in the Melbourne suburb of Dandenong, and my birthday was drawn in the second ballot, held in September 1965. As I was in the third year of a four-year university degree, I was granted a deferral until after completing my studies, and I finally entered the Army in Melbourne as part of the 8th intake, or intake 2/67, on 19 April 1967. Frank Miller was doing the same university course as I was. He was born in April 1945, and he was selected in the first ballot, but he entered the Army on 12 July 1967 - the 9th intake.

I didn't object to being called up - in fact was rather looking forward to it. My parents both served overseas in WWII. I accepted the government had the right to ask us to serve, and I thought I might as well be in it. It is interesting to note that the first ballots had the highest percentage of birthdates selected, and the proportion selected gradually reduced from then on. Firstly, the positions in the Army were filled initially by early recruits, and secondly, later intake numbers were boosted by men entering after completing their time of deferral. There were some men who volunteered to do two years National Service, although not balloted in by their birthday.

After enlisting, soldiers did about 10 weeks of Recruit Training, either at Puckapunyal in Victoria or at Kapooka in NSW (and from 1966 at Singleton, also in NSW). They were then assigned to a specific part of the Army, called Corps - such as Infantry, Artillery, Signals, Engineers, etc. Each soldier would undergo specific Corps Training, before being posted to a unit such as an Infantry Battalion, or a Battery in an Artillery Field Regiment, or an Engineer Squadron, and so on.

Due to National Service the Australian Army would grow to nine Infantry Battalions, and eventually there were usually three Battalions in Vietnam at a time. The Battalions rotated through, usually doing a 12-month period in SVN. With them in Vietnam were supporting units of other corps, such as Artillery (guns), Armoured Corps (tanks and armoured personnel carriers), Engineers (construction and mine-laying), Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Signals, Service Corps (transport and some other roles), Ordnance (ammunition supply), Army Aviation (aerial reconnaissance), Medical, and so on. So, there were a lot of other soldiers required to support the basic infantry units in the field. Thus, Infantry were only a part of the number serving in Vietnam - there were many others as well, many in roles that were basically non-combatant.

If a soldier was posted to a unit, of whatever corps, that was due to go to Vietnam, the unit would have specific purpose-directed training. For most, this would include a course at the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra, in Queensland. Thus, soldiers who went to Vietnam had been in the Army quite a period before going overseas, maybe nine months or more.



There is a common myth that soldiers who went to Vietnam were on average aged 20. Certainly, National Servicemen were balloted when aged 20, but given the time before entering the Army, and the time processing through various stages of training, it is obvious most would have been at least 21. Plus, the added age of those who enlisted a bit older due to deferral, and there were also Regular Soldiers of a variety of ages. Regular Soldiers were men who enlisted voluntarily for a three or six-year term in the Australian Regular Army (ARA).

My own path through the Army was very different. After a couple of weeks of Recruit Training at Puckapunyal I was selected for officer training, and I went to the Officer Training Unit (OTU) at Scheyville, west of Sydney on 12 May.

This was an intensive five-month course, from which National Servicemen (and ARA Air Cadets) graduated as 2nd Lieutenants, the lowest grade of Officer. (Right: John Lochore, Chris Smith, Ray Robinson and Lex Neville, Class 2/67) I didn't graduate with my class, and I did a Repeat Term of another couple of months, but after that I still didn't graduate. When transferred from OTU I was offered a posting as a Corporal at a Recruit Training Battalion, but instead I asked to go to Artillery, as my father had been in Artillery during



WWII. So, in December 1967 I went to School of Artillery at North Head, near Manly in Sydney. My rank then became Gunner, which is the Artillery rank equivalent to a Private soldier in the Infantry. My plan was to become an Artillery Surveyor, which earned the highest pay rate for an ordinary soldier, as this seemed to be the best I could achieve as an ordinary soldier. This was the first time I had ever failed anything important in my life, and I was a bit down about it. Thereafter, being known a 'Scheyville Dropout' didn't help my standing among other ordinary soldiers. I should note, though, that if I had graduated as an officer, I might well have gone to one of the many postings within Australia, like Frank Miller did, and thus never have gone to Vietnam.

From late 1967 until late August 1968, I alternated between School of Artillery, North Head, and the Holsworthy Barracks, near Liverpool, south west of Sydney. I was assigned to a small unit named 131 Divisional Locating Battery, which was part of 12 Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA). I did courses in Surveying, which were very interesting, plus other 'locating' training. In late April I went to Jungle Training Centre at Canungra for a couple of weeks. Because of my prolonged time at OTU and my subsequent training I had less of my two years National Service time remaining than most men, and I assumed therefore that I wouldn't be going to Vietnam. However, it must have been about July when we were all lined up and went one-by-one to see an officer, who asked each of us if we had any objection to serving in South Vietnam. I said I was willing, and steps were put in place for my embarkation. I was actually pleased to be going, as some of the most disgruntled soldiers I knew were men who spent their entire two years in the Army 'kicking around barracks' in Australia. So, I flew to Vietnam, changed planes at the Ton Son Nhut US Airbase at Saigon, and arrived at the Nui Dat base on 3 September 1968. One immediately felt the heat and humidity.

Australia supported the US effort to resist North Vietnamese aggression against the government of South Vietnam. The first Australian soldiers to go there were the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), a small team of experienced and expert soldiers whose role was to train and advise South Vietnamese units. These were very highly regarded. They also suffered losses. Later in life I knew a lady whose first husband was an AATTV Captain who was killed in Vietnam. When the first Australian Army units went to Vietnam, they operated under US Command, and this was not a satisfactory arrangement,

due to very different cultures of the two Armies. The Australians were quite disciplined and relatively conservative in their tactics, and the Americans were considered rather 'gung-ho'. So, Australia requested an area where they could operate independently with their own command structure. Thus, Australia took control of Phuoc Thuy Province, an area south east of Saigon. In the centre of the Province, they set up a Task Force Base called Nui Dat, in a disused rubber plantation set on a hill. Phuoc Tuy was a relatively quiet part of South Vietnam. It could be said that Australia's role was a sideshow in the overall Vietnam context, the aim being mainly to show support to America. But there were some instances of intense combat. The first major Australian conflict was at a place called Long Tan in August 1966, where an Australian Infantry Company encountered a much larger force of the North Vietnamese Army. During the battle, 17 Australians were killed and a further 25 were wounded, one of whom later died of wounds. This was the highest number of Australian casualties incurred in any one engagement of the Vietnam War. The losses on the Vietnamese side were at least 245 dead, an estimated 350 wounded, and three captured. After Long Tan the enemy was reluctant to initiate a major assault on the Australian Task Force Base at Nui Dat.



My unit, 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA, did not go to Vietnam as an entire unit as other larger units did. Instead, we maintained a Detachment at Nui Dat throughout Australia's time there, and personnel were rotated to and from the Detachment a few at a time. We had personnel there continuously from April 1966 until the end of 1971. It was common for an Artillery Battery to be air-lifted to a specific spot and set up a local Fire Support Base (FSB), from which to attack enemy positions and to offer fire support to Infantry patrolling in that area. Some of our Surveyors, of which I was one, would go out by helicopter at the start and by survey we would establish the exact map reference of the position of the guns, and this would enable the guns to be accurate in their gunfire onto specified enemy locations. Often, we would go back to base the same day or the next morning. However, sometimes our people would stay at a FSB for a prolonged period, with one task being to observe enemy mortar fire. If staying overnight, we dug small pits for ourselves and took turns on watch duty through the night.

I never came under fire myself. In fact, 'I never shot at anyone and nobody shot at me'. Although, once I was in a vehicle convoy when a vehicle in the convoy hit a mine and we all left the vehicles and deployed on the ground to either side of the road. Others in our unit manned Listening Posts at Nui Dat and at the Fire Support Bases, listening and watching for sounds of enemy mortars, to aim to pin-point where they were. Others manned Radar stations, aiming to track the flight of any mortar shells. Those were tedious tasks, and I was glad not to ever do them. Later there was a sound-ranging base established near our huts within Nui Dat, whereby the timing of sounds from various microphones could be used to detect the location from which enemy mortar fire had come.

Our physical conditions in Nui Dat were not harsh. Initially we lived in tents with low sand-bagged walls, which were later replaced by huts. Meals were good, and there was a canteen. There was a limit of two cans of beer per man each evening, but the group pooled their rations, and some didn't drink, so others could drink more if they wanted to. There was a 'Gift Shop' (called a 'PX', like the American 'Post Exchange' or 'PX') where we would buy watches, radios, tape recorders, etc. We could listen to the radio station of Armed Forces Viet Nam, including reports on American football. And of course, the US reports about the war, which seemed to me to be unrelated to our own activities. We could also get Australian radio broadcasts. We heard about the protests by Uni students, as well as other home news, and of course the Australian sports.

We had a stop-start life in base. When there was an operation it was all go, then there would be times of little activity, and we would have menial tasks, such as filling sand-bags, or 'guarding' while local

Vietnamese filled the sand-bags. Later in my time at Nui Dat there was a request for our section to second someone to the Quartermaster's Store for 12 Field Regiment Headquarters, and I was picked. This was consistent and regular clerical work which I found easy, and I enjoyed being in that small team and I spent the last months of my Vietnam time in the 'Q' store - not very warlike!

Yet our unit did have some casualties. In February 1968 one of us was killed by a mortar while at a FSB. And in August 1967 a chap in our unit, whom by coincidence I had known in primary school in Melbourne, suffered shrapnel injuries while at a FSB. He was medically evacuated back to Australia, where he made a full recovery. Both of these were before my time there. There were others but I don't know details. We did carry loaded weapons with us all the time when at Nui Dat, even to go to meals or to the canteen. Either an Australia Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) or a lighter US rifle called an M-16 'Armalite'. The chaps in our unit were decent men just doing their jobs. Naturally, there was some whingeing about being there and about being Nashos, but they were a cheerful bunch and did their jobs well.

It is commonly believed that all service in Vietnam was extremely dangerous and high-stress. As I've described, my experience was otherwise, and a lot of others would have had a fairly safe time there. But for many there was indeed danger and high tension, particularly for the Infantry soldiers. One man who was in my class at OTU, and had a room a few doors down from mine, was killed as an Infantry Platoon Commander in Vietnam. The men in the Gun Batteries in Artillery had much more combat experience than I did. Overall Australia lost 521 men killed in the Vietnam War at a much lower casualty rate than the Americans.

I returned to Australia on 4 March 1969, after six months and one day in Vietnam. Most had twelve months stints, or almost so, but my time at OTU before joining the Artillery meant I had limited time remaining of my two years. I had home leave until my final discharge in Melbourne on 18 April 1969. I came home as an individual soldier, not as part of a group, and although others told of being confronted by protesters, I never was. I was just welcomed home by family and friends, including your Papa Peter.

In the 1950s and early 60s the Western World was very worried about Communist expansionism, after the Communist takeover of half of Europe. Then there was the Communist terrorist threat in Malaya, which the British did a very good job of suppressing, and the resultant independent state of Malaysia. Vietnam was formerly a French colony, and was invaded by the Japanese in WWII, and after they were driven out the French tried to regain control. The resistance forces in Vietnam sought help from Russia and China and changed from just a nationalist resistance to become a communist force. So, I hold the French largely responsible for the mess that Vietnam became. After a time, Vietnam was partitioned into Communist North Vietnam and 'Democratic' South Vietnam. After the North Vietnamese attacked the South and set up guerrilla forces called the Viet Cong (VC) to infiltrate the South, President Kennedy committed the US to support South Vietnam. The VC were pretty nasty, killing village leaders, teachers and other educated people.

In keeping with the mood of the times there was reasonably strong support in the Australian community for our forces going to Vietnam in the earlier years of our involvement. National Service was generally accepted, although not with enthusiasm. A turning point in public opinion seemed to be after the Tet Offensive early in 1968, and the continuing TV broadcasts of American actions in the war. Thus, the protest movement grew in strength, and was very strong by the end of the decade. Two aspects of the protests were hurtful to soldiers - one was actively sending aid to our enemies, and the other was the personal insults and sometimes attacks on returning soldiers, who had just been doing as their government directed. Australia pulled out of Vietnam in late 1972, and the US withdrew forces in the following years. The South Vietnamese regime collapsed, and there were heartbreaking scenes as the North Vietnamese took over Saigon in April 1975. There were cruel reprisals against South Vietnam officials, soldiers and many others, causing many to flee by boat. Malcolm Fraser welcomed many of the 'boat people' who came to Australia from South Vietnam.



After my two years in the Army, I felt some disappointment in myself that I 'hadn't done better' - gained promotion, made closer friendships, and so on. For many years I was reticent about my service, put my medals away, didn't take part in attend ANZAC Day Parades, etc. It wasn't a popular subject of conversation with the general public, and I didn't try to connect with other veterans - I thought my service wasn't significant enough, compared to others. Since I'd relocated to Perth, I didn't keep up contacts with Army friends, who seemed to all be on the East Coast. Except for one friend from OTU who lives in Perth and has been a life-long friend. However, I didn't become an alcoholic, nor do I have physical or mental health issues attributed to my Army Service.

Early in the 2000s I acceded to my wife's repeated entreaties and agreed to take a lady who was a widow of a WWII soldier to a local suburban RSL ceremony on ANZAC Day, and I even took out my medals and wore them. From then on, I reconnected. In the years since I've joined and been an office-bearer in a small RSL sub-branch and enjoyed taking part in the ANZAC Day parade in Perth. Also, I have reconnected by email with men I'd known in the Army.

### **The Ramblings of a Day Dreamer by another Vietnam Veteran (John Neervoort, 2/67)**

T. E. Lawrence wrote:

All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses  
of their minds wake in the day to find it was vanity:  
but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men,  
for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.

I saw the film "Lawrence of Arabia" in 1964, when I was at Teachers College. I started teaching in 1966, at a one teacher school twenty miles south of Walcha, northern NSW. The school had 22 children from kindergarten to sixth class in one room. In week one I realised I didn't really like children. Nor did I really like Teaching. At the end of the first month I received a "Dear John" letter from my Sydney girlfriend saying that she didn't really like me (the name right, but the message was crap). At the end of the first school term, I was driving home to Bulli for Easter when my VW Beetle's engine blew up near Tamworth. I caught a train home. I was a very unhappy chappy.

Waiting at home was a letter from the Department of National Service stating that I did NOT have a magic birth date. NO BODY WANTED ME! The following week I phoned them up and asked if I could volunteer for National Service. They said I could, but being a school-teacher, I would not be called up until the first intake of the following year (1967). At last, I had a plan. At the end of second term, there was a meeting of the parents to see who could accommodate me for the third term as the room I boarded in was needed to house the shearers. I was amazed how interested they all were in the pictures their kids had drawn that were pinned to the walls. I broke the impasse by suggesting my parents could bring their caravan to the school and I could live in that for the final term. They were very happy. I was very lonely. I borrowed Seven Pillars of Wisdom by T E Lawrence from the Walcha library. The above quote stuck in my mind, although I remembered it as "*All men dream but those that dream in the daytime are the dangerous ones, as they will do something about it*".

The two years spent in NS completed the two years left on my Teaching Bond. Furthermore, the NSW Education Department topped up my Army pay to equal my teaching pay. In effect, the whole time at OTU I was being paid as a Second Lieutenant. This subsidy cut out when I graduated. I entered OTU with 1/67. I passed the course. The Thursday night before graduation we watched the film Zulu. I think the two Lieutenants in Zulu being awarded Victoria Crosses was designed to send some subliminal message. We were addressed by Dave Sabben who with Gordon Sharpe KIA were in D Company 6RAR at the Battle of Long Tan. After that, we were required to write down our 3 choices of Corps to graduate into on the following Thursday.

I wrote down:      1. INFANTRY      2. INFANTRY      3. INFANTRY

The following day, a Friday, I was ordered to front Commandant Geddes. He explained that they had already chosen the cadets that had been selected for Infantry and that I was not one. My choices were:

1. Pick any Corps other than Infantry to graduate,
2. Become a Corporal in Infantry on Monday, or
3. If I was REALLY determined to graduate into Infantry, they were prepared for me to continue at OTU and try my chances with 2/67.

Either way, he did not want an answer then as he said it was one of the most important decisions I would have to make and that I should seek guidance from my parents and other mentors before fronting him on Monday with my answer.

On Monday, I gave my answer – I did want to extend my time at OTU to graduate with 2/67 as an Infantry 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

There were two lecture rooms. On one there was this sign above the door:

**The most honourable, arduous and dangerous way of serving one's country was in the Infantry**  
And on the other: **In the end, all wars are won or lost by the Infantry**

Sometimes I wonder if I am on the same planet. Anyway, I did get what I wanted. The Vietnam War was creating vacancies for Infantry Platoon Commanders, more so than in other Corps. Looking back, I have often wondered how much of one's life has been pre-ordained. The delayed graduation had me posted to 6RAR along with Guy Lloyd and Charlie Koch (both now dead). We were the first new subalterns to join 6RAR after its return from Vietnam. 6RAR was also the first major unit to occupy Lavarack Barracks in Townsville, and the first Infantry battalion since the Second World War. After their NS commitment was over, Guy and Charlie departed 6RAR and the Army. I had extended my NS by 18 months to complete a full tour of duty in SVN. This did not affect my National Service status.

After joining 6RAR in November, I was in charge of a platoon in the final exercise for 1 Armoured Regiment at Puckapunyal before it deployed tanks for the first time in Vietnam. Sgt Bob Buick MM, brother of Mick Buick (1/67), was my Platoon Sergeant on that exercise and on a further two exercises as "enemy" in Shoalwater Bay in 1968. I was informed from the horse's mouth about 11 Platoon at Long Tan, Bob Buick being the Platoon Sergeant that took command after 2Lt Gordon Sharp (1/65) was KIA. I think it was size and shape that had him dress in black pyjamas as a Vietnamese male. I was relegated to wearing a black dress as a Vietnamese female. On one of the exercises, I saw Terry Langlands, wet and bedraggled during the wet season. We were both Corporals in the same platoon in 2/67. Sadly, he was KIA some months later. 6RAR was the only battalion to embark for Vietnam from a non-capital city. The last days before departure had the pubs giving us free beer, free taxis back to Lavarack and the University students cheering us on our march down the main street. We had to take the Magnetic Island ferry from the Townsville wharf out to HMAS Sydney due to the shallow water.

The Sydney arrived at Vung Tau harbour. We disembarked climbing down cargo nets into waiting lighters to transport us ashore. A very good mate of mine, an RMC graduate, was climbing down next to me. Men of 4RAR were climbing up. One yelled up to my mate to inform him that a 5RAR RMC graduate had been killed just last week. My mate had been the best man at his wedding two years earlier. He nearly fell off the cargo net. One year later, whilst walking to the LZ to catch a Huey on the last day of 6RAR operations, another RMC graduate stood on a mine and was killed. My mate was fairly shaken, as at RMC each of the two had their rooms on either side of his. Years later he told me the RMC Cadet below his room was also killed. You get to feel you are the centre of a dart board and God is out to get you.

I was lucky in Vietnam. I commanded the Anti-Tank/Tracker Platoon. This platoon had four sections, four M60's, five ANPRC 25 radios, four 106mm RCL and about eight 90mm RCL (to replace the Carl Gustav which Sweden would not supply ammunition for). I had to supply a Corporal for Task Force duties, so that made the change to a standard 3 Section Platoon easy. This gave us an internal platoon radio net plus a spare M60. We had 3 tracker dogs (Marcus, Milo and Trajan) so each Section was a self-

contained Tracker Section. With the internal radio network I could operate the Platoon as three separate Sections, out of sight from each other. Being in Support Company, we were a battalion resource so I was answerable to the CO even if we operated within a Rifle Company's AO. In fact, we became the CO's private Platoon. He would send us into areas where it would be extravagant to send a rifle company, knowing that we were well armed, independent and that God didn't want me up there creating havoc, so we were safe and protected.

As a battalion resource, we were typically located within the battalion's fire support patrol base (FSPB). As a platoon we would conduct daily patrols within mortar range. At FSPB Diggers Rest located on the Firestone Trail, which was a wide trail cut through the jungle by eight bulldozers, side by side, we set up our 106mm RCL to point straight down the trail. On day one, as we were setting up the base, a twin bladed Chinook medium lift helicopter was flying in supplies, flying straight over my platoon position. Between runs, the Signal Platoon erected a tall 292 pole antenna. When the Chinook came back, I called the CP to ask if they had told the crew there was an obstacle in the way. They had. The Chinook turned early and approached over the artillery, next to the Trackers. I hated digging so I used this as an excuse to light a cigarette and watched the Chinook. It was heading for the far side of the base. The nose went up to land. Then, the unthinkable, the nose kept rising and rising, the underslung load swung down and hit the rear rotor. The twin rotors normally mesh within each other's arcs, but with the rear rotor minus a blade the aircraft turned upside down and hacked its way into the jungle. One could see and hear the branches being cut and thrown around. Before the CP could give the order, my platoon was saddled up ready to go. We exited the FSPB through the artillery into the jungle. Then there were a number of explosions and the tinkle of shrapnel through the trees, dropping small twigs onto us. I called the CP to enquire about the load. It was a rifle company's resupply plus an underslung load of first line mortar bombs. When the explosions died down, I went to look with the forward section commander. The two pilots were dead, hanging upside down in the cabin. The rest of the helicopter was burnt ash. We worked out that there were three airman helmets by their rounded shape. Two door gunners and a loadmaster. What was more frightening was the rifle company's ammo resupply. Grenades, M72 RCLs, mortar bombs and rifle rounds were littered everywhere. We tiptoed out and left the mess for the Assault Pioneers to remove.

At the same FSPB, a few nights later, the artillery reckoned there were enemy in that same area of bush. A close airstrike was called in. All soldiers were to don helmets, flak jackets and stay below ground level in their pits. Two USAF Phantoms arrived. Being on the battalion's command net I heard them say "We have wall-to-wall heat (napalm), 250 frag and 500 frag (bombs). What is your order?" The CP replied: "We'll take the lot". This was too good to remain below ground level, so I took a command decision to have a peak. The napalm looked great. The fragmentation bombs I heard from the bottom of my pit. The small arms (30mm Gatling gun) were absolutely spectacular. When they started firing, a red line would start in the black sky (you couldn't see the aircraft). In an instant it had touched the ground. Now imagine a straight red line from point in the sky joining the ground. Then, the line just disappeared into the ground as the pilot stopped firing. There are some things one sees that defy comprehension. This was one!



On the 18 August 1969, 6RAR celebrated Long Tan Day by planting the Long Tan Cross at the site of 11 Platoon's stand in the battle three years earlier. The whole of the Battalion was involved with all the companies other than D Coy in positions surrounding the site just in case the VC wanted a re-enactment. The Tracker Platoon was stationed on Nui Dat 2, a small hill which three years earlier the NVA high command had occupied during the battle. It was an excellent position to witness the cross being flown suspended from a Huey from Nui Dat to the site. After all the companies returned to Nui Dat, The



Trackers wandered down to look at the cross, take some photos and then walk back to Nui Dat. We were always last to leave any operation, sometimes being left as a stay-behind party.



Left: John with Trajan. My Battalion CO arranged for 12 Trackers to return to Nui Dat and join SAS. The idea was to mount four six-man patrols, each comprising 3 SAS and 3 Trackers. I was one of those 12. We had a few days of lectures and practical training. I also had my M16 modified with an M203 79mm grenade launcher attached below the barrel. The ammunition I carried was the standard M79 40mm bomb, 40mm shotgun round and 40mm WP (white phosphorus) grenade. The WP was the normal default round loaded for patrolling as the patrol 2IC took up the rear. The WP round was useful to take

following/chasing VC's minds off sex. One further important activity was to learn how to tie a Swiss Seat. This was a cradle created by a rope wound around the waist and the top of the legs, tied off with a karabiner in the middle of the waist. This was standard SAS patrol kit worn at all times. If one required a "hot" extraction, a Huey would be dispatched with a special inside frame bolted to the floor. Attached would be six long ropes with a large bowline loop with a sandbag attached. The end of the rope would be tied off with two half hitches and the half hitches would be taped over. When the Huey located the patrol, they would hover above, throw three ropes out each side door and the patrol would be standing back-to-back, attach their Swiss seat to the weighted rope using the karabiner and hold one hand straight out with a thumbs up to indicate they were ready. The Huey would lift vertically at maximum rate of climb to 1000 feet before flying forward, gaining extra height if being fired upon, before selecting a suitable LZ to land and have the patrol hop on board pulling in their rope before taking off for Nui Dat.

We were all ready to do a simulation "hot extraction" from SAS Hill with a tour of Nui Dat dangling from under a Huey, yodelling if the Swiss Seat had been poorly positioned in relation to one's testicles. This was to happen the following day, however, a real hot extraction took place that afternoon and it seems in the excitement of the moment, one of the patrol accidentally attached the karabiner to one of the half hitches (which should have been taped to avoid such a situation). The trooper fell to his death in, coincidentally, the 6RAR AO. A search was conducted to no avail. His body was finally recovered decades later. We were told the simulation was off. We would still patrol wearing Swiss Seats and if a hot extraction was required, we would learn on the job. It was an honour to do a patrol with SAS.

In July 1969 there was party at the Officers Mess after our first operation. There I met Capt Chris Neale USAF who was a Forward Air Controller, code name Jade 8. He flew a Cessna Skywagon twin boom aircraft with an engine up front and another behind the cockpit (hence the twin booms). We got on very well and he would invite me to fly with him between operations. On one occasion he directed an airstrike with RAAF Canberra bombers. Greg Monteith (2/67) was the pilot flying the small Bell Sioux (callsign Possum 26). His passenger dropped the smoke grenade on the target (old bunker system) which the FAC fired a white phosphorous rocket at to mark the target for the bombers. I flew with Chris aka JADE8 many times between operations. At the end of our tour of duty, Chris had offered to take me over the Cu Chi tunnels to the Cambodian border for a look. The 6RAR Adjutant grounded me. No more joy flights until the Boeing 707 'freedom bird' home.

Another interesting activity for the Tracker Platoon was to introduce some 14 ex VC and NVA soldiers who were 'Hoi Chans'. 'Hoi Chans' were enemy who had changed their allegiance from the North Vietnamese Army or the Viet Cong to working for the South. Leaflets were regularly dropped by air over the jungles and areas where the enemy operated. If they waved one of those leaflets and made out that they wanted to surrender, they would be paid an amount for doing so and an additional amount depending upon what weapons they surrendered and further amounts for important information of food or weapons

caches, tunnels, etc. The US had figured that it was cheaper to buy them out rather than find and shoot them.

The first patrol we did with the 14 'Hoi Chans' and 28 Trackers was very interesting. I had given verbal orders that if we should have a contact, anyone shooting a 'Hoi Chan' for any reason would be forgiven and I would concoct some story. We kept two 'Hoi Chans' in the Tracker Platoon, the rest going to the rifle companies. One was ex North Vietnamese Army, the other was an ex local VC guerrilla. Nguyen Xuan Tinh was born along the Red River south of Hanoi. He spent six years in the NVA, rising to the rank of Warrant Officer and commanding a platoon. He started to realise that the NVA wasn't liberating the South but was just killing them. Then he was wounded, abandoned on the battlefield and picked up by the Americans. He was very good. He became a "Bushman Scout" as we called ex-enemy that worked for us: the Americans called theirs "Kit Carson" Scouts. They were armed with M16s.

The Nui May Tao massif dominated the intersection of Phuc Tuy, Bien Hoa and Long Kahn provinces. It was a large enemy base with underground hospitals. The ox carts had left a bloodied trail 3 years earlier when they carted their dead and wounded from the Battle of Long Tan. Apart from some SAS patrols (who hated the area) no French, American, Australian or South Vietnamese ventured there. Just before Christmas 1969, 6RAR/NZ did. The Kiwis spent over a day walking on top of an underground hospital. They knew it was there, but the camouflage was so good that they couldn't find it. A number of patients had been spirited away a few days before. When the Trackers captured 7 enemy stretcher cases after a contact between us and their stretcher bearers, Tinh was quick to advise me by sign language to kill them there and then. He spent most of the morning shaking his head muttering "F\*\*king Neervoort", about the only English my platoon taught him! We didn't of course, but it took all day to cart them up to a large rock on a ridge line where a Huey could balance one skid on the rock as we fed the wounded into the aircraft. The large rock plateau also meant there was an absence of tall trees. Most Dustoffs (aerial evacuation of our dead and wounded) were winched out due to the tree height. I told my guys not to worry if any patient slipped off the rock in the process. They were gangrenous and half dead. They would have been killed instantly in the fall. There were no accidents, and a lot of valuable information was gathered from them. The battalion also recovered 16 tonnes of pharmaceuticals. That one haul was more than the combined allied forces captured in all of 1969.

Before we left Vietnam, we took the Bushman Scouts down to Vung Tau for a picnic. We hid them under the seat to get past the sentry. Tinh wanted to come back to Australia with us. We would have loved to have him here. That was against the rules, so we handed him to the battalion that relieved us – 2RAR. He featured in a SMH article. He later lost a leg on a mine. He could see that the Australians were going to leave. He knew that without the Australians, neither the South Vietnamese nor the North Vietnamese would accept him, a one-legged deserter. He did the only honourable thing he could by topping himself using his M16.

There are times I am not so proud about US and Australian involvement in the Vietnam War. The soldiers busted their guts, but the politicians wouldn't stay the course. In the end we lost because we couldn't be bothered to win. Not enough day dreamers!

They tried to get me to sign up by offering either SAS or remaining with 6RAR with one year in Townsville and two years in Singapore. I said "No War, No go".

Instead, I joined 1 Commando Coy (CMF) doing a parachute course, small craft handlers (two-man canoes, zodiacs), roping & rappelling, underwater assault swimmer, underwater demolitions and submarine familiarisation. I often worked with the Oberon class submarines stationed at Neutral Bay as they needed to train launching and retrieving canoes in both day and night conditions. I worked the maximum of 100 days per year (tax free). Being launched from the deck of a sinking submarine 3 nautical miles off Palm Beach in a two-man canoe in company with 3 to 5 others all in a raft formation to give stability on a pitch black night was interesting. When they blew the ballast tanks to take on water and submerge rearwards it was a case of rubbing the heart to get it going again. The big difference between

the Army and Commandoes is the former can give you the shits whereas the latter just scares the shit out of you! It was good to wear the green beret. I remember one time seeing Ray Simpson VC DCM as a civilian, peeling spuds in some PD greens they gave him. He was ex-1 Commando and always treated by us as Australia's highest decorated soldier. Without a war, he was just a spud peeler, by choice.

**Epilogue:** In 1973, I made a point of visiting T E Lawrence's house in Dorset, driving up the road to the hill where he was killed riding his Brough Superior Motorcycle. There will always be a place for those that dream in the daytime.

In 1975 I travelled overland from London to Nairobi, Kenya. Christmas Day was spent on the side of the road with me trying to fix the Bedford truck's electrics. We reached Nairobi in early 1976. I heard that extras were required for a film. The title was Orzowei, produced by an Italian group but I am not sure it saw the light of day. The interesting thing was that Stanley Baker, star and producer of Zulu, was the main actor. My wife and I got on well with Stan and his wife Ellen. They also had a son with them, but I don't remember his name. Stan gave some interesting talks on the Zulu to the International Group of Trans African travellers. We used to joke about Stan the Man sleeping a lot on set, but he died of cancer within the year.

I took quite a bit of super 8 movie film in Vietnam. I extracted the most interesting 5 minutes of the following and posted them to Youtube. You should be able to access them by searching for the following:  
Vietnam War Aussie Infantry Vietnam War Aussie Hueys  
Vietnam War Aussie Armour Vietnam War Aussie Navy  
Vietnam War Aussie Artillery Vietnam War Aussie R & C Vung Tau

### **Tracker Dogs**

Of all those sent to Vietnam eleven members of the Australian Army carried out their allotted tasks without a word of complaint, which was all the more commendable considering they could not return home when their tour of duty ended. These veterans were, of course, the tracker dogs used by the Australian Task Force. The dogs were the core of Combat Tracker Teams that were used from 1967 until the last combat troops departed in 1971. Normally two dogs were assigned to each of the Australian Battalions of the Task Force at Nui Dat. Each dog would complete around a three year tour before they were 'retired'. On occasions, as when 2RAR was replaced by 4RAR, which arrived with Milo and Trajan, there were three dogs in the battalion.

Generally, a Tracker Team consisted of the two dogs and their handlers, two visual trackers and two cover men (a machine-gunner and a signaller). However, each Battalion had their own way of doing things and so you will find, for example, in 6RAR during their second tour from June 1969 to May 1970 there were 3 teams in use. The dogs were trained at the Infantry Centre, at Ingleburn in NSW, and came from a variety of sources, including the local pound. They were outstandingly successful in carrying out their tracking task and, although not trained to detect mines, the dogs were intelligent and sometimes able to do so.

The Australian Army policy was that the dogs would not be brought home at the end of their service. One reason, perhaps not adequately explained at the time, related to an Army veterinary report which noted that large numbers of American tracker dogs in Vietnam had died from a tropical disease, thought (but not confirmed) to be transmitted by ticks. The report recommended that no tracker dogs be allowed back into Australia "even under strict quarantine". Homes were found with European or Australian families resident in Saigon for 10 of the 11 dogs. One dog, Cassius, died of heat exhaustion after a training run.

In order of arrival in Vietnam, the dogs were:

Cassius, Justin, Caesar, Marcus, Tiber, Janus, Julian, Milo, Trajan, Juno and Marcian



## Qantas Flying Into Vietnam? (Peter Morgan, 1/66)

Peter Morgan (at right on Graduation night with wife Beverley) started his National Service at 3 TB Singleton on 2 February 1966. He commenced OTU with Class 1/66 on 18 February. Peter graduated on 21 July, was allocated to the Infantry Corps and along with Neville Gale, Robin Horsfield and Gary Reidy was posted to the Infantry Centre at Ingleburn, commencing on 30 July. After Canungra, Peter was allocated as a Reinforcement Infantry Officer for Vietnam. He arrived at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Reinforcement Unit (1 ARU) on 11 November and on 15 December was allocated to 6 RAR. He served with 6 RAR until 14 June 1967 at the end of the battalion's tour.

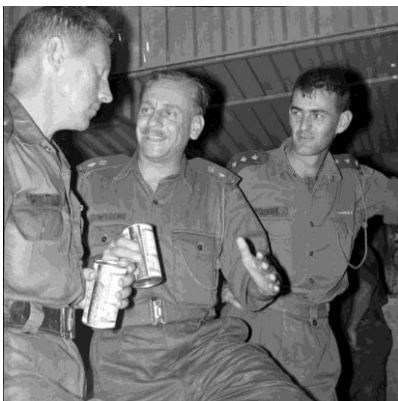


Peter flew to Vietnam as a reinforcement in November 1966. The flight he was on was carrying a relatively few reinforcements, and so no doubt a commercial flight was used. Qantas took them as far as Manila in the Philippines, but from there they went to Saigon with PanAm. They were told that Qantas didn't fly into Saigon because of the war. The Qantas flight was continuing on to Hong Kong and Teheran, Persia (that last has always stuck in Peter's mind, but that is another story). Peter had wondered if the situation had changed just within a month or so of his deployment, or was a 'Furphy' that Qantas would not fly into Vietnam.

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The following piece comes from *Rounds Complete* by Steve Gower, an artillery officer who served in SVN with 1 Field Regiment from 19 September 1966 until 10 June 1967.

*On the leg from Manila to Tan Son Nhut airport (Saigon) reality sunk in. Our weapons were distributed and just before the aircraft commenced a steep approach dive prior to landing, presumably as a precaution to avoid ground fire, the captain spoke to us over the PA system. He said what a privilege it was for he and his crew to fly us to Vietnam, on their behalf he wished us every good luck in the days ahead, and then expressed the sincere hope that they could have the pleasure of flying us home at the completion of our tour of duty. He then, out of necessity, switched off to concentrate on the landing. The remarks encapsulated **Qantas** at its very best as a national carrier.*



It would appear from the responses Peter has had Qantas did fly into Vietnam during the war. Apart from Steve Gower's flight, Ian McQuire (who became Harry Smith's 2IC at D Company, 6 RAR) flew in with Qantas on 16 June 1966 and 7 January 1970 and then back to Australia on 4 March 1971. The four flights in by Qantas might have been carrying a large enough number to be chartered by the Army.

Left: On their last night in Vietnam, 29 May 1967, the CO, 6 RAR, Lt Col Colin Townsend (centre), enjoys a discussion and a can of beer with the OC D Coy, Major Harry Arthur Smith, MC (left), while the Coy 2IC Captain McQuire looks on. AWM photo.

Peter recalled that: 'Gary Reidy was pretty keen to go and put his training into effect, and worked pretty hard to get to Vietnam, but as it turned out, the first vacancy came up with 4 RAR at the Far East Land Forces (FARELF – HQ in Singapore) in Malaya, so he went there.' (on 24 September 1966). He served with 4 RAR in Vietnam from 21 May – 23 September 1968. Gary was awarded a Military Cross for his actions during an attack on 13 September 1968 where he was wounded. He was repatriated to Australia the following day. Neville Gale followed Peter to Vietnam, arriving at the 1 ARU on 12 December 1966. He was transferred to HQ 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force on 19 January 1967, returning to Australia on 21 November that year. Robin Horsfield transferred to the Artillery and the 1 Field Regiment on 15 May 1967.

### **Both her Father and her Husband were at Scheyville (Christine Lillian Carney)**

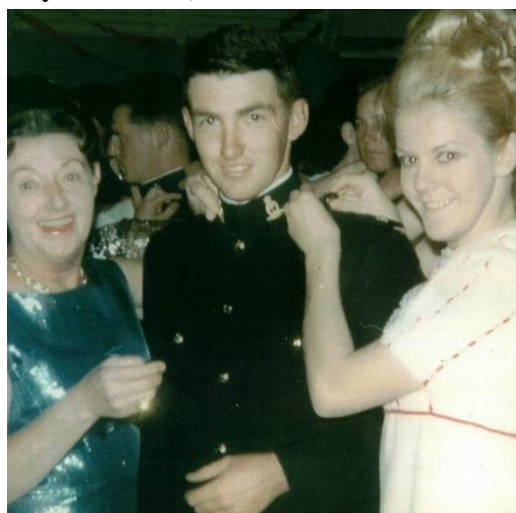
In 1926, then 17-year-old Norman Eltringham left his home-town of Gateshead near Durham in northern England to set sail for Australia on the vessel 'Demosthenes' (which became HMAA A64 Demosthenes from 1915 – 1917). He was part of what was then known as the 'Dreadnought' scheme which was a program designed to promote and assist the migration of British youths willing to become farm workers in Australia. On arrival in Australia, the teenage boys were assigned to a State Government farm for three months of agricultural training. More than half of the boys who participated in the scheme were sent to the Scheyville farm. Norman Eltringham was one of those boys and he remained at Scheyville for the required three months before being sent to Parkes as a general farm hand. Norman afterwards left the agricultural world and qualified as a welder during the depression years. In 1936, he married Esther Joel in Sydney and they subsequently had six children. The fifth of these children, Christine Lillian was born on Christmas Eve in 1949.

At the age of 16, Christine joined the Government Insurance Office of New South Wales as a Typist. There she met Bernard Carney who was then an 18-year-old and working as a Clerk in the same department. They went out together for the first time on 23 July 1966 and soon became boyfriend and girlfriend (as it was back in those days).

Two years later to the day on 23 July 1968, Bernie reported to the Marrickville induction centre as a National Service recruit and was sent to Kapooka. After only ten days at Kapooka, he was on his way back to Sydney and then on a bus to Scheyville. On the way, the bus actually stopped directly outside the rear entrance of the Government Insurance Office building and Bernie knew that Christine was working inside but there was no chance of a visit (also no mobile phones way back then).

The rest is history and after 20 tumultuous weeks of training at OTU, Bernie graduated with Class 3/68. In the company of his daughter Christine, Norman returned to Scheyville for the first time since 1926 to watch the Class 3/68 Graduation Parade. The photo at right shows Bernie's mother, Naomi and his girlfriend, Christine, pinning on his pips at graduation in December 1968.

Bernie and Chris married on 13 June 1970 before Bernie's discharge on 23 July 1970 – exactly four years to the day after they went out for the first time. They celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on 13 June 2020. Sadly, Norman died in 1971 at the age of 62.



At one of the Class 3/68 reunions at Scheyville, Jonathon Sanders, the Ranger there at the time was an ardent Scheyville historian. He was delighted when Chris told him the story of her father being at Scheyville as a Dreadnought boy as well as her husband being a Scheyvillian. He said that, to the best of his knowledge, this was the only case of its kind. If any other Scheyvillian does have a dual connection with the establishment, it would be interesting to have on record as part of our OTU history.



## OCS Portsea Statue

For the past three years a team of Portsea Graduates has been working towards having a statue of an Army Officer Cadet installed at Point Nepean Park, Victoria, where the Officer Cadet School, Portsea was located. The statue has been unveiled. To view the unveiling ceremony, the YouTube link is: <https://youtu.be/Hs9tkMOc6z4> The Rye RSL has provided photographs of the event and it is available at <https://online.fliphtml5.com/bspxy/mvmj/> There is also an OCS Portsea website. <https://www.ocsportsea.org>



## VALE:

**Malcolm Roy ‘Mal’ Smith** was born in England on 10 April 1943 and immigrated to Australia as a child. After completing his education, the then 23-year-old enlisted in the Army on a five-year Short Service Commission to become a pilot. He joined the Army, and commenced his training at OTU, on 29 July 1966, graduating with Class 3/66 on 22 December 1966. He was allocated to Army Aviation and was posted to 2 RTB, Puckapunyal, where he awaited his flying training. In 1967 Mal completed Basic Flying Training with Course 65 at the BFTS, Pt Cook, Victoria, and then Advanced Flying Training with Course 13 at RAAF Amberley early in 1968. He was posted to 171 Air Cavalry Flight in Amberley. 171 was relocated to Holsworthy in early 1969, but Mal didn’t stay long as on 9 April 1969 he found himself in Vietnam with 161 Independent Recce Flight. During his twelve months in Vietnam, he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross. After returning from Vietnam, in June 1970 Mal was posted to 183 Independent Recce Flight in Lae, PNG, where he learnt to fly the difficult PNG terrain. 183 was based in Lae from 1970 until 1972.



Mal discharged from the Army in late 1971 and returned to PNG where in 1975 he established Pacific Helicopters in PNG. Today, under the banner of the Pacific Helicopters Group, the business has expanded and diversified into building and construction, hotels and resorts, residential estates, a commercial shopping mall, fixed wing Dash 8 aircraft, powerline maintenance in Australia, Israel, China. The group includes APA, which is one of three companies world-wide to overhaul military and commercial Black Hawk engines for the Australian Defence Force. Pacific Helicopters is proud to state there has never been an engine failure in the twenty years that they have been providing the service. Mal is the Executive Chairman of the group and remains actively involved in the business, spending time in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, China and Nepal.

## *Pacific Helicopters*

The PH fleet peaked at 51 helicopters from Hughes 500 E/R, Bell 206 and 212, Airbus 350 BA, B2 and B3s, Lama’s and Puma 330J, Mil 17. Marking a milestone for both PH and aviation operations in PNG the company has taken delivery of the first of three H145 helicopters from Airbus Helicopters. The H145 had arrived in the Eastern Highlands Provincial capital of Goroka, following final reassembly at Airbus Group Australia Pacific’s Sydney facility.



This H145 is the first new Airbus Helicopters aircraft to be operated in PNG, with PH setting a new industry standard in a country steeped in aviation history and offering an even brighter future. Operators are increasingly looking for high-performance, efficient rotorcraft with strong safety credentials and oil and gas operational compliance – key characteristics of the Airbus Helicopters family. “As a result of the introduction of the H145, and the demonstration flights carried out in Port Moresby, Pacific Helicopters is confident that their prospects for future business opportunities within the PNG Minerals and Resources industry are very exciting.” said Malcolm Smith-Kela, PH owner and CEO. Mal still flies today and has over 17,000 flight hours.



## *Community Involvement*



Mal established Kina Securities Limited (Kina Bank) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1985 as a diversified financial services company. In the 1990s he started the PNG Stock Exchange with this company (with a blackboard and chalk). Once the stock exchange was fully operational Mal sold his interests and moved on from that area.

Mal pioneered and implemented grant development programs and business partnerships focused on improving social and economic conditions in developing communities. He has been named by the PNG Times as one of the most influential business leaders in Goroka, in the Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea and is regularly consulted on issues concerning environmental research and conservation.

Mal became Governor of the Eastern Highlands Province and a member of the National Government from 2002 until 2012. He was on many committees, but he did more work on the Public Accounts Committee where he could only refer the many 'suspect' people to the Ombudsman and Public Prosecutor, 'who did absolutely nothing!' Mal received the MBE and CMG for services to the environment, aviation and business by the Queen. He regards those awards as highlights of his life.

In February 2017 Mal established the Kela Foundation, with the aim of giving underprivileged Australian children and their communities access to the same education and health opportunities that were afforded to him as a child in Australia.

While Governor Mal changed the health system of PNG. The National Government had been managing hospitals and the Provincial Government had been managing the rural health centres. The new system sees Provincial Health Authorities manage both hospitals and rural health centres. Mal is the current Chairman of the Eastern Highlands Health Authority and instrumental in having the new (200 Million Kina) hospital wing constructed, which will be the main specialised health centre for all the Highlands.

Throughout more than forty years in business, Mal has always made time to serve the not-for-profit sector. A strong advocate of global corporate social responsibility, he has held management and leadership roles in several national and international non-profit organisations such as founding Research and Conservation to train teachers.

## *Visitors to PNG*

If you turn up in Papua New Guinea expecting a first-contact experience, then you're half a century too late. "What you're seeing now are the last remnants," says Mal, now naturalised Papua New Guinea citizen. Mal tells bizarre stories of tribal encounters when he was pioneering his way through the wilderness. These days, however, the common garb is T-shirts, not 'pig fat and arse grass' (pidgin for traditional costumes).

## *Death*

The above article was written for 'Whatever Happened To' for this Scheyvillian, but on Tuesday 6 April 2021 it was announced that a PNG National, who had been transferred to Queensland on 28 March for treatment, had died of COVID complications in a hospital north of Brisbane. The following morning it was announced in the press and on radio and TV that the man was Malcolm 'Kela' Smith. Mal Smith had spent most of the last 50 years in PNG running a successful business and had been a Provincial Governor. His body is being repatriated to PNG for burial. A competitor in PNG Aviation, Robert Agarobe, the Governor for PNG's Central Province, wrote Mr Smith had been "a dear friend." "My aviation life with Malcolm Kela Smith was a love and hate relationship and as competitors we had our moments, however, we were best of friends who shared more than a few beers together and assisted each other in times of need when it came to work," Mr Agarobe said. "A tough bugger, a true aviator and a legend."

**Peter John (Collas) Macfettters** (Jim Gilchrist, OCS 1/72 and Peter Eveille RSL ACT )

Peter John Collas was born in Queensland on 9 June 1945 and at 17 years-of-age joined the CMF as 135664 on 30 August 1962 in the 'Pentropic era' and served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Queensland Regiment, then based in country Queensland. He completed his CMF service on 29 April 1964. Peter was 'Balloted In' to National Service and commenced at 1 RTB, Kapooka as 1731258 with the second intake on 29 September 1965. Selected for Officer Training, Peter commenced with Class 2/65 on 15 October, graduating on 7 April 1966. Peter was allocated to RAInf and posted to 3 RAR.



In September 1965, 3 RAR had returned from its tour of Malaysia and Borneo to Woodside, South Australia, the official date of 3 RAR's occupation of Kapyong Lines at Woodside being 14 October 1965. The battalion was reformed after leave in 1966 and began training for operational service in South Vietnam. In January 1967 Peter transferred to the ARA. However, before 3 RAR left for Vietnam, Peter had been transferred to 3 TB Singleton, where National Servicemen had recently commenced undertaking Recruit Training.

Peter served for 20 years in the ARA with postings including AHQ prior to serving a tour as a Staff Captain (Temporary) with HQ, Australian Forces Vietnam from 23 July 1970 until 22 July 1971. On return to Australia Peter was transferred to 7 RAR. In 1972 he transferred to the RAAMC. On retiring from the ARA in 1987 and settling in Canberra, Peter served a further five years in the Army Reserve, his final rank being Lieutenant Colonel. He became heavily involved in the RSL in the ACT.

Jim Gilchrist and Peter Eveille worked closely in the RSL with Peter to manage the Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch. Peter was a former President of the Sub-Branch, the Deputy President, President and Treasurer of the ACT Branch and a member of the National Board. In recognition of his work with the RSL, Peter was appointed a RSL Life Member in 2014.

Peter married Carol and the couple had three children: Chantelle, Jodi and Jason. Adversity was not new to the couple as they lost both Chantelle and Jason.

As part of finding his roots, Peter and Carol went on holiday to the UK and Scotland with Jodi accompanying them for some of the journey. This was a very important trip for Peter as he was able to find his true heritage and ancestral line. While the reasons were personal to Peter and Carol it resulted in Peter changing his name from Peter John Collas to Peter Mitchell MacFettters and Carol became Carol Ann MacFettters. He was advised officially on 27 February 2017 with the receipt of his Change of Name Certificate. He was very proud of this re-birth and moved onto his new name smoothly.

During 2020, Peter and his wife Carol purchased what they described as their 'ideal' home in Ulverstone, Tasmania, on the northern coast about 15 kilometres from Devonport. During the middle of 2020, Peter and Carol sold up in Canberra and along with daughter Jodie, progressively moved to Ulverstone, including undergoing 'COVID' quarantine. They had settled in well to their new home and were looking forward to enjoying the lifestyle that this part of the world offers. Sadly, Peter suffered a brain aneurism on 2 December and passed away. A combined Funeral Service was held between the Woden Valley RSL in the ACT and the Ulverstone RSL in Tasmania on 14 December 2020.

During the Eulogy Peter Eveille reported that Peter was an avid Swans AFL fan: he kept the record of every game he attended and some he didn't. When the Swans made the finals there was no slowing him down from wearing his jersey and singing their song when he showed up for our Saturday morning walks. Some days he had to walk by himself if the Swans had a big win. This leads on to another little story – Peter had an issue with Mr Murdoch's press coverages. If one was to debate/argue using the Daily Telegraph as back up you were instantly down played to a feral. But, when winter approached and the Swans were in the news the 'Telly' was the only paper. Peter was involved in sport in many facets – he played, he coached, he refereed, he umpired, in sports such as soccer, rugby and cricket. He also

volunteered in any role in supporting his young ones with their sports and interests. He was an avid runner, running marathons, half marathons, several 'city to surfs' and other fun runs. However, as his knees felt the strain, he turned his energy into cycling, cycling to work at Campbell and Russell offices.

Jim Gilchrist O1/72 reported that 'I can say that in the 47 years that I knew him, I always found him to be a decent fellow who was totally committed to whatever tasks he assumed or had been given; he was also a very loyal friend to those he took to heart.'

**George William Fisk** was born on 26 April 1945 and commenced training as a Victoria Police Cadet on 2 February 1962. On graduating he was posted to the Russell Street Police Headquarters in Melbourne. When his number came out in the first National Service ballot, George changed uniforms and commenced his National Service at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Recruit Training Battalion, Puckapunyal, on 30 June 1965. On 16 July George became part the first class at Scheyville. He graduated, along with seventy-five others, on 18 December 1965. From there he was posted to the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment being which was being raised at Puckapunyal. from 1 September 1965. Towards the end of his time with 7 RAR, George became an Acting Company Commander, a Major's role. Not bad for a 22-year-old! On 28 November George was transferred to the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra. On completion of his National Service, he returned to Victoria Police, again at Russell Street. After recovering from an illness and a period on 'light duties' George returned to the Army in October 1969 as a member of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment, Citizen Military Forces, on 24 October 1969. He retired from the CMF on 1 November 1974. George continued with VicPol until 5 February 2015, a total of 53 years of service to the public of Victoria. He reached the permanent rank of Superintendent and had acted as Chief Superintendent and Assistant Commissioner. During his tenure George was awarded the National Medal (with third clasp), the Victoria Police Service Medal (with eighth clasp), the 35 Year Service Award, The Victoria Police Medal for Merit, the Australian Police Medal, the National Police Service Medal and also received a Departmental Commendation.



George married Glenys in 1968 and their 52-year marriage produced three children Greg, Susan and Ian and six grandchildren: Taylah, James, Claudia, Chloe, Mila and Charlotte

After a short battle with illness, George passed away peacefully on Sunday 27 December 2020 in no pain and not alone. His grandchildren wrote: 'Gramps you were strong and always present. You spent many wonderful memories with us from ballet to basketball, karate and our first days at school, watching the AFL Cats play and spending Christmas, Easter and birthdays with us. We will miss having fun with you and hearing that loud supporting voice at sporting events, we are so proud of your achievements.'

Due to Covid restrictions, George's funeral was held privately on Saturday 2 January 2021, at the Police Academy in Waverley. The OTU Association was represented by National Chairman Frank Miller (4/67), who had spoken at George's retirement function at the Melbourne Cricket Club in 2015, classmates Mike Delves and David Sabben and one of his Junior Classmen Rob Youl. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in memory of George by visiting The Blue-Ribbon Foundation: [www.remember.org.au](http://www.remember.org.au)

Right: At the Waverley Police Academy:  
Rob Youl (2/65), Frank Miller (4/67), Mike Delves (1/65) and David Sabben MG (1/65).

**Terence 'Peter' Simonds** was born in Sydney on 12 July 1947 a son to Terence Joseph and Sheelah Mary (Peg) Simonds. He completed his secondary education at St Edmunds College in Canberra. Before entering the Army on 1 May 1968 as a





National Serviceman Peter was employed as an Insurance Broker by Yorkshire Life Insurance. Peter was selected for Officer Training and commenced at OTU with Class 2/68 on 17 May. While Peter did not 'shine' during infantry tactics, he did enough to convince the staff that he should become an officer and graduated on 10 October. He was allocated to the RAASC and started Corps Training at Puckapunyal. In early December he commenced his first posting, a Transport Platoon Commander. A year after graduation, Peter decided that he had found his 'niche' in life and transferred to the ARA.



When the Royal Australian Corps of Transport was formed in 1973, Peter undertook a Corps transfer to RACT. Peter went on to serve for twenty years followed by two years in the Army Reserve. His postings included two in Papua-New Guinea, the Transport Centre, Logistics Branch, a secondment to the Railways Research and Development Organisation and the Land Warfare Centre, finishing with an Army Reserve posting at Headquarters, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division. With the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division set to be removed from the Order of Battle in 1991, Peter opted for discharge on 18 April 1990.

Peter was the devoted husband of Judy Simonds (née Pallot) and son in law of Douglas and Gwen Pallot. He was a loving father of Terence Nicholas, Natalie, Fiona, Carolyn, Stephanie & Laura and Father-in-law of Lisa, Luke, Paul, Dylan and Neal. He was the adored Grandpa of Samantha, Terence Zachary, Nathaniel, Lachlan & Thomas; Alexandra & Douglas, Amity and Ella; and Gabriel.

For some time, Peter had been battling brain tumours. He finally lost that battle, dying peacefully at home on 15 March 2021. Peter's life was celebrated with a service at St Leonard's Church in Glen Waverley on Tuesday 23 March.

#### **Catch-up Vales:**

**David Frederick Woidt** was born in Angaston, SA, on 3 March 1945, one of four siblings. He completed his secondary education at Unley High School before attending the University of Adelaide where he graduated as a Bachelor of Science in 1966. Having deferred his National Service David commenced work as a Student Teacher before enlisting in the Army on 2 February 1967 as 4718939. He commenced OTU on 17 February, graduating with Class 2/67 on 8 Oct 1967. He was allocated to the RASigs and posted to 6 Signals Regiment at Watsonia, Victoria, from where he took leave from 13 January 1969 and was discharged on completion of his commitment on 1 February. David returned to secondary teaching and was a dedicated, highly respected teacher and member of the community. He had expressed the thought that had he not already been committed, he may well have chosen to remain in the services, which says much for the benefits he felt he had received.



David was a father to two children. Sadly, he died of cancer on 26 March 1991. He was buried in the Nurioota Cemetery in the Barossa Valley on 28 March 1991.

**John Charles Yenn** was born in Sydney on 15 October, 1950 and completed his secondary education at Westmead Juniors Boys High School. Before entering the Army as a 'Nasho' John was employed as a Trainee Manager by G. L. Productions Pty Ltd. He joined the Army on 19 April 1972 as 2799894 and commenced his Recruit Training at 1 RTB, Kapooka, at Wagga. John went through the selection process for OTU and he, along with Jeff Gordon, Paul Rutherford and Doug Willingham, were held at Kapooka as 'OTU Aspirants'.



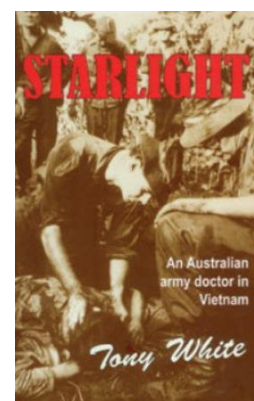
Three Cadets did not commence at OTU with Class 2/72 and these vacancies allowed the 'Aspirants' to commence OTU two weeks late with Class 2/72 around 20 May. The three Cadets who did not commence were Air Cadets Phil Cavanagh and Ian Hendricks who

commenced with Class 3/72 and Barry Flaherty who transferred to the ARA and commenced at OTU with OCS Class 2/72. Graduating on 5 October, John was allocated to the Survey Corps and with his knowledge of printing was posted to the Survey Regiment at Bendigo, Vic, where he became involved with map printing.

John had ballroom dancing training and with these skills, was tasked to be the partner for Miss World, Belinda Green at a ball in Bendigo. After the 2 December 1972 election win by the Labor Government and National Conscription ended, John opted to continue in the Army until December 1973. He then returned to Sydney where through mutual friends, met Helen Daly. Helen and John married in December 1975 at Five Dock, NSW. Post-NS John returned to work in the printing industry and by his retirement in 2013 had reached the position of an Operations Manager in the Printing Industry with Hannapak at North Richmond, NSW. In 2018 John spent three weeks motorcycling in the USA. Shortly after returning to Australia John left Sydney on his motorcycle heading to Adelaide for a motoring event. Unfortunately, on this road trip on 18 September 2018, John and his motorcycle collided with a school bus and he was killed. John was cremated at Northern Suburbs Crematorium in Lane Cove on 5 October 2018.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**STARLIGHT: An Australian Army Doctor in Vietnam - Tony White** (Alistair Pope, 4/66) Starlight is a refreshing book to read. Paradoxically, for a book that I highly recommend it contains a great deal of the blood and gore of war. It also contains observations about the environment and culture of Vietnam as well as some insights into the mind and souls of the ordinary Australian soldier. Tony White, the 5RAR RMO, writes in a conversational style that is as easy to read as a diary. He records events and incidents and expresses the views he held then (and not as so many prefer to remember with the benefit of hindsight). He has no ego about his limited capabilities as a young, inexperienced doctor. The result is that the reader soon feels a sense of being part of the 'family' that is a battalion on ops.



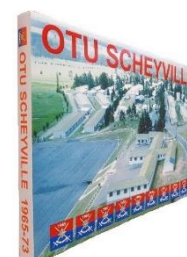
The trials and trauma of infantry operations in Vietnam affected everyone involved to a greater or lesser extent. Although he never fired a shot, Tony and his medical staff sometimes performed their tasks under fire, but never shirked from their duty. The ordinary soldier saw close mates in their platoon or company killed or wounded but they returned to the field when called to go out on their next mission.

Comradeship in the face of danger and death has always characterised the Australian Digger – and this is well-described by an articulate, intelligent and medically trained observer.

The book finishes with a review of this trauma and its post-war effects on many of the participants. When the adrenalin is no longer flowing and the close bonds of mateship are fading as each soldier goes his own way it opens the door for the nightmares to begin. As Tony explains, despite his training and knowledge, even he stood near the precipice as he could not explain to others who had not been there, his experiences. What hope had the ordinary soldier - or the discharged National Serviceman, now back serving customers at the bank just weeks after fighting for his life? Finally, it was somewhat strange to find that I knew six of those mentioned in the book, one of whom I never knew had been wounded until now. It was never raised as a subject of normal conversations.

A full review can be obtained from Alistair.

**OTU Photo Book:** The Scheyvillian usually has a number of reviews of books that may be of interest to the readers. However, this bumper COVID Edition cannot fit them in, so look out in the next edition for more book reviews! However, if you need a book, and you haven't already bought one, there are stocks available of [The OTU Scheyville 1965-73 Pictorial Book](#)



There was a fantastic demand for the "OTU Coffee Table Book" with the first print run of 400 copies sold out. A second smaller print run was ordered, and these are now in stock.

As with all smaller print runs, the cost per unit is higher. These new books can be ordered through the OTU website Q Store. Note: To avoid any confusion on delivery, such as 'Local Pick Up', delivery will only be made by mail, with the appropriate charge.

## **WHAT SCHEYVILLIANS DID**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Australian Civil Affairs Unit – South Vietnam 1967-1971** (Barry Smith, 2/65) (Note 1)

(Barry Smith (2/65) served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Civil Affairs Unit (1ACAU) in then South Vietnam in 1969/70. Barry signed on after his two years National Service and studied Vietnamese at the RAAF School of Languages, Point Cook. His posting to 1ACAU was as a Liaison Officer which meant working on his own in local Phuoc Tuy villages while being called on from time to time to interpret for visiting senior staff, politicians, journalists, and the like. Barry has lectured widely about the role of 1ACAU including at the 2002 Chief of Army History Conference.)

### **Introduction**

This item is a short history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Civil Affairs Unit (1ACAU) in South Vietnam (SVN). 1ACAU was not the first Australian Army Unit to conduct civic action projects in SVN, nor even the first to do so in Phuoc Tuy Province, nor was it the only Australian services unit to perform civic action projects after the unit arrived in SVN in June 1967. This wider context is touched on here only briefly, but it is important to understand that during the 1960s and early 1970s, civic action projects were undertaken on an ever-increasing scale by Australian, US and other countries' armed forces throughout SVN. Australia's civic action program in SVN had little to do with altruism, and everything to do with the political motive of winning the support of the South Vietnamese people for their Government in then Saigon; that is, convince the population not to support the enemy. A subsidiary aim from the Australian point of view was to obtain goodwill towards Australian forces in SVN and Australia generally.

### **Background prior to June 1967**

When the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force (1ATF) first arrived in Phuoc Tuy Province in mid-1966, the military security situation was poor. The province had not been under government control for several years before the task force arrived. Things had improved little by the time 1ACAU arrived. Single vehicles could not travel most roads. Some roads required fully escorted convoys before they could be traversed. The Province's population was about 125,000. The large majority of the population lived in and around the major villages of Baria, Hoa Long, Long Dien and Dat Do. The predominant religions were Buddhism and Catholicism.

### **Beginnings of civic action by the Australian Army**

In 1965, members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) were conducting civic action projects in Bien Hoa Province. In early 1966, a nucleus group of ex Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) members had formed under Captain Bob Rooney and began carrying out civic action-type projects to assist the local population. Rooney's group was not a formal unit. The energetic and flamboyant Major John Donohoe (the Man from WHAM – Winning Hearts and Minds) took over the group in mid 1966.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Australian Civil Affairs Unit**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Civil Affairs Unit was raised at Middle Head, Sydney in April 1967. In June 1967, it moved to South Vietnam, to Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province under the command of Lt Col John McDonagh, Royal Australian Engineers.

1ACAU remained in Vietnam until November 1971. Some positions in the unit were Corps specific. Others were non-corps postings. At the peak it was never more than 60 officers and other ranks at any one time. It had five Commanding Officers:

- a. Lt Col John McDonough, RAE - 1967/68;
- b. Lt Col Kevin Latchford, RAAC – 1968/69;
- c. Lt Col Peter Gratton, RAE – 1969/70;
- d. Lt Col Paddy Outridge, RA Inf 1970/71; and
- e. Lt Col Laurie Wright, RAE – 1971.

During its time in SVN, 1ACAU was located at Nui Dat, but for all this period, it was a unit of Headquarters Australian Force Vietnam (HQ AFV) in Saigon; it was not a 1 ATF unit. The Unit's CO



had direct access to the Commander AFV. On day-to-day operational matters, CO 1ACAU worked closely with Commander 1ATF.

The unit consisted of a headquarters/administration group, plus operational detachments with specific responsibilities. A section of the Unit was also established at Vung Tau. The activities, size and shape of 1ACAU constantly changed between 1967 and 1971.



The **Engineer Detachment** typically constructed windmills (14 were constructed in all), schoolrooms, market buildings, fences, medical dispensaries and more. Two major projects, one each at the beginning and end of the unit's presence in SVN were designing and creating a completely new village called Soui Nghe beside Route 2 north of the Task Force Base, and Project 399 which was the construction of 600 houses for the ARVN soldiers around the Province. The picture shows a windmill erected by 1ACAU.

The **Medical Detachment** was heavily involved in operations known as MEDCAPS (Medical Civil Aid Programs), conducted daily in province villages. By 1969, MEDCAPS were incorporated into what were called ICAPS (Integrated Civil Aid Programs), conducted several nights per week, when a medical team would stay overnight in a village and treat anyone who turned up for treatment. A movie screen would be erected

nearby and those in the queue for treatment, and other villages, would watch the films. Not surprisingly, the films were chosen because of their themes, which promoted South Vietnam at the expense of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. There were also DENTCAPS (Dental Civil Aid Programs) carried out by 1ATF units other than 1ACAU. The 1ACAU Medical Detachment co-ordinated all MEDCAPS and DENTCAPS conducted by 1ATF units. The Detachment's head was also the province CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development) adviser on medical matters.

Typical tasks for the **Education Detachment** were advising on where new schools could be built (initially by the Engineer Detachment), providing educational supplies to Province schools, and conducting English language classes which were very popular – unit members would spend time alone in villages at schools giving these classes. During 1969/70 when CA was under the command of Lt Col Peter Gratton, the Education Detachment also became responsible for youth and sport activities in Phuoc Tuy. At this time, the Detachment OIC was also the Province CORDS adviser on Education, and the Detachment's 2IC was the Province CORDS adviser on youth and sports matters, co-ordinating sporting activities in Phuoc Tuy.

The **Liaison Detachment** consisted of Vietnamese-speaking Australian officers who were graduates of the RAAF School of Languages, Point Cook, Victoria. Described by Lt Col Gratton in 1969 as "the eyes and ears" of the Unit, the Liaison Officers' (LOs) responsibility was to be out in villages every day talking and listening to the civilian population, assessing where projects might be warranted, preparing feasibility studies, and generally developing close contacts at village level. Working with only their drivers, LOs were widely known and accepted by local Vietnamese. LOs spent almost their entire time, including at one point up three nights a week, in local villages. Apart from watching for opportunities for civic action projects, LOs would also typically deliver mail from VC prisoners of war incarcerated around the country to the prisoners' families in Phuoc Tuy, and collect mail and gifts from the families for conveying back through the system to the prisoners. LOs gave Vietnamese language presentations to former Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) who defected to the south under the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) Program (defectors were known as "Hoi Chanh"), and delivered solatium payments (compensation to civilians for non-battle injuries to people or animals, damage to property). On regular occasions, when visitors to the Task Force required an Australian interpreter, LOs were tasked. For example, politicians and journalists visiting from Australia often preferred Australian interpreters to both guide them around the province and do their interpreting at the same time.

The *Agricultural Detachment* advised on, and delivered supplies for, projects such as rice, sorghum and other crop growing. This Detachment also had responsibility for animal husbandry projects when these developed from about 1969 onwards. A typical project would be to supply the wherewithal including animals for local civilians to start their own chicken or pig farms.<sup>2</sup>

The *Vung Tau Section* was established with one officer, a small support staff, a driver and an interpreter. Its modus operandum was to use contract labour.

### **Principles of Military Civic Action**

The principles of military civic action were calculated to achieve maximum impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind that the primary aim of civic action was to win the support of the local population for the Saigon regime:

- a. The local population had to “own” the project. If they felt a sense of ownership, and the project was subsequently damaged or destroyed by the VC, then the outcome would be antagonism toward the VC. Ownership involved features like encouraging the local population to suggest or otherwise originate projects, and to actively their labour during the construction phase.
- b. Projects had to be completed as quickly as possible, for maximum impact.
- c. Projects were initiated in the name of the appropriate ministry, eg Education, Health.
- d. Desirably, projects lent to be themselves to publicity.
- e. Project results had to be observable, measurable and tangible, and ideally impact beneficially on as many people as possible, and
- f. Wherever possible, credit was always given to the South Vietnam Government.

### **Enemy Contact**

While civic action projects saw 1ACAU personnel out in villages every day and many nights, hostile action against civic action projects were rare<sup>3</sup>. Even so, there were incidents.

In January 1968, a 1ACAU MEDCAP team was ambushed near Hoi My village, wounding one Australian and three south Vietnamese soldiers. A village child was fatally wounded. Sniper incidents against vehicles occurred from time to time, as did “pot shots” at unit members installing windmill vanes. On Long Son island, the VC destroyed the water reticulation system just days after the system came into operation, but this type of incident was the exception and not the rule. Except for the Hoi My incident, none of these resulted in casualties.

In 1990, during interviews with a number of former senior NVA and VC officers, I asked the then Chairman of the Peoples’ Committee in Vung Tau (equivalent to Mayor), Mr Nguyen Van Kiem, why the NVA/VC did not target 1ACAU unit members and projects when such targeting would not have been difficult. Mr Nguyen, who had been the deputy commander of D445 battalion at the battle of Long Tan, replied that from his side’s viewpoint, the projects were helping the local population, they were public works not harming his side, and they were not influencing the people in any way; so his side left them alone, and in any case, his unit was an (NVA) ‘soldiers’ unit and civic action was something to be handled by local (VC) forces.

### **Policy changes**

Towards the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, the emphasis on pacification increased throughout South Vietnam, including the volume of civic action projects being carried out by Australian forces.<sup>4</sup> By this time, the CO of 1ACAU was responsible for co-ordination of all military civic action by Australian forces, including Vung Tau and Phan Rang (where the RAAF had units) and Saigon. In practice the various CO’s overall spent little time outside Nui Dat except for regular visits to Saigon to brief HQ AFV. The major focus of civic action efforts by Australian troops was in Phuoc Tuy. Towards the end of the Task Force’s time at Nui Dat, every individual unit in the Task Force was at one stage directed to put resources onto civic action projects, and they did. 5RAR, for example, built a two-room school in Ong Trinh Hamlet, alongside Route 15 between Baria and Bien Hoa.

## **Wind-down period**

In February 1971, when the Australian Army had over four years' experience in the conduct of civic action, 1ACAU CO Lieutenant Colonel K.P. Outridge wrote his end-of-posting report, observing that while there were numerous examples of successful civic action projects, there were also failures, with consequent lessons to be learned:

“The most apparent danger in the Military Civic Action field is a too aggressive Australian involvement in Vietnamese affairs. There is a tendency for Australians, being certain of their own ‘excellence’, to exercise an aggressive policemen’ship and push Australian type ‘solutions’ to correct a Vietnamese ‘muddle’. Australians generally are inclined to ignore the environment from both the cultural and economic point of view. Neither cultural change nor improvement in economic environment can be achieved in the short term; this aspect is particularly important when one considers the uncertainty of duration of Military Civic Action involvement in an area.”

Examples of failings were:

- apathy by local administration officials towards projects.
- 1ATF generosity in school maintenance had led to local Parents and Citizens committees’ disinterest towards their own involvement in school maintenance. This was a classic example of an outcome if the local population was not sufficiently involved in projects.
- past over-involvement by Australia in medical aid projects, which did not lead to encouraging Vietnamese self-reliance. (When this was recognised, a program of progressive Australian withdrawal had been implemented to increase Vietnamese self-reliance with tangible, positive results), and
- Lack of training on project maintenance, leading again to over-reliance on Australian personnel and to mechanical breakdowns, e.g., windmills.

Outridge identified a number of solutions:

- local officials had to have major involvement in identifying and approving projects within local administrative systems,
- related to the above point, a means needed to be found to get local officials to take a leading role in project design, contract letting and supervision of contractors,
- provision of local funds for projects as an indication of the depth of local interest,
- all requests for projects to be handled through the normal province administrative system; concurrence at province level by itself was insufficient,
- delays in deciding whether to adopt projects were acceptable as they provided the opportunity to gauge the depth of local interest, and
- once a project had been accepted, there should be no procrastination in its execution.

The common thread of many of Outridge’s conclusions was that the natural enthusiasm of Australian personnel to help a group less fortunate than themselves had resulted in over-reliance by the Vietnamese on Australian support and action, an over-reliance characterised variously by apathy, inaction, sometimes greed and an inability to maintain mechanical items.

## **Effectiveness of Civic Action**

The key question in regard to civic action is how effective was it in achieving its goals of winning the support of the local population for the Saigon regime, and winning good will towards Australia. Vietnamese villagers obviously had to decide how to demonstrate political loyalties from the perspective of their circumstances, which might typically be a mixture of the following and which might differ between villages:

- historical loyalties: e.g., to the Viet Minh, and whether these carried through to this conflict,
- traditional approach and loyalties of their village: for example, Hoa Long village was regarded as being pro Viet Cong,
- may have had close, even direct family links with the VC, the ARVN or both,
- trying to make a living, and to raise and educate children,



- trying to keep their family safe from the war surrounding them, particularly when the security situation in many villages saw a strong ARVN/US/Australian presence during the day but not the same degree of security at night,
- powerless to have any real impact on political or military events, and
- aware that the local administration, both civilian and military, was corrupt and inefficient and not able to provide protection.

Other influencing factors were the Phoenix program (targeted assassination of members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure) which at times destroyed goodwill as did aspects of the solatium practices which were not always well received. In these circumstances, and recognising Outridge's conclusions referred to above, one could not conclude that civic action by Australian forces by itself caused any change in popular support for either local ARVN forces or the Saigon political regime. Former unit CO Peter Gration believed from the outset that in the environment the Australian Army found itself operating in, the primary goal of winning support for the ARVN and local and Saigon governments was incapable of achievement.

In terms of the secondary goal of achieving good will towards Australia, it would be safe to conclude that this was achieved although civic action may not have been the sole contributing factor here. In 1968, former Civil Affairs Commanding Officer John McDonagh noted that the policy of restricting recreational access by Australian troops to local villages, and the good standards of behaviour shown by those troops who did enter villages was a contributing factor to attitudes towards Australia. Positive reactions to Australian personnel during the period of 1 ATF's presence in Phuoc Tuy attest to the popularity and genuine good regard in which Australians were held.

#### **Notes:**

1. *The term "civil affairs" can be thought of as being armed forces involved in the running of civil administration. This relationship may vary from liaison, advice and assistance to the local civil government to the exercise of complete legislative, executive and judicial power by the armed forces.*  
*The term "civic action", in the military context, means to utilise armed forces' resources for constructive civilian activities such as assisting in health, welfare, and public works projects, improving living conditions, alleviating suffering and improving the economic base of the country. In addition, the program seeks to gain the support, loyalty and respect of the people for the armed forces and to emphasise the concept of freedom and worth of the individual.*  
To summarise this: note 1 in plain English, IACAU was probably mis-named. Its major function was civic action, not civil affairs.
2. *One aspect of Australia's National Service scheme was that it provided the army with knowledge and expertise the Army might not otherwise have had. The Agricultural Section is a good example.*
3. *Unit members were vulnerable to enemy action should the VC have wanted. Many unit members spent time alone in villages, for example, delivering English language lessons in schools; dropped off in the morning and collected a few hours later. IACAU vehicles travelled routes daily by themselves with just a driver and one other.*
4. *After the Tet offensive in February 1968 disproved the US policy of attrition in Vietnam, US policy back in Washington changed from attrition to pacification – getting the local population onside and thus not supporting the NVA/VC. The US commander in Vietnam, General Westmoreland, did not accept this change, preferring to stick to his belief in attrition. This was a core reason Westmoreland was replaced in SVN in 1968.*

#### **Other:**

1. OTU graduates who served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Civil Affairs Unit:  
HANNAM, Robert James (1/70)  
LOGAN, Brian Russell (1/68) **Note:** Brian LOGAN is shown on the Department of Veterans Affairs nominal roll as being posted to HQ AFV (Army Comp). In fact, he served with IACAU.  
SEYMOUR, Jeffree Silvester (1/66), SMITH, Barry Langham (2/65), WATT, Bryan George (1/67)

2. An excellent website on Australia's involvement in South Vietnam is at: [Australia's Vietnam War | Explore. Analyse. Share. \(adfa.edu.au\)](http://Australia's Vietnam War | Explore. Analyse. Share. (adfa.edu.au)) This site can be slightly complicated to navigate, but persevere and it has an enormous amount of information on it.
3. Comments welcome, to Barry Smith e-mail: [smith2614@iprimus.com.au](mailto:smith2614@iprimus.com.au)



Barry Smith –  
then, and –  
now – hasn't  
changed a bit  
(he said!)

## Fly Aeroplanes:

### Aviation Flying Hours – Use it or Lose It (Peter MacMillan, 3/68)

I found the attached photos, taken in 1978, when going through a box of 'stuff' recently. I had discharged from the Army at the end of my two years, having been one of the lucky ones from Class 3/68 to be allowed to undertake the Advanced Flying Training Course and fly with the Army for the rest of my time. There was no aviation reserve in those days, but every June, there was a mad scramble to use up the flying hours allocated in the budget in case it was decreased the following year. The then OC at Oakey (Graham Hill-Smith) asked me if I could arrange some leave from Ansett and spend a month flying in the Army. Ansett gave me 2 weeks Annual Leave and 2 weeks Military Leave. Barry Bawden (2/68) organised two Pilatus Porter aircraft and we flew to Darwin but, on the way, flew through Kakadu - fantastic sight-seeing! I flew a Major from 7th Military District to inspect a road down near Roper Bar



and that was the only real work that I did! We then flew back to Oakey via The Rock. It was great fun!

Left: Atop 'The Rock' Gerwyn Evans, Peter MacMillan (3/68) and Barry Bawden (2/68).

## A Correction

In the article on Aviation in Edition 1 of 2020, Peter MacMillan's comments drew a response from a couple of classmates. Peter stated that there were eight Commercial Pilots in Class 3/68. There were actually only seven as Kym Ninnes was an Air Cadet who had already qualified on BFTS at Pt Cook but did not fly commercially. In early January 1969 five Class 3/68 graduates arrived at Amberley where they were to be assessed to see if they would meet BFTS standard. During their time of assessment, the five would fly for an hour or so with a number of instructors. After the test flights were completed, the five were advised that they had all been found to have met BFTS standard. 1 Aviation Regiment stated that there were only two places available on the course. Lambert and MacMillan were selected for that course. Rees, Hoy and McAvoy were advised if they chose to 'sign on' they would be on a subsequent course. The three were advised the 'sign on' would be for five years, and if they didn't 'sign on' they would be removed forthwith from 1 Aviation Regiment. The three left forthwith!

In early February, the three were posted out. Jim McAvoy went to the School of Artillery. No doubt due to his being awarded the Minor Tactics Prize at graduation, Jim soon found himself at Tactics Wing at Canungra. Jim would later say: 'Needless to say I was way out of my depth, so I was re-deployed to Battle Wing, running up and down Heartbreak Hill for the remainder of my punishment.'

### **Removed from a Course (Kym Ninnes, 3/68)**

In hearing about these comments, Kym Ninnes decided that he would add to the Class 3/68 Aviation story and write about his demise from flying training. He said: 'For those 3/68 Aviation Cadets who were wondering about my departure from the Corps here is the tale. Having previously passed Basic Flying Training with the RAAF I was posted directly to Amberley where I commenced fixed wing training (Advanced Flying Training Course). After graduating from Cessna 180s I moved onto the Pilatus Porter. Around June I got sprung trying to manipulate the mess outside telephone line. This was a fairly common practice and had been going on for a few weeks.

The RAAF Service Police walked in while I was trying to get an outside line and reported me to the OC Major Laurie Doyle DFC an Artillery Officer. He was not impressed and sacked me on the spot. In my flying log-book he wrote "suspended from flying duties due to lack of officer qualities and irresponsibility". I waited around for about a month and then the day after the moon landing, I was sent to Northern Command Personnel Depot. After various bits of being messed around I ended up in the RAAC.

At the end of 1973 I applied to convert my Short Service Commission to a Permanent Commission. There were 104 applications and because the VietNam war had ended only four applicants were successful. I was one. I think this was a belated acknowledgment that I had been unfairly shafted back in the day. The Armoured Corp proved a good home for me, and I enjoyed a 20-year career with them.'

Every Graduate 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant living an about \$30 a week can feel for the boys at Amberley!



Above: The 1969 AAAvn Regt Ball Greg Lambert, Kym Ninnes, Peter MacMillan, Lyn Herron and ladies.

### **WHAT SCHEYVILLIANS DO:**

#### **Support The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne and the R&SL (Ray Andrews, 1/70)**

For many years Peter Whitelaw (3/66) has been a 'Life Governor' at The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. He has also been an active member of the Victorian Branch of the R&SL. He was recently awarded a "Life Membership with Gold Badge" for his service to veterans.

Peter has also been appointed a member of the R&SL Victoria State Branch Tribunal. This is a quasi-legal body that resolves disputes within the State Branch. Commodore Jack Rush RFD QC is Chair. Jack enlisted in the Navy Legal Reserve in 1982. The Reserve Force Decoration (RFD) is awarded for 15 years of service as a Reserve officer.

#### **Write Articles (Alistair Pope, 4/66)**

Many Scheyvillians have written books and articles for many organisations. One of the most prolific writers is Alistair Pope. Alistair has many articles published in Quadrant (<https://quadrant.org.au>) During an email exchange Alistair forwarded his Army story!



In 1965 Australia introduced selective conscription to raise the Army numbers from 28,000 to 45,000 mainly because of the requirement to fill the ranks of units to be sent to the war in Viet Nam.



I was not balloted for National Service in 1965 when I turned twenty, but as I had had my fill of accounting, I volunteered for the 2-Years and signed up on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1966. The first battle was fought getting to the aircraft in Perth as the far left-wing “Save Our Sons” {SOS} women violently tried to stop us boarding in the name of Peace & Goodwill. The paradox of violence for peace was lost on them as they had a socialist political agenda and really did not actually care anything about us. (Left: 14 July 1966, Puckapunyal. Alistair - an all-round happy chappy sort of guy! Lock up your daughters!)

We arrived at Mangalore Airport in Victoria at about 04.00am and were bussed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Recruit Training Battalion at Puckapunyal. It was dark and freezing, but after a solid breakfast the day began, though most of us had not slept on the plane!

I was only at Puckapunyal for 18-days when my application for Officer Training was approved and I was given an hour to pack and be ready for transfer to the “1<sup>st</sup> Officer Training Unit” (OTU), Scheyville, near Windsor on the outskirts of Sydney in NSW. Although I was barely at 2RTB, Puckapunyal for Recruit Training, I should mention two exceptional ‘drillies’ (Drill Instructors), Corporal Noel William Catheray (B 28 Apr 1940), RAEME (Vietnam 102 Fd Wksp, 6 May 67 – 6 Feb 68) & Corporal Heinz Grabowski (B 4 Aug 1934), RAInf (Vietnam 2 RAR, 19 May 67 – 14 May 68). Both were exemplary examples of how the military can bring out the best in people. Neither appeared to ever sleep or rest as they would appear like ghosts by day or by night.

Catheray would come around and watch what we were doing, observe and offer advice, help when necessary and chastise as required. He would gather recruits around him and demonstrate the tricks of the trade in making webbing comfortable, secure and up to standard. He always managed to inject some humour, yet he never left any doubt of the chasm between his position and ours. He was a Leader, writ large and we all respected him.

Grabowski was also respected – and feared – as he had the aura of an invincible Achilles. He had served on the Eastern Front in WW2 (as an underage youth), in the French Foreign Legion in Vietnam and Algeria and now in the Australian Army. He was held in awe. When asked, he would tell us tales of his ‘adventures’ in his multiple wars. Within ten days of meeting these warrior gods I knew that no matter what the future held, I would never return to accounting.

OTU Scheyville: 2 August 1966 – 31 March 1967: I had joined the Army in the sixth National Service intake so became part of Class 3/66, the sixth officer training class. Scheyville had been founded by a brilliant officer, Colonel Ian Geddes. For everyone who ‘shared the experience’ Scheyville was a truly life-changing event for all who passed through its gates. OTU Scheyville is probably the only training establishment to inspire a book on its methods and people.

From the moment the bus arrived at Scheyville the pressure was on. The RSM, Larry ‘The Bat’ Moon looked at me and boomed “Hurry up, Officer Cadet Pope! We haven’t got all day!” We had never met, yet he knew my name already! As part of the ‘get fit’ regime we were not allowed to walk anywhere: we either marched in double time, or we ran. Working hours were 06.00am Reveille – 10.00pm Lights Out seven days a week for the first month. It was brutal but exhilarating! After 6-weeks we were given our first leave and allowed to make a choice: stay or go. A couple of Cadets decided the endless pressure and constant stress was not for them and resigned from the course, a couple of others were not given a choice. I stayed, but I was pushing myself to the limit. Every day was a struggle, a relentless challenge - and I loved it! The Army had found me - and I had found my niche in life.”

Alistair went on to serve in Vietnam with HQ 5 Company RAASC from 3 December 1969 to 7 December 1970. He retired from the Army in the mid-1990s with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO:

During the COVID period, there has been a lot of contact between Scheyvillians of all classes and categories of membership. Some of those who have contacted, or been contacted, by the Editor, are:

**3791796 Wilson McOrist** was born in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick on 24 November 1945. He was a student at Melbourne University when 'Called Up' for National Service and deferred until he completed his Bachelor of Science Degree in 1966. Wilson started work as a Physicist with the Department of Supply. He began his Nasho at 2 RTB, Puckapunyal, on 12 July with the third intake in 1967. He commenced OTU with Class 3/67 on 28 July 1967, graduating on 21 December. Wilson was commissioned into the RASigs Corps and posted with Noel Brunker and Tom Jack to the School of Signals at Balcombe on the Mornington Peninsular on Port Phillip Bay. After completing his Signals Corps Training Wilson was posted to Watsonia Barracks where he conducted field training exercises. He discharged from the Army at the completion of his NS on 11 July 1969 and worked for two years as a Physicist with the PMG Research Laboratories at Russell Street, Melbourne.



He married a childhood sweetheart Suzanne, and they took the five-week sea voyage to England on the *SS Australis*. In London they purchased a beat-up old VW Kombi, travelled across parts of North Africa, returned to London and stayed there for two years, with Wilson working in a large Computer Service Bureau. They drove home, in another beat-up old VW Kombi, on the 'Hippie Trail' through Turkey Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

In 1979 they moved to Wangaratta in North-East Victoria to start their own Computer Service Bureau business, Wangaratta & District Computing Services which became Ram Computer Aid. In on the ground floor with early microcomputers they set up a network of Computer Service Bureaux around Australia, and then they took this concept to the USA. There they moved into franchising but returned home after three years, this time to Coffs Harbour, NSW and started a new enterprise *Express Bookkeeping*, a franchise network of computerised bookkeeping centres. Over 200 were set up before the business was sold.

In 1997, by now unemployed, but still in Coffs Harbour, Wilson & Suzanne saw a need in the small business market for decent IT support and they launched *Computer Troubleshooters*, with their first franchisee in Sydney. The network grew to over 500 technology service franchises in more than 20 countries, before the McOrist's sold the entire operation.

Wilson then completed a law degree at UNE, Armidale, NSW, as a 'hobby', and kayaked the 2,500 kms of the Murray River with a friend, for 'fun'. He then self-published a tongue-in-cheek account of their trials and tribulations, titled *The Scruffy Martyr and the Resplendent Gentleman*, available via Amazon.

Wilson also spent eight years researching in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Antarctica for a book entitled *Shackleton's Heroes*. His interest in Antarctica and Sir Ernest Shackleton began when he was a young boy. He read of Shackleton's boat journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia and has been fascinated by the exploits of old-time explorers ever since. Some people love to read Harry Potter or cooking books, but Wilson loves to read about Shackleton and Scott in the Antarctic, Peary in the Arctic, Burton and Speke in Africa, Thesiger in the Empty Quarter, and Australian explorers like Grey traipsing down the western coastline of Australia in the mid-1800s.

*Shackleton's Heroes* was published in the UK and in Australia in 2015. It is a compilation of the diaries of six men who became known as the "Mount Hope Party". These men were a vital part of Sir Ernest

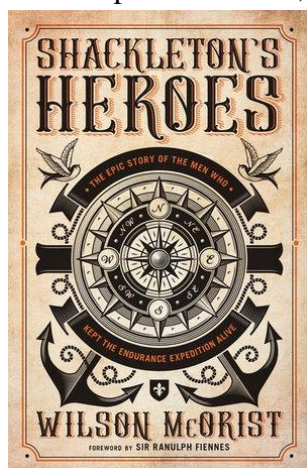
Shackleton's attempt to cross Antarctica in 1914-1917 in the British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. The challenge was quite simple. Shackleton, the famous polar explorer, dreamed of crossing the Antarctic continent via the South Pole to the Ross Sea. In his ship the *Endurance* his expedition left London bound for the Weddell Sea in August 1914, just as World War One broke out. Shackleton knew that the party would not be able to carry enough fuel and supplies to make the crossing, so he arranged for a second party in a ship the *Aurora* to leave London bound for the Ross Sea. Their mission was to lay a series of supply depots across the Great Ice Barrier from the Ross Sea to Mount Hope by the Beardmore Glacier. These depots would supply Shackleton for the final part of the journey across the continent.

There were two major setbacks for the support party soon after their arrival in the Antarctic. Firstly, all but five of their sledging dogs died, and then their ship was torn from its moorings in a blizzard and carried out to sea. She did not return for 18 months. It was intended for the ship to be their main living quarters, so most of the shore party's personal gear, food, equipment, and fuel was still aboard. However, six men, five British and one Australian, formed what became known as the Mount Hope Party, and in spite of severe difficulties, the men completed their given task. Across 360 miles of the Great Ice Barrier all the depots were put in place. Then these six men had to return to safety, and to quote Shackleton: "no more remarkable story of human endeavour has been revealed than the tale of that long march."

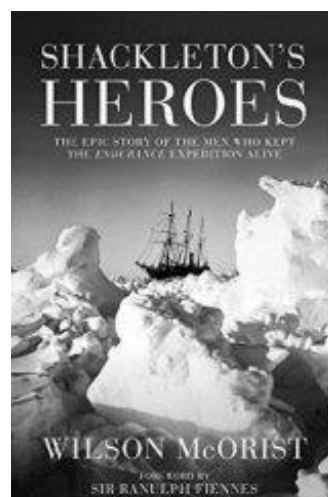
With 330 miles to travel one man collapsed and was unable to walk. He was strapped onto a sledge. Then a second man started to falter, with scurvy. Within 10 miles from a food depot, a fierce blizzard halted their progress, and they ran out of food, and fuel to even melt snow for a drink. They knew they were ominously close to where Scott, Wilson and Bowers had died on the Great Ice Barrier a few years earlier. But three men left the others and reached a food depot, and then they went back and rescued the men left behind. Then another man collapsed, with scurvy. He was left behind in a tent. Within just 20 miles of safety the man on the sledge died. They others reached a hut where seals were killed for food and fuel, and within a few days they went back out and rescued their lone companion. At the hut they all slowly recovered, but two men made a rash decision and attempted to walk over newly formed sea ice to another hut. Heartbreakingly, all the efforts of these six men, in laying down the depots, were in vain. Shackleton never crossed the continent. The depots were never needed.

Wilson McOrist tracked down the diaries of every member of the party. Using those diaries he has compiled a fascinating account of this expedition, and it is good that he has done so because inevitably the Mount Hope Party's efforts have been overshadowed by the story of Shackleton himself and the loss of the *Endurance*, crushed and destroyed in the ice. He led his men in an epic escape to South Georgia in small boats. It is one of the great adventure stories of the British Empire. Shackleton's dream was not realised until 1957 when a British Commonwealth Party finally made the crossing.

Over the last few years Wilson has been working on three more books. *White-Fella Black-Fella*, an historical account of the interaction between the early Australian explorers and Aborigines. It is due for publication in late 2021. *The Boy from Long Gully*, which is a historical narrative on Richard Richards, the lone Australian in Shackleton's Mount Hope Party. It is also due for publication in late 2021. Then there is *Golf: How to get better with Age*. This is a personal account of how Wilson reduced his golf handicap from 15 to 5, after he turned 65. He is searching everywhere for a publisher.



*Shackleton's Heroes* originally came out in hardback, with a paperback version in 2017. Both versions are available from [Booktopia.com.au](http://Booktopia.com.au) at \$34.95 (hard) or \$21.80 (paperback).





### **Gregory Lindsay (4/67) MC (7 RAR Website plus other sources)**

Gregg Lindsay was born in Palmeston Nth, New Zealand, on 12 June 1947 and completed his secondary education at the Brisbane Boys College. Before being called up on 4 October 1967 for National Service, he was employed as a Clerk in the Reserve Bank. He commenced with Class 4/67 on 27 October, graduating on 11 April 1968. He was allocated to the Infantry Corps and posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Pacific Island Regiment at Wewak in Papua New Guinea. After postings in 1969 to The Infantry Centre and an attachment to JTC Canungra, Gregg was transferred to 7 RAR on 7 May. Gregg served with 7 RAR in Vietnam from 18 February 1970 until 4 March 1971.

Gregg Lindsay was awarded the Military Cross for his service in Vietnam. His Citation states: In many contacts during 1970 2Lt Lindsay and his platoon inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy and Lindsay became known throughout his battalion for dash and courage. On two separate occasions he led a group of his platoon directly into an enemy position causing the enemy to withdraw leaving behind a number of casualties. On another occasion during an ambush contact at night 2Lt Lindsay's platoon was fired on by a second group of enemy from a flank. With complete disregard for personal danger, he led four soldiers of his platoon in a 75-yard charge straight into the enemy. This action killed four enemy and wounded two others.

### **Michael Stanton (4/68)**

'I don't remember much about the various personnel that made up my intake. I was also unaware of the others in my class who did not graduate. Strangely enough, of the few names that I do remember, most were the DNGs. Perhaps there was some subconscious connection with the others that, like myself, knew well before the end of the course that we would not make it. I guess it was a matter of personal pride that we were determined to hang on until we were told to leave rather than dropping out earlier on.



After National Service I returned to a career at sea, as did Jim Benton. Where Jim became a part-time seafarer and a full-time farmer, I was a part-time farmer and a full-time seafarer. Now we are both full-time farmers. I'm only in a small way compared to Jim but to me it has been the second-best thing to do in life, next to going to sea. So, that's "what happened to" me. Life worked out pretty well and I'm still enjoying it, despite the pandemic and the ups and downs of trying to make a buck on cattle!'

Postscript: Post-OTU, Mike served with 35 Water Transport Squadron as a Sapper/Seaman.

### **(A SELECTION OF) EMAILS TO THE EDITOR**

**From:** Ross McMurray 32 SSS-A **Date:** 24 February 2021 **Subject:** The Scheyvillian 3 of 2020  
Rod (Hatcher, 1/65) has forwarded the article about 32 (Small Ships Squadron) in your newsletter. Do you mind if I edit it a bit? I would like to delete the first few paragraphs about the history of 32 if that's OK. We know it pretty well by now. I'll include your acknowledgement, and perhaps also include the front cover. It's quite good. The whole magazine is a good read. Well done! (Permission was granted!)

**From:** Allen Callaghan NSAA Media Officer **Date:** 14 & 15 January 2021: **Subject:** The Scheyvillian  
As one versed in writing, editing and publishing assorted printed productions may I praise The COVID Special of *The Scheyvillian*. I found it a great read - interesting, enlightening and historically fascinating. It is a great service that you have put the 32 Small Ship Squadron on record. Even Nashos tend to take Khaki or green uniforms and digging trenches for granted yet your Nashos were sailors, and I wore a kilt, Sporrán and Tam O'Shanter (which I still have) as a member of a Scottish Regiment. The Callaghans were a lesser-known Clan....

I also was greatly interested in the individual experiences of National Service. Being honest we sometimes wondered why we were there; what we were doing and what we took away from it.

I would say Pride. We didn't have the choice whether to serve, where we would serve or for how long and second Scheme Nashos could face death, but we were willing to give it the Australian Go. The other fascinating factor is the diversity of Scheyvillians – truly the long, the short and tall but all possessing that indefinable characteristic of leadership. In true Australian style it was “follow me” not “send me a postcard...” regards Allen

When I was called up, I had my medical in Murwillumbah where I was a Cadet Jjournalist on the Daily News. The Doctor said to me: “You’ve got flat feet, Son. I can wash you out if you wish”. I thought about it for a few seconds and said: “It’s OK, I’ll give it a go”. There were times in Wacol when I wondered at my decision but our Instructors (most of them were Korean Vets) said to us: “You might think we’re putting you through the mill for the fun of it but we’re trying to ensure that if you ever have to face up to an enemy, you’ll have a fighting chance”. As you have detailed, that became a reality for many second era Nashos in Borneo and Vietnam.

In my own case, as the ABC’s Television commentator on ANZAC Day I can say, if challenged, that my Dad did 6 years in the Army in WWII; all three of my Mother’s brothers served in the Army in WWII; my Brother rose to Warrant Officer in the Navy (including the supply run to Vietnam) and I did my time in uniform as a Nasho. Your members served in a very diverse range of units and I would put to you there would be great interest in their experiences. As an example, I came across the Teachers who became instructors to the Pacific Island Regiment in PNG.... regards Allen

**From:** Frank LeFaucheur (1/71) **Date:** 14 March 2021: **Subject:** ANZAC Day

I will actually be at Karratha RSL on ANZAC Day! I was on the original surveys for the Karratha townsite back in 1969 and want to have a look at the changes! Will send photos, if worthwhile - David Ward (2/66), as always, is coordinating our ANZAC Day March.

**From:** Geoff Davis, (3/70) **Date:** 18 Jan 2021: **Subject:** Website Picture Gallery

Good Afternoon Everyone, I have been advised that the Editor has uploaded the latest group of photos kindly provided by Bruce Clisdell to the OTU Association website. There about 70 or so ‘new’ photos that most of us wouldn’t have seen before, so they are worth a look. They are integrated within the existing 3/70 photo data base that has Bruce’s original photos, plus many taken by Steve Merralls and my late father.

Go to the Association website [Sign in to OTU Website | OTU Scheyville](#) and put in your name and Regimental Number as log in details. Then go to “photo Gallery” under “The Association”. I am sure you will enjoy viewing them.

**SPECIAL REQUEST EMAIL from The Scheyvillian 3 of 2020 No responses yet!**

**From:** Bruce Clisdell (3/70) **Date:** 12 September 2020: **Subject:** Photo Album

**If anyone knows the whereabouts of Bruce’s photo album, please contact him on 0428 673 252.**

**Q STORE (Order through the Website) All prices include Packaging & Handling**

**40<sup>th</sup> Reunion Badge (46):** \$5

**40<sup>th</sup> Reunion**

**OTU Lapel Badges (49):** \$9

**1993 OTU Reunion VHS Tape (1):** \$15

**2003 Reunion DVD (6):** \$15

**The Scheyville Experience DVD (3):** \$15

**The Scheyville Experience VHS (1):** \$15

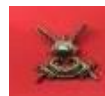
**OTU Ties (12):** \$35

**Window Stickers (78):** \$4

**National Service Officer Recruit Training Film on DVD (3):** \$15

**The OTU Scheyville 1965-73 Pictorial Book 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (1):** \$59

**The OTU Scheyville 1965-73 Pictorial Book 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - with some changes (49):** \$80





# OTU ASSOCIATION

## 2020/21 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Website: [www.otu.asn.au](http://www.otu.asn.au)

<b>INVOICE</b> ABN 26 390 124 006		<b>Please return by 31 December 2021</b> Cheques payable to OTU Association	
MAIL TO: Treasurer OTU Association PO Box 672 BALWYN VIC 3103  CONTACT: 0425 729 769 hjmoyle@gmail.com		<b>Annual Subscription</b> July 2020 to June 2021 <b>Donation to Youth Leadership Development</b> Total Cheque/Cash Enclosed <i>(For Direct Debit payment see below and please remember to update our database or return this form so that your contact details can be confirmed)</i>	
		<b>\$50.00</b> \$_____ \$_____	

<b>MEMBERSHIP DETAILS UPDATE</b>			
<b>Personal Details:</b>		<b>I Have Retired Yes / No</b>	
Title/Rank:		<b>Work Details (If Applicable):</b>	
First Names:		Position:	
Last Name:		Organisation:	
Wife/Partner:		Industry:	
Address:		Address:	
Town/Suburb:		Town/Suburb:	Postcode:
State:	Postcode:	Work Phone:	
Home Phone:		Work Fax:	
Personal Mobile:		Work Mobile:	
Personal Email:		Work Email:	
Personal Web Address:		Work Website:	
Class:		Any Comments:	
Corps:			
Regimental No:			
Awards:			
I am a new member: <input type="checkbox"/> I am a continuing member: <input type="checkbox"/>		I am no longer interested. Please delete me from the database: <input type="checkbox"/>	
		<i>(Please Indicate)</i>	
For Office Use:		You will need to know the following information to pay your Membership using Direct Debit: <b>Bank</b> – National, <b>BSB</b> – 083 298, <b>Account No.</b> 56-687-0611, <b>Reference</b> – Surname and/or Regt No.	

### Membership Drive

Please list details below of those who shared the Scheyville experience who you think **may not be current members** of the OTU Association. We will check against current membership lists and follow up non-members.

	NAME	CLASS	ADDRESS	EMAIL	PHONE NO
1					
2					
3					



## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES & CONTACTS:

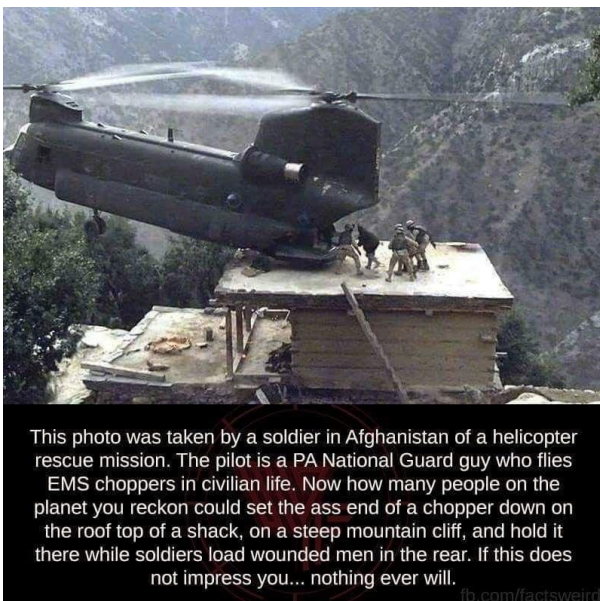
- Queensland:** Geoff Daly (4/69) 0403 171 478 [seagull@bigpond.com](mailto:seagull@bigpond.com)  
**Monthly Luncheons: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month**
- NSW:** Gary McKay (2/68) 0411 574 019 [garymckay@bigpond.com](mailto:garymckay@bigpond.com)  
**Monthly Luncheons 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month**
- ACT:** Les Boag (4/68) 0418 210 348 [les@boag.biz](mailto:les@boag.biz)  
Monthly Lunches Bruce Selleck (2/70) 0407 163 108 [bselleck@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bselleck@bigpond.net.au)
- SA:** Gary Vial (3/69) 0414 762 525 [garyvial@ctmc.com.au](mailto:garyvial@ctmc.com.au)  
**Advised through SA Contact List**
- Tasmania:** Dennis Townsend (2/70) 0419 313 855 [det47@y7mail.com](mailto:det47@y7mail.com)  
Ray Williams (2/71) 0447 006 034 [adaptbm@bigpond.net.au](mailto:adaptbm@bigpond.net.au)  
**Quarterly lunches advertised by email**
- Victoria:** Frank Miller 0401 140 762 [millerfw@netspace.net.au](mailto:millerfw@netspace.net.au)  
Bernie Gleeson 0414 702 905 [berjulgleeson@bigpond.com](mailto:berjulgleeson@bigpond.com)  
**Monthly Lunches, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday**  
Brian Cooper 0418 373 874 [bctcooper@gmail.com](mailto:bctcooper@gmail.com)
- WA:** David Ward (2/66) WA Chapter Chairman/Hon Treas 0417 927 146 [david.ward@taxhut.com.au](mailto:david.ward@taxhut.com.au)  
Frank LeFaucheur (1/71) Lunch Co-ordinator 08 9246 2666 [lefauche@iinet.net.au](mailto:lefauche@iinet.net.au)  
Jay McDaniell (3/69): 0438 959 050 [mcdaniell@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mcdaniell@ozemail.com.au)

**Quarterly lunches** on the first Friday of the month of February, May, August and November at The Sorrento, 158 James Street, Northbridge. Parade time is 1300 hr. Warning-in is required with bookings to be confirmed CoB on the Wednesday before via email to Frank LeFaucheur.

### The Back Pages:

Left: For Medics and Aviators! From Paul Burza (3/69)

Right: RMC Cadets in greens with SLRs.





Below: Colin Lindsay and 2/67 Classmate Lindsay Clay with Neil Leckie (3/68) at The Golfhouse Hotel in Ballarat on 8 October 2020. Right: Dick Flint receives the AM



Left: On 17 December 1917, David Payne receives his OTU Certificate, while Ian Gossip waits on the steps below.

Below: 2Lt David Paterson who will be honoured during the AWM 'Last Post' Ceremony on 5 June 2021.



Left: Peter Whitelaw (3/66) who was honoured by the RSL with a 'Life Membership with Gold Badge'

Below: Class 3/67 Graduation Parade from "Army – The Soldier's Newspaper". McOrist 3<sup>rd</sup> from front.

