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173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

Representing the 1RAR Group 1965-66

THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE CHAPTER'S MAGAZINE

SITREP



July - August - September 2015



THE HON DARREN CHESTER MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation awarded to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment



Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who served with the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) in Vietnam 50 years ago have been recognised with the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (CGWP).

The Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd) has formally approved the awarding of the Citation in recognition of the military assistance provided to the former Republic of Vietnam while under the operational command of the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Darren Chester welcomed the decision.

"I am delighted to confirm that the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation will be awarded to members of 1 RAR," Mr Chester said.

"This decision follows a three year review by the Defence Honours and Awards Appeal Tribunal who determined that the awarding of the Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation was intended not only for the 173rd Airborne Brigade, but also the Australian forces who operated under their command."

"This award finally acknowledges those Australian soldiers and recognises the important contribution they made 50 years ago."

In May 1965, the Australian Government agreed to provide military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. Initially, 1 RAR was restricted to operating in the Bien Hoa tactical area of responsibility (TAOR). When the 173rd Airborne Brigade deployed to operate away from Bien Hoa, 1 RAR was left to conduct operations within the Bien Hoa TAOR and to provide defence for the air base. However, on 30 September 1965 the Australian Prime Minister agreed to lift the restrictions on the deployment of 1 RAR. For the remainder of their tour of duty in Vietnam, the members of 1 RAR served alongside the other units of 173rd Airborne Brigade on every operation and became the third battalion of the Brigade.

1 RAR participated in seven operations with 173rd Airborne Brigade between 5 May 1965 and 31 May 1966 that were referred to in the citation that awarded the Republic of Vietnam CGWP to 173rd Airborne Brigade.

THANK YOU ALAN LARSEN

On behalf of all members of the 1RAR Group I wish to thank Chapter 23 member, Alan Larsen, for his outstanding effort in gaining approval to wear the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (CGWP).

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm unit Citation



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Background:

In May 1965, the Australian Government agreed to provide military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. In 1965 it was directed that 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) would deploy to the Republic of Vietnam and operate under control of the United States (US) Military Assistance Command, which in turn placed 1RAR under the operational command of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The Citation was originally awarded to the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade and its attached and assigned units in 1970 to recognise its outstanding service to the Republic of Vietnam during 1965 to 1970.

The role of 1RAR was to conduct search and destroy missions, patrolling and security operations. 1RAR participated in seven operations with 173rd Airborne Brigade between 5 May 1965 and 31 May 1966 that are referred to in the citation that awarded the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (the Citation) to 173rd Airborne Brigade.

What is the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm unit Citation?

Known as the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and Frame Unit Citation, the Citation was awarded by the former Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to specific military units that distinguished themselves to the same level as would be required for the individual award of the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

The Citation Emblem is in the colours of the Gallantry Cross with Palm and was issued with the Gallantry Cross ribbon bar with a bronze palm and gold frame.

Other Australian Units who have previously received this award are the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, 2 Squadron RAAF and 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

Why is 1 RAR being awarded the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation?

1RAR is eligible to be awarded the Citation as it was attached to the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade from 05 May 1965 to 31 May 1966, a period of service for which the Citation was awarded to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Why is the Unit Citation being awarded 50 years after

the deployment to Vietnam?

In 2011, Mr Alan Larsen, who previously served with 1RAR in Vietnam, lodged an application with the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (the Tribunal) seeking to have the Citation awarded to 1RAR and its attached units, for service in Vietnam between 5 May 1965 and 31 May 1966.

The Tribunal found that in awarding the Citation to the 173rd Airborne Brigade and its attached and assigned units, there was intent for the Citation to be awarded to 1RAR. The Tribunal recommended to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence that the award be accepted.

At the time of the awarding to 173rd Airborne Brigade, Australian policy governing acceptance and wearing of foreign awards, required the foreign government to make a formal offer to the Australian government. The Republic of Vietnam made a formal offer to the United States in 1970, however, no formal offer was made to the Australian Government for the Citation to be awarded to 1RAR and its attached units as a subordinate unit of 173rd Airborne Brigade.

The 1997 guidelines governing the acceptance and wearing of foreign awards allows the Governor-General to grant permission for the formal acceptance and wearing of foreign awards by Australians in extraordinary or unusual circumstances. As the Government of the Republic of Vietnam no longer exists, the Parliamentary Secretary considered these circumstances fell within these guidelines. As such, the Parliamentary Secretary wrote to the Governor-General recommending that he exercise his authority to accept the Citation. The Governor-General accepted.

Who is eligible to be issued the Citation insignia?

To be eligible to be issued the insignia of the Citation, individuals must have been posted to one of the units which comprised the 1RAR Battalion Group in Vietnam in 1965-] 66. Personnel who served in the 1RAR Battalion Group in Vietnam for the specific time periods (as set out in the table below) may apply to wear the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation insignia.

Units and Dates of service supporting 173rd Airborne Brigade

1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment
25 May 1965 to 31 May 1966

1st Armoured Personnel Carrier Troop RAAC
14 September 1965 to 31 March 1966

105th Field Battery, RAA
14 September 1965 to 31 March 1966

3rd Field Troop, RAE
14 September 1965 to 31 March 1966

161st Reconnaissance Flight, AA AVN
14 September 1965 to 31 March 1966

1st Australian Logistic Support Company
25 May 1965 to 31 March 1966 Battery Section,

4th Field Regiment Light Aid Detachment RAEME
14 September 1965 to 31 March 1966

Who can I contact to find out if I am eligible to be issued the insignia of the Citation?

With the assistance of the Department of Veteran's Affairs, Army Headquarters has established a nominal roll of members whose service records show they meet the eligibility criteria. Individuals wishing to find out if they are eligible are encouraged to contact Defence Honours and Awards on the toll-free inquiry line: 1800 111 321 (within Australia). This line is operated Monday to Thursday between the hours of 10.00am - 4.00pm (excluding public holidays).

How many members have been identified on the nominal roll as being eligible to receive the insignia of the Citation?

The original nominal roll contains a total of 1754 names from both Army and the Royal Australian Air Force.

Who do I contact if I think I am eligible but my name is not on the nominal roll?

Members who believe they are eligible and have confirmed through Defence Honours and Awards (1800 111 321) that they are not identified on the nominal roll should submit an application form to Defence Honours and Awards via their website at

<http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/Content/Applications.asp>

The application should include details of the applicant's service in Vietnam and the unit posted at the time of the deployment.

How do I apply to be issued the insignia of the Citation?

Members who believe they are eligible to be issued the insignia of the Citation will need to complete application form AE532 - Application for Defence Medals located on the Defence Honours and Awards website:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Content/Applications.aspu>

Applications can be submitted electronically through the website or by mail to:

Defence Honours and Awards
Republic of Vietnam Unit Citation - 1 RAR
CP2 - 1, Department of Defence
PO Box 7952
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Note: When completing the application form, please ensure you specifically identify the 'Republic of Vietnam Unit Citation for 1RAR' at Section H of the application form. This will ensure your application is processed correctly. Please be aware that if you select 'Full Medal Assessment' at Section H your application will take longer to process while the necessary investigation is undertaken.

Can the insignia of the Citation be worn immediately?

Yes. Once you have been appropriately issued the insignia of the Citation by Defence Honours and Awards you are able to wear the insignia.

Will there be a ceremony to present the Citation to 1RAR?

At this time Army Headquarters is liaising with 1RAR to determine a suitable means and occasion for presenting the Citation to the unit. The Army website will be updated as further information becomes available.

Who will be the custodian of the Citation and what does this mean?

As the historical link to the Vietnam era 1RAR, the current 1RAR will be the custodians of the Citation. A Citation Streamer in the Citation colours will be presented to 1RAR in due course and they will be eligible to parade the Streamer on their Colours.

Can the Citation insignia be worn in perpetuity by current members of 1RAR?

The Citation will not be worn in perpetuity by members subsequently posted to the present day 1RAR. This is in keeping with the practice exercised by 8/9 RAR as the custodians of the Citation awarded to the 8th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment during Vietnam.

Who do I call if I have an inquiry about eligibility or application for the Citation Insignia?

If you require information not contained in the FAQ please contact Defence Honours and Awards on the toll-free inquiry line: 1800 111 321 (within Australia).

How do I keep informed about what's happening:

Information about presentations and activities will be disseminated through the Veteranweb Network at:

raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au

APPLY NOW
AND
WEAR IT IN MELBOURNE

Invitation



The Vietnam Veterans Association of Victoria

Wishers to extend an invitation to all former members

of the 1RAR Group Vietnam 1965-66

To attend a special commemoration of the 50th Anniversary

of the Groups Deployment to South Vietnam.

The commemoration will be held at Melbourne's

Shrine of Remembrance

on

Tuesday 18th August 2015

RSVP to Ray Payne by 10th August

raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au

07 5524 7742

MELBOURNE COMMEMORATION

The VVAA Victoria is using Vietnam Veteran Day to Commemorate our 50th Anniversary ... as they are the only ones who have offered and our Government plans to celebrate next year as the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and ignore our anniversary we should support the Victorian VVAA.

For us it will be a one day reunion, we are not organising accommodation or making formal plans. Cheap airfares are available and its worth the effort.

Commemoration program

0930 - 1100 hrs **Gunfire Breakfast**

1030 - 1130hrs Marchers gather at Northern Forecourt.

1130hrs Marchers Form up at Northern Forecourt.

1200hrs March Step Off.

Official Commemoration Service.

1300hrs Formalities conclude.

1330hrs **Reunion 1RAR Group at 'The Duke'**

1RAR GROUP REUNION

Duke of Wellington Hotel (The Duke)

146 Flinders Street, Melbourne, (Corner of Flinders & Russell Streets)

Enquiries To:

Ray Payne OAM

raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au

Phone: 07 5524 7742

WARNING ORDER - CGWP PARADE

TOWNSVILLE - 23rd NOVEMBER 2015

I think we all expected that our 50th Anniversary year would have involved a special commemoration supported by the Government, RSL, Army etcetera, unfortunately if it wasn't for the VVAA in Victoria we would have gone without a commemoration at all. We will show our gratitude in Melbourne.

However, we have finally been granted the Republic of South Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (CGWP). While we receive the emblem 1RAR gets to attach a Streamer to the Colours. This will be done on the 23rd November during a Brigade Parade. On the parade 2 & 3 RAR will receive new Colours and the Streamer will be attached to 1RAR's Colours.

In September I will be flying to Townsville with the President of the 1RAR Association to meet with the CO 1RAR and LTGEN John Caligari AM, DSC. On my return I will have full details of the planned events. Please keep this period around the date clear as we have some ideas that will create some great memories.

A TRUISM

I was sitting on a bench next to a homeless man, I asked him how he ended up this way.

He said: Up until last week, I still had it all!

A cook, cooked my meals, my room was cleaned, my clothes were washed, pressed, I had a roof over my head, I had TV, internet, I went to the gym, the pool, the library, I could still go to school. ...

I asked him, "What happened? Drugs? Alcohol? Divorce?

Oh No, nothing like that he said. No, no ... I got out of prison.

I decided to change calling the bathroom the "John" and renamed it the "Jim". I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.

I'm not saying let's go kill all the stupid people. I'm just saying let's remove all the warning labels and let the problem work itself out.



CHAPTER 11

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Chapter Secretary - Neil Cromarty - neilcrom@iinet.net.au
Home 0249335958 or Mobile 0428680903
Chapter Treasurer - Rosina Cockerill - 0417 060 541



All Correspondence to Chapter XI- P O Box 585 RIVERSTONE NSW 2765

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

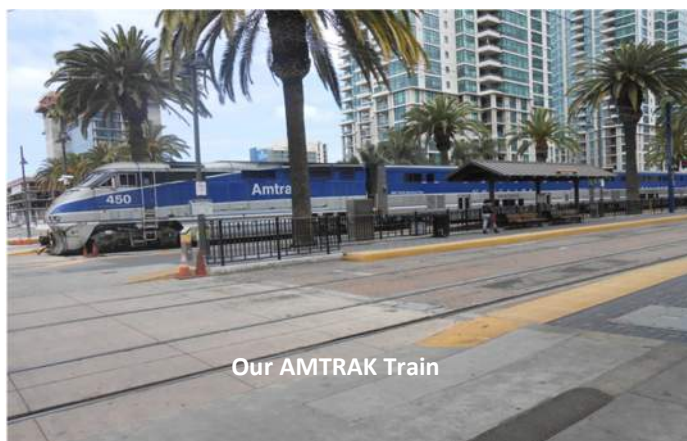
By Bob Cockerill

Since our last report about our away meeting at Lightning Ridge the chapter has been active in advertising for our 4th July Dinner at Penrith. It is not too late to register your attendance so come and join for a pleasant evening.

The annual reunion for the 173rd Airborne Brigade this year was held in San Diego, California. Neil Cromarty and myself attended the San Diego reunion to represent our chapter and more importantly the 1st Battalion Group and our wonderful country.

Neil and I met at Sydney Airport before flying out. This year our wives decided not to go. The flight with Qantas in a new 380 was very good, a lot quieter than the 747. Even the airline food was pretty good. All the latest movies were available.

Arrival at LA and going through customs and immigration was a lot better than previous trips to the US. A trip by coach to Union Rail Station and a pleasant rail trip by Am Track to San Diego.



Our AMTRAK Train

The reunion kicked off the next day and by that time Neil and I were all set to go and enjoy ourselves.

Meeting up with old mates again was terrific and we soon got use to the local transport system, which worked well. We checked out the San Diego zoo and a couple of the tourist sites and restaurants in the Gas Works and Little Italy areas.

The Reunion venue was a resort to the north of the main part of San Diego, with the highways and transport system it only took a short time to get anywhere.

The annual dinner was well attended and well organised by our hosts, the Western Chapters.



Bob runs into one of his mates.

It was inspiring to listen to the Brigade Commander, Colonel Michael Foster he spoke of the Brigade commitments around the world and the life after being in the army.



Neil Cromarty Colonel Michael Foster & Bob Cockerill

We all partied on till after midnight after the dinner where all had a great time. The following day it was goodbye time.

Neil and I went down to the main part of San Diego for another couple of days and had a look around.

We attended a ceremony that was to remember the police, customs, coast guard and other agencies that had lost their lives while on duty, a very moving service.

Following that we checked out the maritime museum, with Russian subs, the USS Dolphin the worlds deepest diving submarine and several sailing ships.



Russian Submarine

The following day we went aboard the aircraft carrier Midway, we climbed all over this ship, top to bottom, front to rear and everywhere in between a whole day of upstairs and down stairs. For those who don't remember the Midway supported ground troops in Vietnam where fighter bombers flew missions from the Midway.



Deck of the Midway

After checking out all the sites round town, it was time to start heading home to Sydney.

On arrival back home I had a couple of good surprises. The local paper in Campbelltown did a story on me as I was one of the original Campbelltown boys to go to Vietnam in 1965. The second was an email indicating that the CGWP Citation had finally been awarded to the 1RAR Group 1965-66 while being assigned or attached to the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep) of the US Army. My sincere thanks to Alan Larsen and all who did not let this matter be pushed aside and bought it to reality. I still remember the work that Car-ey McQuillan put into the original submission many years ago.

To celebrate the fifty years of departure on board the HMAS Sydney there was a small group gathering for a luncheon in Canberra. This was organised by Mal Peck who has been doing this for many years. Rosina and I attended the luncheon and my thanks to Mal for his continued efforts

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Neil Cromarty

Further to President Bob's report, I would like to add a some other bits and pieces, The Banquet held on the last night was a great success, the food was excellent and great company.

As part of the Official Ceremony, Bob was honoured to be asked to recite the ODE, both verses. There were a lot of compliments about his presentation and the words of the ODE. There has been a lot of requests about the Ode and its words. In the next edition of Skysoldier we will have the words of the Ode and its origin.

We all attended the Memorial Service the next morning before saying our good byes.

It was great to catch up with our US mates the rest of the Aussies and Kiwis ... Mick and Chris Rosser, Colin Cochrane and Meryl from Qld, John Deazley, Chris Cooper and his wife from NZ.



L/R Friends from US Chris Cooper & wife NZ Bob Cockerill,



Three best dressed at the Dinner

It was great to catch up again with David & Anna Santini from Ft Myers Florida. David & Anna stayed with us for several days a couple of years ago when they were doing a

road trip on the eastern side of Australia. While they were with us David & Anna were able to attend one of the official openings of the Australian Army Infantry Museum at Singleton, David was a Sergeant on exchange from the US Army to the School of Infantry in the eighties.

Ellen & Trudell flew down from St Paul Minnesota for the Reunion. Ellen organised a pre dinner drinks get together before the banquet, I think half the Reunion turned up.. Two years ago Trudell, Bob & Rosina, Kyra & myself and Bill Anderson did a road trip from Las Vegas to South Dakota, we had a terrific time.



Two old friends with Bob and Eric Hitchcock

Thanks to everyone who attended the reunion for their hospitality, the setup for the buffet breakfast was great, this allowed everyone to sit where ever they wanted, this meant that we were able to meet new friends when we sat down. Bob has already said it but I would like to thank everyone connected with the Reunion. Well done.

We can recommend San Diego for a holiday venue.

Don't forget about our 4th July Dinner at Penrith.

From the Australian Army Infantry Museum – Singleton

The displays within the museum galleries contain items which demonstrate the history and traditions of Australian Infantry since the late Nineteenth century until the present. All of these items have an interesting individual and collective story to tell. But there are some items displayed which we consider have a special interest, and which should not be missed on a visit to the Museum.

Some of these especially interesting items are small and some are large. Some were successful in their operation and others were not so useful particularly when compared to our modern day technology. Over the next few issues of "In Support" I will bring you some detail of these special interest items and their history.

The first of these is the Russell Boomerang Grenade. It was invented by Mr G. V. Russell, a Melbourne engineer, and submitted to the Federal Munitions Committee in August 1915 for trials. This was at the time during the Gallipoli Campaign when grenades (then called "bombs") were first employed and front line troops were being forced to make their own supplies from available material such as jam tins or bully beef tins.



Scale in Centimetres

Russell Boomerang Grenade

The Boomerang Grenade was designed to be able to be thrown further than other grenades (bombs) available at the time and with greater accuracy. It was also claimed that it would descend vertically onto the enemy and that it could not possibly return.

The explosive charge comprised 3 ounces of blasting gelatine which was attached externally to the elbow of the boomerang. Blasting gelatine was one of the most powerful explosives known at that time. It was composed of 93-95% of nitro-glycerine and 7-5% nitro-cellulose (gun cotton) and was 50% stronger than dynamite.

Detonation was by a detonator and a short length of Bickford's fuse, tipped with a similar composition as used on wax matches. This allowed ignition by friction.

The Boomerang was made from galvanised sheet iron, with a total cost of 1/6d (15 cents) per unit.

The trials were conducted by the Australian Grenade Training School, Lt Col R. Law Commandant, and finalised in January 1916. Lt Col Law's conclusion was that: *"The Board are of the opinion that this Grenade is so erratic and uncertain in its flight that they consider it of no value for Military Purposes"*.

Mr Russell objected to this finding and offered to supply further grenades for testing. While the offer was accepted, no further correspondence is recorded. It was assumed that Mr Russell decided to cut his losses. So ended the life of a

potentially unique Australian weapon with an ancestry of over 40,000 years.

The example on display in the Museum is located within the Grenade Cabinet in the Latchford Gallery, and is the only one of its type known to still exist. Of course, it lacks the explosive charge and detonator.

Reference Sources:

1. Richard Landers "Grenade: British and Commonwealth Hand and Rifle Grenades", Landers Publishing, Dural NSW, 2001
2. Lt Col R. Law "Grenades and their uses", Instructional Pamphlet of the Australian Imperial Force, 1916

Bill Edwards

Museum Volunteer

The history of the Infantry Combat Badge



The history of the Infantry Combat badge by the bloke that designed it, Colonel David Thomson. From 1967 to 1970 I was the Director of Infantry and Regimental Colonel of the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR). I was very fortunate that the Chief the General Staff (CGS) at the time was Lt Gen Sir Thomas Daly KBE DSO. From 1951 to 1952 he had been Director of Infantry and maintained a keen interest in the Infantry Corps. From 1952 to 1953 he had been the Commander of the 28 Commonwealth Brigade in Korea when I had been serving as a company commander with 1 RAR.

Shortly after my appointment as Director, the CGS sent for me and said 'David, the Infantry Corp is expanding and I wish to be kept advised of any major happenings or problems'. This was a wonderful invitation to a new Head of a Corps, which expanded from four to nine regular battalions from 1965 to 1967.

This expansion allowed three RAR battalions to serve in Vietnam and one to serve in Malaysia. It was a very busy time for the infantry Corps. In early 1970 I was sent for by the CGS. During our discussion I suggested that it was time for the Infantry Corps to have an Infantry Combat Badge to

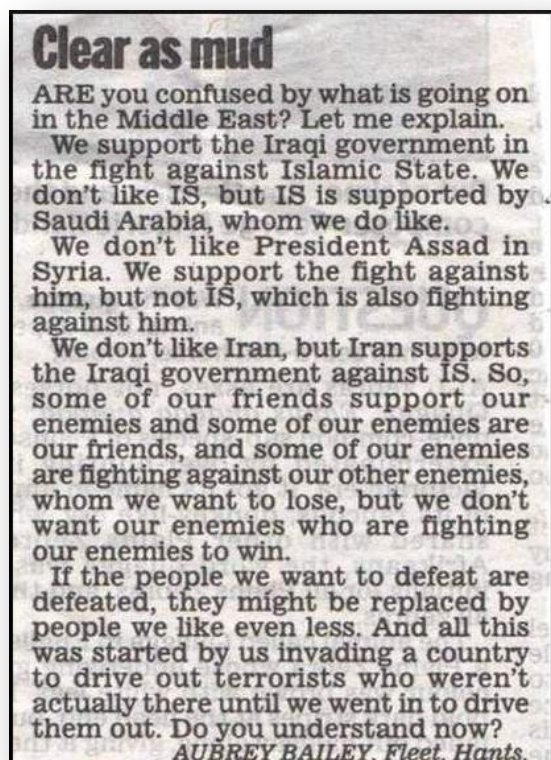
be worn by Infantrymen who had served overseas in operations.

The United States had such a badge that was a Silver Rifle on a blue background. It is available in a subdued version as well. The CGS agreed with enthusiasm and told me to design a suitable badge for Australia.

I returned to my office with no ideas for a suitable badge. On that day I was in civilian clothes and was wearing a small Legacy Badge in my lapel. I glanced down at this badge that I removed and inspiration came. Each new member of Legacy is presented with a Legacy Badge described as follows: 'The Badge of Membership consists of a Torch and a Wreath of Laurel with its points inverted - the Torch is the emblem of service and sacrifice and the Wreath of Laurel is the symbol of Remembrance.'

I turned the Legacy Badge upside down so that the Laurel Wreaths were pointing upwards and started sketching. After several tries I reached a possible solution. I changed the shape of the Wreath and replaced the Torch with an Infantry Bayonet. Bronze seemed a suitable colour for an Australian Infantry Combat Badge. Then I gave my sketches to an artist and took the results to the CGS, who agreed with the design and told me to go ahead.

The Infantry Combat Badge (ICB) is now proudly worn above Medals or Medal Ribbons by members of the Infantry Corps who have served in an infantry unit for at least 90 days in operation. I hope that those wearing the ICB might be inspired to join Legacy and help look after the widows and children of departed comrades.





CHAPTER 19 - NEW ZEALAND

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By John Deazley

In Auckland we commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day on the Sunday closest to 18 August. This year 16 August.

Wellington being the Capital has a large service on the 18th with a large consul/embassy guest list to lay wreaths.



This has been organised since we were given that date officially by the government by one of our Bien Hoa vets Lindsay Skinner who lives in Wellington.

He is our Vietnam Veterans Assn Committee members.

He represents myself at Wellington when the occasion demands, so is good value.

We also have Patrick Duggan as our Christchurch rep. He is the Canterbury Region District President. He has the South Island to attend to for us.

161 Battery 50th is 14 - 17 July at Palmerston North. Linton Military camp is about 12 Km outside of the city and is home to 16 Field Regiment. So we are close to 161 bty. Details below.

Also 161 Battery has a live shoot at Waiouru MC about the 8th August that about 20 of us old timers attend.

We are over 3000 feet high on the Desert Plateau with sleet, snow and wind. They normally have an Infantry company exercising at the same time.

It is great to be there with the active troops and spend time with them. Makes one think one is still 20 years of age.

161 Battery (Vietnam 1965-1971) Reunion -

This is to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Battery reporting "one gun ready" at Bien Hoa in the Republic of Vietnam.

It is to be held in **Palmerston North 14-16 July 2015** based at the Cosmopolitan Club and Linton Camp.

It is open to all personnel who served with or were attached to 161 Battery in Vietnam between June 1965 and July 1971, wives, partners and families.

For all enquires **contact:**

John (Woody) Barrett - Ph 07 549 4829 or email

ionlynbar@yahoo.com.

"Ex Ben Cat" - 8 August 2015 (TBC)

This is the Annual Day to join the serving soldiers on Exercise in Waiouru.

From all those that have attended in the past it is not to be missed,

Further details on this will be published as they come to hand, but the list is open with the **Secretary** now.

81st AGM and Reunion - Christchurch - 13-15 November 2015

The AGM and Reunion this year is being hosted by the Southern Gunners at the New Christchurch RSA. Planning is well underway with an exciting programme of activities.

Be aware this is also Christchurch Anniversary Weekend, so make your bookings early.

Think about getting in touch with your comrades from your "era" and make this a great get together.

Registration Forms and full details are now available on the Website.

Contact: Skin Frances Hm 03 3832967 or 021 2168109 or email skin_frances@outlook.com

THE LAST HURRAH!

New Zealand's Iroquois helicopters, famous for the familiar whop-whop-whop sound of their rotors, was withdrawn from service in May after a final fly-through many parts of the country. Thirty veterans of the Vietnam war - where the robust helicopters became famous - were given a special trip down memory lane during a series of flights from Ohakea air base on Friday (30 Jan).

The veterans included former RNZAF Air Vice Marshal Robin Klitscher who flew a helicopter gunship in Vietnam on secondment with the Australian Air Force and former RNZRSA national president Don McIvor who served in the NZ infantry. Paraparaumu RSA president Chris Turver, the first New Zealand war correspondent with 161 artillery battery in Vietnam, says it was an emotional experience for veterans to remember the reliance they placed on the Iroquois for support. "It was like having a lifeline that could be called up almost anytime."

Iroquois's entered service with the RNZAF in 1966 but were never sent to Vietnam but instead became famous in New Zealand for many support roles, notably search-and-rescue. Today there are eight left at Ohakea, with at least two destined for display in air museums in New Zealand and others to be sold. They have been replaced by nine state-of-the-art French-built NH90s, also based at Ohakea.



CHAPTER 23

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Ray Hughes OAM

There has been a number of changes that have had to be made with the winding up of the Redcliffe Raffle.

It is unfortunate that we have lost this revenue source, but it was inevitable that over time we would wear out our volunteers. We stand truly grateful to those members who gave up their time over the past ten years, some worked right through the whole period, outstanding effort. Thank you.



We are endeavouring to make some cut backs and one area that will be affected is the substantial subsidies that we have offered at various functions and away meetings. We plan to continue to offer some subsidisation.

Currently we have an excellent Q Store and to keep it at the same level means carrying stock, we have decided to reduce the Q stock holding and only carrying fast moving items. There will be some stock sold off at bargain prices shortly.

We have reserve funds of \$9000, each year over the next ten years we will take a portion of those funds into our general account, but it will mean that we still need to raise funds in order to maintain our magazine, admin expenses and functions etc. With postage increasing and other increases these costs climb.

In order to maintain our revenue level we will hold two major raffles each year, your support of these raffles will keep our chapter viable.

It's not all bad news - We have been awarded the CGWP at last, thanks to the outstanding effort of Chapter 23 member Alan Larsen. As Ray has said, we certainly owe a great deal to Alan for achieving this award.

Hopefully you will support the two Anniversary events this year - The VVAA Victoria's Commemoration on August 18th and the parade in Townsville on November 23rd when the CGWP Streamer is attached to the Colours. If you have never witnessed a Brigade parade don't miss this one.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Ray Payne OAM

Here we are 50 year since we arrived in Vietnam and what does our Government do to acknowledge this milestone ... absolutely nothing. What are they doing? They have allocated funds for next year to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Long Tan and no funds are available for this year.



The only commemoration of any value is that being celebrated is in Melbourne. Bob Elworthy AM has vowed to make the day very special to 1RAR Group members. I have been invited to attend and Julie and I will most certainly be there ... I have heard from some others who will be there. So I ask each of you to make a special effort and wear your CGWP.

Talking about the CGWP, on November 23rd in Townsville all three battalions will parade and the CGWP Streamer will be attached to 1RAR's Colours. If you've never seen a Brigade Parade before don't miss this one. I have been invited to visit 1RAR in Townsville during September and will have more detail on my return.

I was going to promote the Battalion birthday for a gathering in Townsville in October, however with the Streamer being attached in November that will be a more appropriate time. It also gives some separation from a trip to Melbourne.

There has been a number of changes to our meeting program this year and some times these are unavoidable. I ask you to note that our Annual Anniversary Lunch has been moved to Tuesday, August 11. We had to move as Redcliffe RSL stuffed up our booking ... my thoughts are that this will actually work better.

We will need to discuss our September 'away' meeting at our next meeting. The latter part of this year is getting busy, so it will be up to you to discuss options.

Just a quick reminder to return your raffle tickets now.

HOLIDAY ROAD TRIP

Starting in April Julie and I headed off with our good friends Garry & Hazel Scott. As I think you all realise we live very busy lives and taking off for four weeks takes some planning.

We started by heading for Grafton for ANZAC Day arriving a couple of days early and it was off to the races. We were well treated there and invited into the members stand. We picked a couple of winners and came away without a profit but our whole day at no cost.

ANZAC Day and I was looking forward to catching up with a few mates who live in the area.



Julie dropped me at the form-up point and it wasn't long before I found some friendly faces. Arthur 'Beanie' Burt and Bill Blaikie were the first two. The streets were lined with people 4 & 5 deep all the way up the main street and 140 horse back riders followed us with a re-enactment of the WW1 ride from Copmanhurst.

The memorial service was moving with addresses by senior school children who had a excellent grasp of the futility of war. After we adjourned to the RSL for lunch. All in all an enjoyable day with really good company.

From Grafton we moved south to Urunga, a small coastal village just south of Coffs Harbour. We stayed in a fabulous Caravan Park right on the river. The Location was so good we decided to stay a week. For those of you who have been to Evans Head this is similar, with a pub over the road, a great Bowls Club and the shops right there. Only it was a lot better than Evans Head with outstanding facilities and river location and the beach a short walk. We most definitely will return and stay a couple of weeks.

We moved on further south and explored many of the places where we'd driven past the signs but never had time to turn off to and explore.

We had some bad weather earlier on in our trip, but now the weather was perfect, cool mornings a lovely sun shine all day.

Port Macquarie and time to turn around and start heading home again. Slowly up the Coast and it was hard to believe that our four weeks was gone as we pulled up at home.

We had travelled with good friends and we'd also met new friends while away That's the beauty of caravanning.

ANZAC DAY 2015

Photo is of the rising sun in the centre of the Memorial of the same name at 6.20am Anzac Day 2015 at Swansea NSW.

Around 3000 people attended the dawn service. Then we had breakfast and hung around for the March through Swansea at 11:00am.

My poem was read at the Dawn Service by my mate Paul Grimley (ex RAF Regiment) now a Battlefields Tour Guide who Flew from England with the express purpose of reading the poem (below).



SWANSEA'S RISING SUN

One hundred years has slowly passed
Since our soldiers left these shores.
Many of them would breathe their last
And be lost forevermore.

These soldiers from Australia
Came from everywhere around.
They wore the same regalia.
And many came from Swansea town.

One item worn would clearly show
Where these men were from.
Their Rising Sun Badge simply glowed
Upon the hat it sat upon.

The years have dulled our memory
As sounds of battle fade
But we must respect our history
And the sacrifices made.

Each day at sunset this badge will shine
And its lights will blaze on high.
As we remember the heroes of another time.
With this epitaph for those who died.

Bill Charlton c 2015



CHAPTER RAFFLE:

Thank you to all those members who have already returned their sold raffle ticket and a special thanks to those who have sold multiple books.

Please remember that all sold or unsold tickets must be returned by 1st July.

The raffle will be drawn at our Greenbank Meeting on the 11th July.

CHAPTER 23 MONTHLY MEETING VENUES

June 13th	Sandgate RSL Club
July 11th	Greenbank RSL Club - Raffle Drawn - Numbers Required
Aug 11th	Redcliffe RSL - Anniversary - Tuesday Lunch - Numbers Req
Sept 14 th -17th	Away - To Be Advised
Oct 10th	Yeronga Services Club
Nov 14th	A.G.M. Lions Supporters Club
Dec 12th	Tweed Heads Bowls Club - Christmas Party

SEPTEMBER 'AWAY' MEETING

We originally discussed going down to the Blue Dolphin at Yamba in September. While Julie and I were away we found a much better Caravan Park at Urunga ... the Urunga Heads Holiday Park. It suits our needs perfectly, great large sites, huge camp kitchen, immaculate amenities, pub with great meals directly opposite, fabulous Bowls Club on doorstep also with great meals, shopping centre closer than that at Evans Head. Urunga has the best butcher shop on the north coast. The park is river frontage and a stroll to the beach. Nice quiet location. The fishing is obviously good we saw many catches. Urunga is situated only 20 minutes south of Coffs Harbour. It's location gives us easy access to Bellingen, Waterfall Way, Coffs Harbour and many attractions. While it is your choice I strongly recommend it.

CHAPTER 23 LADIES LUNCHEONS

June 25th.	Southbank Surf Club.	Southbank
July 30th.	Summit Restaurant.	Sir Samuel Griffith Drive, Mt Cootha
August 27th.	Chilli & Spice.	128, Charlotte St., City
September 24th	Nagomi.	7,Eagle St. Pier, Riverside (May Change TBA)
October 29th.	Vapiano.	Queen St. Mall. City
November 26th.	Customs House.	399,Queen St., City

The meeting place for Southbank venues is at our usual spot at the bottom of Tribune St., in the Parklands. City & Riverside venues, we meet at The Pig & Whistle in Queen St. mall. For Mt Cootha, we will meet in the city and get a bus to Mt Cootha.

July & November venues have been booked, as advised by the venues. Numbers will be req'd closer to the time. If you have any queries, feel free to contact Margaret ... 0427867154 or Sandra ... 0411124987..



A LETTER TO MIGRANTS

written by Wayne Sprlyan

So you want to be an Aussie and live your life like me ©
You want to tell your friends back home what it's like to be free
You want to walk our sandy shores and see the rustic red
Of this land called Australia where you can lay your head
In safety neath the Southern Cross and walk our streets by day
Knowing that the fear you left is now so far away.

Yeh! You want to be an Aussie & say the things I say ©
Like Cooee Cobber, Crikey Mate, Bonza & G'day
You want to see our famous sheep with the Golden Fleece
But to be a dinky Aussie mate you must believe in peace.

We'll welcome you with open arms, we'll take you to our hearts ©
But there's some things we'll ask of you before your new life starts
Please leave behind your hatred, leave behind your wars
And don't divide Australians to justify your cause
We are a Christian country and it's our birth right
To practice our religion any how or way we might.

Yeh! You want to be an Aussie and do the things I do ©
Like surfing down at Bondi Beach or touring Kakadu
You want to flip em heads or tails and dive upon our reef
But to be a dinky Aussie mate you must believe in peace.

Our kids believe in Santa Clause, the Easter Bunny too ©
It's not fair we're told to change just to suit a few
You must change your ways my friends and live within our laws
Cause our fathers gave their lives in other countries wars
To keep this land of ours, surrounded by the sea
A haven from the wider world, where our people are free.

Yeh! You want to be an Aussie and have an Aussie tan ©
You want to learn the Aussie game, become a footy fan
So you want to wear the green & gold and climb our highest peak
But to be a dinky Aussie mate you must believe in peace.

Assimilate with us my friends, don't form your groups and be ©
A separate part of this Great Land is not how it should be
So welcome to our land my friend, this land you now call home
For when you become an Aussie, you will never be alone.
Do not forget your birthplace, of this we will not ask
But to step into tomorrow you must leave behind your past.

Yeh! You want to be an Aussie and see the things I see ©
Like Arnhem Land, the back of Burke and drive the Strezlecki
Ride the mighty Indian from the West Coast to the East
But to be a dinky Aussie mate you must believe in peace

Yeah! To be a dinky Aussie mate you must believe in peace.

JASON 'JAY' NEVILLE - AIF SWIMMING CARNIVAL



I had the privilege of representing The Southport Sharks in the Annual A.I.F. Carnival in ALBURY on 21st March, I have always swum Masters Carnival's since 1989 not aware there were ADF Returned, EX and serving members which included RSL branch members plus Clubs like Southport Sharks. They were included as the numbers dropped off after time.

The A.I.F. was to keep the wounded from the WW1 in exercising to help recover. Many carnivals are held during the year which lead up to Annual Championship swimming nearly all handicap events, which means they swim to a nominated time and the winner of each age group closest to their time is the winner.

Plus open swims as 50m Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle, Backstroke and 3 service members must be in each event.

Then Relays, Crow's Nest Cup Service Relay 4 x 50m, 10 x 50m Relay. I had 6 swim's, 3 handicap which I was not interested in as I have not had enough training and find it hard to swim to a time. I am more interested in 50m Butterfly which I had a good chance of getting a place, which I did, 3rd in the 60-69 age bracket.

Then the Servicemen's Relay (which is what I wanted to be in as it has been a long time since I served). John, our Captain President of the club said "He likes to come from behind in a race", meaning slower swimmers would swim first fastest last. I am use to a different way as to maintain a better chance to win ... Oh well, I sucked it up as one should. I came for this event I am dammed sure I will do my best to win the bloody race ... I was all fired up!

The gun went off, not looking to good we were 20m behind after the first leg, John next he gained 5m, I am 15m behind the leader, I want to win this race I never came up for a breath until I caught him and it was so good to suck some air again, feeling good that I caught my opponent I put every last bit of my energy into my last strokes which gave us a lead of 5m, Greeny was last and held the 5m lead all the way home. When I was walking back to our group near the pool I got some funny looks. Greeny said to me later "I held that 5m all the way home . "with his arm around my shoulder it was a good feeling what a win..

The results were not mentioned during the day, the function that night was a big surprise ... Boy! was it! Being my first AIF Carnival I didn't know what to expect until they started presenting prizes and all I heard all night was Southport Sharks.

I came 3rd in 50m Butterfly and we won Crow's Nest Cup 4 x 50m Services Relay. Collecting that Crow's Nest Cup was just so GOOD and we receive an embroidered towel.

We cleaned swept 105 points runners up 54 points Southport Sharks have won this event for 17 years ... Boy Southport Sharks know how to party, 3am in the morning they went to.

The next AIF Carnival 2016 is at Southport.

APOLOGY

I wish offer my apology to Jan Stapleton, as Jan sent me some photos from Anzac Day and for the life of me I can't find where I filed them. Sorry Jan.

50 YEARS ON

By Gerard Henderson

Time to look at contemporary attitudes to our role in Vietnam

It's just a half-century since prime minister Robert Menzies announced that Australia would commit combat forces in defence of the anti-communist government of South Vietnam.

The decision was announced on April 29, 1965, just four days after the commemoration of the landing of the First Australian Imperial Force at Anzac Cove a half-century earlier.

Australia's Vietnam commitment had begun in May 1962 when the Coalition announced the deployment of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam to South Vietnam. It ended in December 1972, soon after the election of Gough Whitlam's Labor government, when the AATTV troops were withdrawn. All Australian combat forces had been withdrawn by the end of 1971 during the prime ministership of William McMahon. So the main focus of the Vietnam war in Australia occurred between April 1965 and November 1971.

Along with the Dardanelles campaign of 1915, Australia's Vietnam commitment has become the most analysed military involvement by Australian forces during the past century; this despite the AIF's significant achievements on the Western Front, particularly in 1918, and despite the crucial role the Australian Army played — along with Canadian forces — in stopping an attack by North Korean and Chinese forces at the Battle of Kapyong in April 1951 during the height of the -Korean war.

The recent deaths of Whitlam and former Liberal prime minister Malcolm Fraser provide an appropriate opportunity to reflect on the Vietnam war in Australian history.

Many commentators falsely claim Whitlam withdrew Australian combat troops from Vietnam. In fact, in the years before he became prime minister in December 1972, Whitlam was not a high-profile critic of the Vietnam commitment. In the Australian Labor Party, left-wing politicians such as Jim Cairns and Tom Uren took that role.

In his final years Fraser became a critic of the Vietnam commitment, despite the fact he was minister of the army from January 1966 until February 1968 and minister for defence between November 1969 and March 1971.

Moreover, in the second half of the 1960s, as a backbencher and then as a minister, Fraser was one of the few Liberal MPs who could successfully defend Australia's involvement in Vietnam.

In the error-riddled *Malcolm Fraser: The Political Memoirs*,

which Fraser co-wrote with academic Margaret Simons, he falsely claimed Harold Holt (Menzies' successor) "announced the despatch of Australian troops to South Vietnam". In later life Fraser claimed he was unaware of the disastrous decision made by the US in late 1963 to overthrow South Vietnam's leader Ngo Dinh Diem. Fraser used this so-called discovery in 1995 as a reason to rationalise why he changed his view on the Vietnam commitment. In fact, the US role in Diem's assassination was widely known and discussed at the time.

Fifty years after the announcement Australian troops would be dispatched to Vietnam — later to be supported by the Australian navy and air force — it is convenient to examine the -con-temporary attitude to the -commitment.

Australia's Vietnam commitment enjoyed broad support for most of the time our defence forces were deployed. The Coalition won elections in 1966 (under Holt's leadership) and 1969 (under John Gorton's leadership). The Democratic Labor Party was the political party most supportive of the Vietnam commitment. The DLP did very well in the half-Senate elections of 1967 and 1970, which saw the election or re-election of Frank McManus, Vince Gair, Jack Kane, Jack Little and Condon Byrne.

What is commonly called the "anti-war movement" at the time was not really opposed to the -conflict, meaning there were few pacifists in the debate. Those who opposed the role of the US in the conflict — supported by Australia, New Zealand and some other -nations — barracked for Hanoi. This was the hard point made at the time by one-time Labor -supporter economics professor Heinz Arndt when he said many of his left-wing associates wanted the communists to win.

Cairns constantly claimed in the mid-60s and beyond that the National Liberation Front was an independent South Vietnamese entity. Not so. The NLF was always controlled by the Communist Party dictatorship in North Vietnam, which had dispatched thousands of troops to the war zone in South Vietnam by the mid-60s. Many more followed. Some of the engagements undertaken by the Australian Army in the field were with well-trained and well-equipped members of the North Vietnamese army.

The Vietnam war was won in Moscow and lost in Washington, DC. As Peter Edwards documented in his valuable book *Australia and the Vietnam War*, the North Vietnamese army was supplied by the Soviet Union with sophisticated surface-to-air missiles capable of downing the best fighter jets, along with T-54 tanks and long-range artillery. All this -material was supplied to communist forces through North Vietnamese ports.

Continued Page 20



CHAPTER 27 SOUTHERN STATES AUSTRALIA

President - A.B. Garcia

Secretary - John Arnold

PO Box 1092 Altona Meadows VIC 3028

Ph: 03-8060 6045 Email: johnarnold@iinet.net.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A.B. GARCIA

On February 28th our AGM was held in Albury/Wodonga again and all executive positions were retained as last year.



The same old brigade stay in place and will continue the good work we do. We do for others that can't do it for themselves. We held it there as part of our circulating way of doing things to appease our members. We had a great turnout in fact one of the best for years. Thanks to all who made the effort to come and be with us. Ursula and I really

enjoy getting away and visiting different places. A lot of our members live outside the Melbourne area and as scattered as we all are, are able to come together where ever we can.

We celebrated Gordon Andrew's 80th birthday at a hotel not far from the Vietnam Veterans club. There were about 20 of us and were all pleased to be able to be with our brother and his darling wife Margaret. Gifts were presented, and the Chapter covered the cost of beverages for all. We are always happy to assist where we can and really appreciate the sacrifices made by those who come and be part of us. We really enjoyed ourselves being all together.

The sad part of all this is the passing of our brother Gordon just recently. We were notified by Margaret that something wasn't right with Gordon. Tests were done and the outcome wasn't good. Our hearts sink when we receive those kind of news. After a short illness, our brother passed away peacefully. When all this happened, I had a very dear friend also pass away. And the funeral was going to be held on the same day as Gordon's. Thanks for Margaret's understanding on this matter, and our brothers did honor to Gordon as per Margaret's and family's requests. He did so much in his life and filled it in the way he wanted. There is nothing better than to do what you can while you are still capable of doing. Every body should live by this creed.

And recently another Herd brother just retired had a party to celebrate it and somehow had his neck broken. He is now in ICU in a hospital in North Carolina. I am told that he will never walk again. His name is Bill Rasool. Wonderful man. I had the pleasure of meeting him in 2006 at Ft. Bragg North Carolina. Jim and Ena Harper, Ursula and I were invited for a BBQ at his house on base. We were well looked after by Rasool. So now, he has his younger brother caring for him while he recuperates as best he can. His younger brother Phil Williams lives in Indiana and travels by air to look and tend to

his brother. This takes great strain on finances, so we decided as a Chapter to donate \$173.00 to assist with expenses. This is what it's all about as far as I'm concerned. Looking after our brothers. This is the least one can do in our position. We raise funds to help unfortunate people and situations. Hopefully other Chapters can match this amount and help get our brother the help that is needed to make him comfortable. At least, he knows we are here and care for him. Makes you feel worth something and gives you peace of mind that we are after all humans that care for our fellow veterans. Just recently we donated \$173.00 to the Association so they can use these funds for looking after our Wounded Warriors or whatever they need money for. We love helping others in need.

I've just been nominated as the President of the Loch Sport R.S.L. again. It's an honor and a privilege at this time of the year as it will be the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli. On the 25th of April 1915 the Anzacs were involved in battle of which



the day is called Anzac Day. I will officiate here in Loch Sport at the foreshore and will be so proud to be part of history. I didn't plan to be in this position, but was swayed by my committee that they'd like me to take over for a year. I'm the only Herd President of an R.S.L. in Australia!!! That's huge!! There is nothing more I love than a challenge and this is one of them. Many over the years I've been in Australia. Try 43 years!! Best move I've ever made. And I would not have been able to do this without the support of a wonderful lady, my wife of almost a 50 years next October. We'll celebrate it in Honolulu Hawaii. Want to come??

Lastly, we are trying to build up our coffers by raffling off a figurine of a pair of boots, jungle hat, and dog tags. Ray Payne's wife, Julie, won it on our last reunion, and he knows how magnificent it is. All the monies we raise goes to help others who can't. So, please help us help others.

Take care, and our prayers and best wishes go to all who are ill or are recovering. As the years creep up on us, we become more vulnerable to different illnesses. Bless us all. Love to all. And may God look after our troops in peril. Heroes all.

A.B.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

JOHN ARNOLD

GOOD GRIEF, here we are in the middle of the year. It's a funny thing how everything goes so quickly as you reach your "Late Maturity" (everything that is except yourself).

With winter coming on down here in Victoria the daylight hours are reducing and the night hours are getting quite cold, seeing most of us who don't take the cold too well giving daily thanks for central heating, gas heaters and for the lucky ones, open fireplaces. Due to some rather unusual weather patterns, a couple of arctic blasts across these Southern states it has been even more unpredictable than usual with April being a bit of a bumper instead of the balmy autumn weather we usually enjoy.

ANZAC Day in Melbourne was an absolute nightmare weather-wise with cold rain throughout the day and from memory a top temperature of 13°. However the day is gaining more and more significance to so many more people each year and the weather did nothing to interfere with the thousands of people who braved the elements to attend the Dawn Service at the Shrine of Remembrance. Even during the hiatus between the end of the dawn service and the commencement of the parade the streets were filling up with those coming as spectators and the veterans of the various conflicts we have been involved in over our history. Among these were the many fit looking, well turned out young men who are charged with carrying on our traditions and I recall a bloke who was walking down Swanston Street alongside me on the way to form up prior to the parade making a comment along the lines of "Strewth mate, we are certainly the Old Brigade these days" as we noticed these young warriors pass by.

Personally I was quite happy on the day despite some health problems I have been having these past couple of months, looking forward to catching up with Paul Israel (8PI C Coy, 1RAR) who had made the trip down from his home up near Wollongong to march with us. Bit of a bugger though as he doesn't look too much older now than he did back in '65-66.

The timing given for our step off was 10.45 hours but, as is usual, the stand around and wait time exceeded that by a considerable delay but everyone around our little group of Paul, Ken Baker, Graham Lobb, Bill Williams and Merv Williams seemed to be enjoying themselves with the usual chatting, bullshitting and winning every battle.

Over the past 12 months or so there has been the occasional incidents of 'some' people not really liking we chapter members too much as a result of information that has been made known and there had been a comment by one person, who should really know a bit better, that we members of Chapter 27 should not display our HERD flag. Well, we took as much notice of this as we have in the past and Graham Lobb volunteered to carry the flag on our behalf and, ultimately, it was well received.

It was not too long before the Regiment was to step off that 'yours truly' suffered some sort of health episode and had to withdraw from the parade; a late scratching you might say. I was quite disappointed by this course of events as I had been looking after myself up to this morning and initially felt OK to be part of it. Anyway, I went home, was in bed by 11.30 hours and did not surface until the following morning and have

been on a watch list ever since. I am not sure if it is a problem with my heart, which has been misbehaving itself a bit lately or if it was just a case of 'The Black Dog' wandering in for a bit of a look around to mess with what little brain I seem to have left. I am going into hospital on June 9 for a bit of a check so they can confirm or discount whatever they can. Hopefully I will get myself in gear prior to August 18th as that date is going to be quite a special one for us in Victoria (and other members from other states if they should wish to be involved). There will be more on that event later in this publication.

Our chapter raffle for this year is being opened up for ALL Southern Hemisphere members to participate and so we are sending notice to all of you that the prize is the piece called "Stand Down" which is a pair of combat boots with a slouch hat resting on them. This is the same piece that was raffled at the reunion in October 2014 and if you need to see a picture of it, there is one below ... OR you could ask Julie Payne to tell you about it as she won the reunion raffle and knows all about it.

It will be a bit different in this effort as we do not want to go sending out tickets to everyone as that would prove to be extremely frustrating and time consuming, so what we intend doing is asking that you look at the photo we have placed in this issue. If you are interested, send your details to our Chapter's Hon-Treasurer, Jim "Shad" Harper, with your cheque, money order of EFT and you will be sent out the required tickets, which are \$5 each and we will be happy to sell them in blocks of 5 tickets, making your costs \$20. The raffle will be drawn here in Melbourne at our chapter meeting on Monday August 17 and the winner will be notified and the editor of the SITREP Magazine advised so it can be published in our next issue.

Chapter 27 will cover the mailing costs to wherever it has to go.

SPECIAL RAFFLE

\$5.00ea

or

5 for \$20



\$5.00ea

or

5 for \$20

FOR TICKETS MAKE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO:

CHAPTER 27 - 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE

Send to - TREASURER - JIM HARPER

PO BOX 2143

SEAFORD VIC 3198

Or

Direct deposit to Westpac Bank

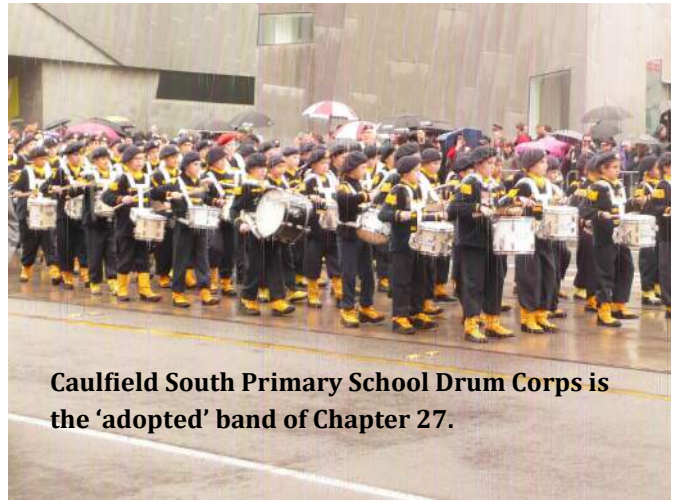
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Account: 555 62851

ANZAC DAY IN MELBOURNE



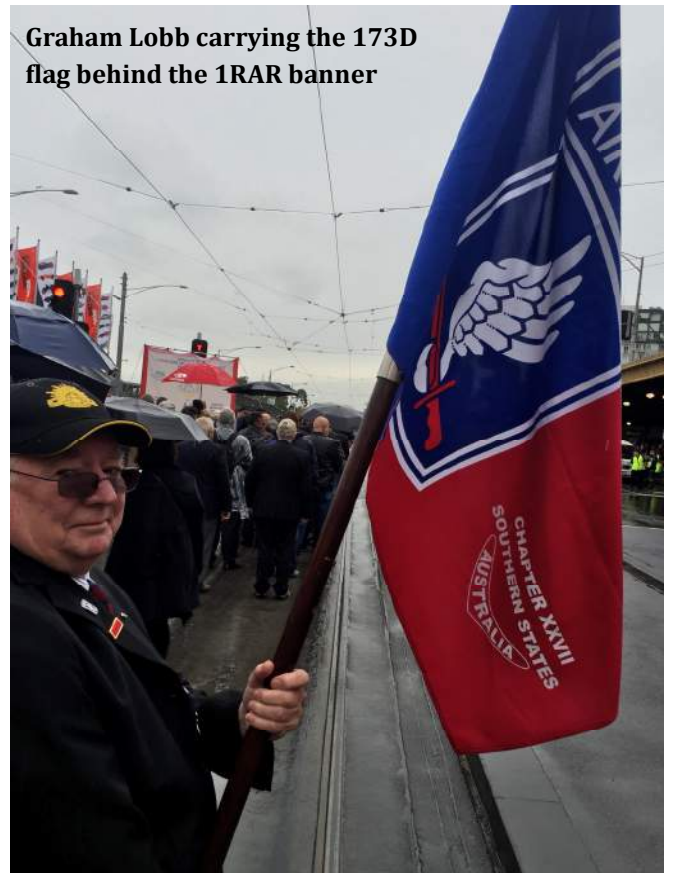
Army Guard - It would have been cold in this uniform on the day.



Caulfield South Primary School Drum Corps is the 'adopted' band of Chapter 27.



Prior to the march—Ken Baker, Paul Israel (Down from NSW) and Graham Lobb



Graham Lobb carrying the 173D flag behind the 1RAR banner



Melbourne Pipes & Drums lead THE RAR



1RAR Stepping off in the rain





On Sunday May 24 our Chapter President A.B. Garcia, his lovely lady, Ursula, our member, Bill Williams, and yours truly were invited to attend and participate in the Memorial Day service conducted by the American Ex-Servicemen's Association Victoria at our most sacred site, the Shrine of Remembrance.



Although a relatively brief ceremony it was conducted with all the reverence that is owed to America's war dead from all conflicts since the Civil War.

A.B. Garcia laid a wreath on behalf of the Chapter at the Plinth within The Shrine.

After the ceremony we all gathered at a VERY American venue called Misty's Diner, just a 5 minute drive from The Shrine and to me, it seemed almost like walking onto the set of "Happy Days". We enjoyed Buffalo wings, spare ribs, meat balls and other "Yank Style" foods and there were more than a few bottles of American beer consumed (but not by me as I am now a non drinker! Yeah, I know BORING. We were made so welcome that it was just like back years ago when we were all young, 10 foot tall and bulletproof.



I was lucky enough to be able to talk a very attractive young lady to join me in a photo; that was Miss Vanessa Colon, Vice Consul, United States Consulate general. If only I was about 40 years younger (and single).

CHAPTER 27 RAFFLE RESULT

Our last raffle of the WW1 Digger figurine was won by Bill Noble (B Coy 1RAR) who now resides in the pretty coastal paradise of San Remo which is just before you cross the bridge onto Phillip Island. Bill has been a resident of that area for many years now and does quite a lot of volunteer work at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum situated on the island.

We would like to thank all those who participated in that raffle and look forward to a great response in our current effort.



A.B. GARCIA - FOOTBALL SUPER



Back in Ft. Campbell I was in this football team competed with the entire base and these are the players and coaches.

Photo was taken in late 64? I'm on the right hand end of the front row. We then went off to play in Georgia for the championship and lost. I dropped a sitter!

Front Row:

Sgt. Nickell, PFC Kelly, PFC Boyer, Sgt. Wyatt, PFC Serna, A.B. Garcia

Second Row:

Lt. Davis (OIC and Coach), Capt. Ducheane, Sgt. Claypool, PFC Fitzmier, CPL. Jackson, PFC Rogers, Lt. Gaithar, CPL DuBose, Sgt. Burnay, Lt. Rolf, PFC Tiehm, Lt. Sarakaitis (Coach)

50th ANNIVERSARY OF 1RAR GROUPS DEPLOYMENT TO SOUTH VIETNAM



COMMEMORATION MELBOURNE

18th AUGUST 2015



Vietnam Veterans Day observance in Melbourne this year will be a special salute to the 1RAR Group, acknowledging the 50 years since the Groups deployment to South Vietnam.

This is an initiative of the **Vietnam Veterans Association Australia (Victoria)** and they are the body that conduct this service in Melbourne each year and it is an extremely well presented event. They are determined to make this a truly special event for Group members.

ALL members of ALL units who served in the 1RAR Group are invited to attend. While organized in Melbourne the organizers wish to make it a National event for former Group members and hopefully we'll roll up in numbers beyond their expectations to acknowledge their recognition of our deployment.

The day will start with a gunfire breakfast from around 09.30 hours in the gardens to the North/East of the forecourt of the Shrine of Remembrance, followed by a short march to the concourse for the service proper.

The guest speaker at the service will be our own **James 'Jim' Bourke AM, MG**. Jim was born in 1943 in Ayr, Queensland, where he was educated. After graduating from the Officer Cadet School (OCS), Portsea, in 1964, he undertook two tours in Vietnam, serving first as a platoon commander with 1st Battalion the Royal Australian Regiment



(1RAR) in 1965–1966. Jim the Platoon Commander of 11 Platoon D Coy and was seriously wounded during the battle of the Ho Bo Woods (Operation CRIMP). He returned to Vietnam as an adviser with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) and 1st Australian Logistic Support Group (1ALSG) in 1968–69. In later years the driving force of the successful recovery of our MIA's from Vietnam.

Following the service 1RAR Group members will adjourn to the Duke of Wellington Hotel (The Duke) for a reunion gathering. The Duke is located in Flinders St a short ride by tram to Flinders Street station and a short stroll down a block.

Should you require any further information on this special observance you only need to contact John Arnold on johnarnold@iinet.net.au or Ray on raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au

BUT PLEASE understand that this is NOT organised by the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. This is solely an initiation by the Vietnam Veterans Association Victorian Branch to

whom we are truly grateful. There is no accommodation bookings suggested and it is a one day event (but making it a 'sorta' unofficial long weekend is most definitely the go).

Let's see a special effort made by everyone to come to Melbourne and commemorate our 50th Anniversary.

EVENT PROGRAM

- 0930 - 1100 hrs **Gunfire Breakfast**
- 1030 - 1130hrs Marchers gather at Northern Forecourt.
- 1130hrs Marchers Form up at Northern Forecourt.
- 1200hrs March Step Off.
- Official Commemoration Service.
- 1300hrs Formalities conclude.
- 1330hrs Lunch Duke of Wellington Hotel)By own arrangement.
- 1RAR GROUP REUNION continues at 'The Duke'

MELBOURNE ACCOMMODATION

We had quite a number of enquiries as to where most Group members are staying for the 50th Anniversary commemorations. We are recommending the Mercure Welcome Hotel as they looked after us very well last year. We can have a meet and greet in their Cocon Bar the night before. You can get some good deals on line at the moment and also some cheap airfares.

MERCURE WELCOME HOTEL

265 Little Bourke St
Melbourne
03 9639 0555

I hope that you make the effort to support the VVAA Victoria as they are the only ones who have stepped forward to acknowledge our anniversary

Continued from Page 14

The communist leadership's attempt to initiate popular uprisings in South Vietnam in 1968, 1972 and 1975 all failed. The South Vietnamese army collapsed only after the US congress prevented the supply of US weapons to Saigon's forces.

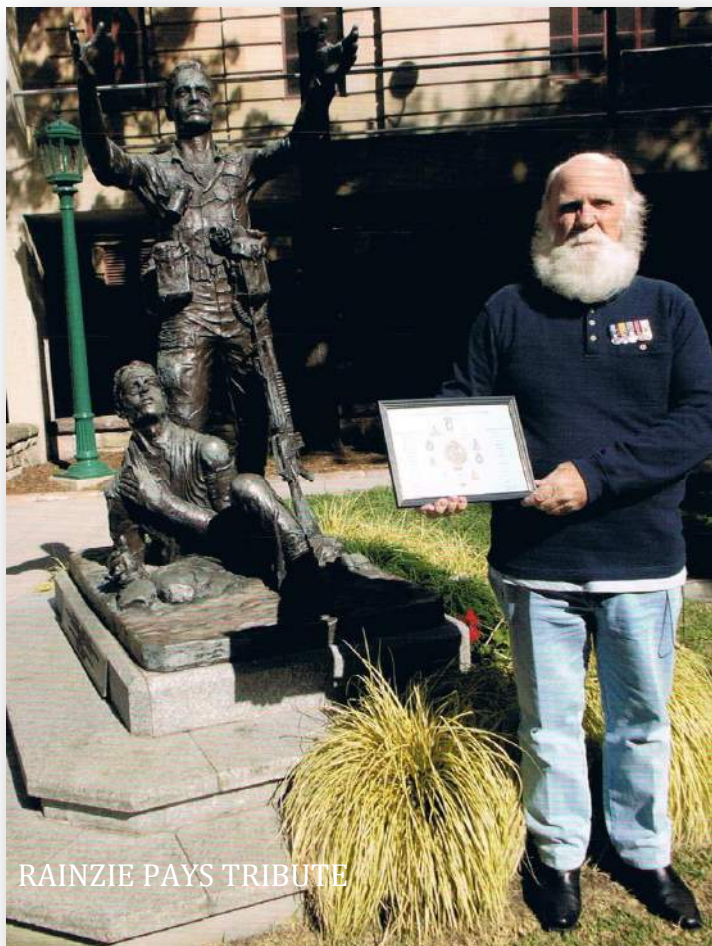
In other words, Hanoi won the Vietnam war because of the unintended consequence of the Watergate scandal and the subsequent resignation of president Richard Nixon, which de-authorised US decision-makers. This is documented in George J. Veith's *Black April: The Fall of South Vietnam 7539-75*.

The Left, including the Labor leadership, welcomed the communist victories in South Vietnam and Cambodia in 1975.

As late as 1978, Whitlam was still denying there were communist-inflicted atrocities in Indochina (including Pol Pot's Cambodia); and as late as 1979, Uren was still proclaiming his support for Pol Pot.

The 521 Australians who died in Vietnam did not die in vain. Southeast Asia, along with Australia and New Zealand, was much better equipped to handle a communist victory in Vietnam in 1975 than would have been the case a decade earlier. This was the position of the late Lee Kuan Yew, the former leader of Singapore.

Menzies' Vietnam commitment of a half-century ago remains controversial. However, on -balance, it was a correct decision taken in the interests of Australia.



SITREP

Southern Hemisphere Chapter's Newsletter

Representing the 1RAR Group 1965-66

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Don't be surprised if you found mistakes in this magazine

We print something for everyone and some people delight in looking for mistakes

So now we can all be happy



RAINZIE PAYS TRIBUTE

On the 6th June Ray Raines travelled into ANZAC Square in Brisbane to lay a special plaque on the Vietnam Memorial. The plaque commemorating the 50th Anniversary and listing the names of 1RAR Group members who lost their lives while under the operational control of the 173D Airborne Brigade (Sep).

I would have like to reproduce the letter that Ray wrote to me, but unfortunately it only arrived in the mail today and this was all the space I had left.

He did say that while he laid the plaque a small crowd gathered and enquired about the plaque and why he was there. He was able to tell them and they offered to take his photo.

Thanks Ray, thanks for not forgetting our KIA's.