



1ST ARMoured  
REGIMENT  
ASSOCIATION INC.

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2020 | NO. 84

# PARATUS

CO - LTCOL Tim Orders

RSM – WO1 Andrew Donnelly

Troops and vehicles from 1st Armoured Regiment deployed to support the Reserve forces providing assistance on Kangaroo Island's bushfire crisis.



## 1st Armoured Regiment Theatres of Operation

Japan  
Vietnam

Battle Honours

- Coral - Balmoral
- Hat Dich
- Binh Ba

Rhodesia

Cambodia

East Timor

Iraq

Solomon Islands

Afghanistan

## Newsletter Contributions

The views and comments expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributor and not necessarily endorsed by the current committee.

Whilst every care regarding all information is exercised, it should not necessarily be taken as absolute historical fact.



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## New Regimental Appointments - 2019

### Lieutenant Colonel Tim Orders

CO 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Orders enlisted from Adelaide to the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2000 graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2002. In 2003 he graduated the Royal Military College to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps. As a subaltern he completed a number of postings within 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment as well as a Project Manager within Australia's Defence procurement organisation.

In 2012 Lieutenant Colonel Orders commanded one of Australia's three M1A1 Abrams tank Squadrons within 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment in Darwin. This was followed by the appointment as the Regimental Operations Officer in 2014 during the transition of the unit to the Australian Army's first Armoured Cavalry Regiment as part of PLAN BEERSHEBA.

Lieutenant Colonel Orders has fulfilled staff appointments in Career Management Army in 2017, and as Deputy Director South West Pacific in Military Strategic Commitments in 2018.

Lieutenant Colonel Orders has deployed on Operations to Iraq in 2006 as an embed with the British Multi National Division Headquarters and to Afghanistan in 2014/15 as Chief of Staff of the Australian National Headquarters and as Military Assistant to the US Deputy Chief of Staff - Operations. Most recently LTCOL Orders deployed as the Executive Officer to the Force Commander, Multinational Force and Observers, Sinai in 2019.

Lieutenant Colonel Orders is a graduate of Australia's Capability and Technology Management College and the UK Advanced Command and Staff Course. He holds a Master of Management (Defence Procurement and Acquisition) from University of New South Wales and a Master of Arts (Defence Studies) from Kings College London.

Lieutenant Colonel Orders is married to Hannah and they have a daughter, Abigail, born in 2017.



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### Captain David Coleman

Adjutant, 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment

Captain Coleman entered the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2008, graduating in 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in history and politics. In 2011 he completed his officer training at the Royal Military College – Duntroon where he was allocated to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps. In 2012 he took up his first posting at the School of Armour, commanding the Cavalry Troop within Support Squadron.

In 2013 Captain Coleman was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) and was placed in command of a Cavalry Troop for 2013 and 2014. During his tenure, Captain Coleman led his troop in a wide-range of activities, including Operation Queensland Flood Assist II in Bundaberg and several Unit activities throughout Queensland. He actively supported the local community through philanthropic engagement with the Camp Quality charity organisation in 2014, for which he considered a highlight of his time as a Troop Leader. In recognition for his work as a Troop Leader, Captain Coleman was awarded the Jonathan Church Ethical Soldier Award.

Promoted to Captain in January 2015, Captain Coleman was appointed as a Cavalry Squadron Second-in-Command and deployed with his Squadron on Operation OKRA to Iraq as part of the Task Group Taji Rotation One Training Team. Captain Coleman completed his regimental grounding in 2016 when he was the Regiment's Operations Captain.

In 2017, Captain Coleman was posted to the Royal Military College – Duntroon, where he was employed as an instructor within First Class, before being appointed as the Officer Commanding Kapyong Company, an experience he found extremely rewarding. Following his two years at Duntroon, Captain Coleman worked as a staff officer within Headquarters Joint Operations Command prior to taking up his current appointment as Adjutant, 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment. Captain Coleman is a New Zealander by birth, and lives with his wife Emma. They enjoy travelling, the outdoors, and sport; in particular rugby union and football. Captain Coleman aspires to command a cavalry squadron within the Armoured Cavalry Regiments.







## Editor's Desk

Peter Lukeis

[comms@paratus.org.au](mailto:comms@paratus.org.au)

Welcome to our first Edition of 2020. A new year always bring fresh hopes, so on the dawn of a new decade who would have ever anticipated the devastation caused by the fires across our country. Yet what shines through is the generosity of the National spirit, with so many donating to the cause of their fellow Australians. Our hearts go out to those who have lost their homes and their loved ones.



Our Combat Engineers and Plant Operators from 2nd Engineer Regiment working on Kangaroo Island have seen first-hand the devastating impact Australia's bush fires have had on its communities and wildlife. They have helped clear routes and remove trees blocking roads so that emergency services can gain access and identify damage to buildings and infrastructure. The engineers have cleared 85kms of fire breaks working alongside Defence Australia personnel.



ASLVs crossed the Sealink ferry to marry up with Reserve forces on Kangaroo Island in support of #OpBushfireAssist.

Over the next few days, more than 100 personnel from the Regiment joined them and the 9th Brigade-led Joint Task Force 1111 to support fire affected communities & civil authorities.

Our 1st Combat Engineer Regiment Sappers were also there joining them to assist with clearing burnt and fallen trees to improve accessibility on the Island.

1st Armoured Regiment looked forward to assisting our SA community and integrating with local authorities and volunteer organisations who are already doing great work in response to the bushfire crisis.

Who would have thought armoured vehicle crewman have the skills to nurse injured wildlife back to health? We're proud to be helping out at the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary - Kangaroo Island, and supporting the wider Kangaroo Island community as a part of OpBushfireAssist. 1st Armoured Regiment soldiers in the V1 Emergency Support Team, supported by members from 1st Combat Engineer Regiment and New Zealand Army have also been working to clear key roads in the Flinders Chase National Park. This will assist in opening these roads to tourism to help with the Island's recovery from the bushfires.



Soldiers are helping to care for injured wildlife on Kangaroo Island, which has been devastated by bushfires.



6 ASLVs from the 1st Armoured Regiment depart RAAF Base Edinburgh to support Reserve forces and civilian authorities in the response to the Kangaroo Island bushfires.



1ST ARMoured  
REGIMENT  
ASSOCIATION INC.

## Committee 2019/2020

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### Links to Web Sites and Face Book Pages

#### Web Sites

1<sup>st</sup> ARMoured REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC.  
[www.paratus.org.au](http://www.paratus.org.au)

RAAC CORPORATION  
[www.raaccorpltd.org.au](http://www.raaccorpltd.org.au)

ROYAL TANK REGIMENT ASSOCIATION  
[www.royaltankregiment.com](http://www.royaltankregiment.com)

#### Facebook Pages

1st ARMD REGT ASSOC MEMBERS ONLY  
[www.facebook.com/groups/112757492512931/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/112757492512931/)

1st ARMD REGT ASSOC SOCIAL PAGE  
[www.facebook.com/groups/106848019339045/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/106848019339045/)

1<sup>ST</sup> ARMoured REGIMENT FACEBOOK  
[www.facebook.com/1ArmdRegt/](http://www.facebook.com/1ArmdRegt/)



## Report from the Secretary - Russ James

P: Secretary, 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association Inc.

PO Box 301, Mentone. VIC 3194

[secretary@paratus.org.au](mailto:secretary@paratus.org.au)

**Please note new address above**

B: Bendigo Bank

1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association Inc.

BSB: 633-000 Account: 161498159



### Membership Renewals

It is difficult to fathom just how quickly time passes, but once again the 1<sup>st</sup> of February has arrived which means that around a third of Association members are due to renew their membership. In essence, membership renewal means that one is prepared to commit their support for the Association for at least a year, if not longer. The Management Committee recognises that our members will only renew if they (the members) believe that the Association is being managed effectively and is moving forward.

Over the last 20 or so months, the current Management Committee has implemented new policies, procedures, processes and standards which we believe have achieved significant improvements in accountability and transparency. Minutes from all Association meetings (AGM, Executive and Management Committee) are distributed electronically, generally within three (3) to four (4) days of the meeting. Minutes have included copies of all new policies and procedures and only one or two comments have been received and these related to typographical errors rather than the content. The implementation of discipline on our two main face book pages has dramatically improved behaviour in the electronic environment and the angst that prevailed in the past no longer exists. Our members are now more attuned to our basic tenets (as outlined in the Constitution) of having respect for each other.

### Membership Renewals – Basic Figures

As at 1 February, 161 members were due to renew their membership. Commencing in early January, individual renewal notices were sent by email to 150 members and 11 letters were sent to those members without email. As at the date of writing this report, 97 members had renewed their membership for periods ranging from one (1) to five (5) years. However, there are still 64 members who have not renewed. It is possible of course that many members are not addicted to email and may only look occasionally.

Under the Constitution, members who do not renew their membership by the due date are not entitled to vote at either an AGM or other special meetings of the Association. Non-renewing members are not removed from any mail or email distribution lists until the 1 August, and only after written advice has been provided.

### Membership Figures

At present there are 489 active members in the Association; this is an increase of around 113 since the AGM held on 14 July 2018, and an increase of 11 since our last report in November 2019.

It should be noted that the membership increase (of either new or lapsed members) is offset by membership losses of those who did not renew in February 2019 (19 members) and those members who have died over the last twelve months (five [5] members).

At present the Association does not have a Recruitment Management Manager and we are largely dependent on existing members to encourage their friends to join.

### Future Event

The 2021 Port Macquarie Reunion Sub-Committee has been issued with a Terms of Reference (TOR) which provides authority for the Reunion to be held in Port Macquarie and for serious planning to commence. As advised elsewhere, the Meet and Greet is to be held on Friday 23 July 2021 and the Reunion Dinner on Saturday 24 July 2021. Further details are to be released via Sub-Committee updates.

### Management Committee Meetings

The last meeting was held on 3 December 2019 and the next meeting is planned for the period 26 February to 2 March 2020. The agenda, apart from normal administrative reports, is to include:

- a. Discussion on definitions of 'died of wounds' and actions that may be taken by Associations to add DOW after a veteran has died
- b. Review of existing items sold through the Q Store as well as designs for new items that include the correct Association Badge

### Where to From Here?

As stated in the last Newsletter, the Association in general and the Management Committee in particular need to:

- a. Increase recruitment, especially of the younger generation
- b. Increase recruitment, especially of the younger generation



- c. Identify areas for future spending that would encourage members to renew their memberships as well as attracting new members
- d. Continue to recognise those former members of the Regiment who die, regardless of membership of the Association.

#### New Members

John Antulov	Stan Hanuszewicz
Adrian Baggio	Raymond Hayes
Lindsay Bancroft	Louis Hayward
Mitchell Beasley	Trevor Hillard
Joel Bray	Alfred (Mac) Macintyre
Anthony Clark	Teresa Maher (Associate)
Bob Fleming	Jim McKenzie
Scott Fraser	Neville Miller
	Barry Mionnet

Terry Moriarty  
Toby Nettleton  
Scott Pennycook  
John Phoenix OAM  
Andrew Preiss  
Colin Shaw  
Simon Smith  
Kenneth Thompson

#### Donations since July 2019

Rob Millsteed  
Bill Tippelt  
May Hyson  
Raymond Hayes  
Doug Blackney  
Roger Powell

#### Deaths

Dudley John TUDMAN  
Leon Francis (Ned) KELLY  
Keith Barry BONNEFIN  
Geoffrey Vincent COOPER



### IMPORTANT

Contact Details – as indicated in the last newsletter it is important that our membership contact details are up to date. If in doubt, please advise the Secretary at [secretary@paratus.org.au](mailto:secretary@paratus.org.au) if you have changed your address, your phone numbers or your email address/s in the last couple of years!

### Unidentified Membership Fees

If you paid your membership fees during 2018 and did not receive a new membership card or you have stopped receiving Association emails and newsletters, please contact the Secretary at [secretary@paratus.org.au](mailto:secretary@paratus.org.au)



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## Honour Roll

#### Killed In Action

WO2 J.A. Bond  
WO2 J. Stone  
TPR J. Kerr

#### Died of Wounds

TPR M. Hannaford  
WO2 T. Phillips

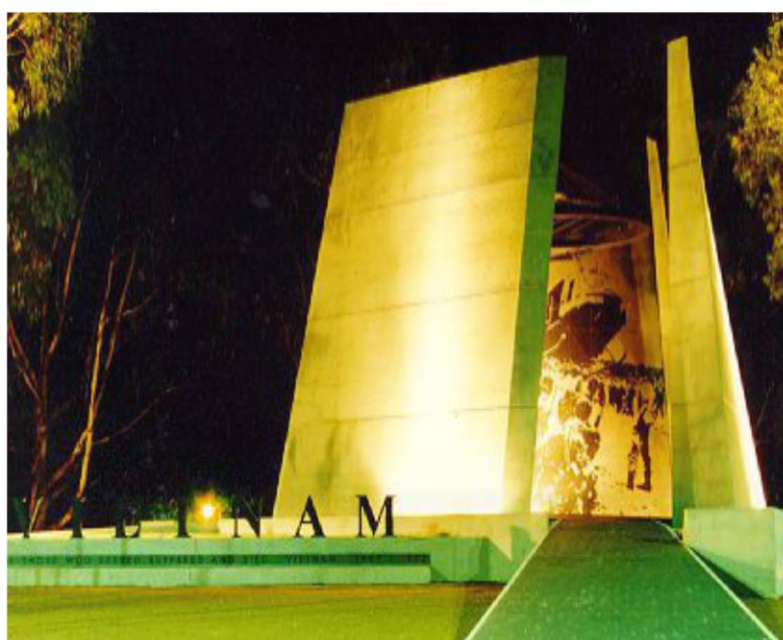
#### DOW Post-Vietnam

WO1 L. S. Swarbrick  
WO2 N. Lowes  
TPR P. G. Barwick  
TPR R. S. Bellott

#### Killed Accidentally

LT A. J. Massey  
SGT R. Morrison  
SGT R. G. Murray  
TPR A. M. Jordan  
TPR A. Patterson  
CFN B. Silver (LAD)

Dedicated to those 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment  
Soldiers that made the ultimate sacrifice





## Leon Francis KELLY (Ned)

Passed away on 12 December 2019, aged 64 years

Ned was born on 11 March 1955, joining the Australian Army on 12 July 1972, around four months after he turned 17 years of age.

After the mandatory stint (around 13 weeks) at 1 Recruit Training Battalion (Kapooka), he was posted to the RAEME Training Centre at Bandiana on 19 September 1972. From there, Leon was posted to the School of Signals on 3 May 1973. No doubt it was here that Leon realised that the Tankies offered greater career opportunities and he was posted to 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment on 30 July 1974. During his time at the Regiment he worked his way through the M113s as well as progressing through all tank crewman positions including his promotion to Sergeant.



Ned spent part of 1984 and the early part of 1985 at Armoured Centre before being posted back to the Regiment on 27 Feb 1985. Two years later (1987) he was back at Armoured Centre for a further two years before a posting at the Army Apprentices School for most of 1989, 1990 and 1991.

On 15 January 1992 Ned was posted back to the Armoured Centre where he remained until discharged with the rank of Warrant Office Class Two from the Australian Regular Army (ARA) after 21 years-service.

Ned's knowledge of the Pucka range, which he knew like the back of his hand) led to his second career at Puckapunyal Range Control.

After discharge from the ARA, Ned immediately joined the General Reserve and was posted to C Squadron 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment, where he remained for approximately nine (9) years. Ned served his country in uniform for almost 30 years and this was followed by many years of assistance to others in uniform to train in the service of their country.

Ned spent a number of months on overseas deployments including a month in 1976 in the United States of America and a month in the Federal Republic of Germany attached to the British Army (5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards) during May/June 1980.

Leon was a friend and mentor to many soldiers posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment when it was located at Puckapunyal. Leon was the 'best man' for at least three of his mates including Jim Grubb, Larry Maxwell and David Key - which demonstrates his character and ability to establish and maintain relationships with subordinates, peers and superiors.

Comments published in various locations provide an insight into his character:

We were proud and honoured to have served with Leon.

He always had a smile on his face and was happy for what he had achieved, what he is was doing in the moment and what he planned to do next.

A true gentleman, a champion bloke, a great person, a great mate and last but not least, a great soldier. He was always supportive and had a great sense of humour.

Leon may have gone, and gone far too early, but he will not be forgotten.

May he rest in peace in the green fields beyond.

Prepared by Russ James from information provided by Defence Records, close mates and various comments made on a number of face book pages



## Simon BRADSHAW

It is with great sadness I announce that Simon Bradshaw passed away a couple of hours ago in his beautiful wife Suzie arms. Condolences to Suzie, Scott & Gee. Ride on always Simon. I am sorry I could not join you on this last journey mate, but there will come a day when we will meet again. No more suffering or pain mate, just the eternal rest!



## **Keith Barry BONNEFIN**

Passed away peacefully on Tuesday 8 October 2019 aged 75 years.

Keith was born on 21 August 1944 and joined the Australian Regular Army on 15 February 62 when he was around 17 and a half years of age. After the normal stint at 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Training Battalion he was posted to 1<sup>st</sup> Forward Delivery Troop on 5 July 1962 to undergo corps training.

He spent just over two years at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Recruit Training Battalion prior to moving to Detachment A Squadron 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment (located in Puckapunyal) on 29 June 1967. At this time the Detachment was training for deployment in Vietnam as well as preparing for the move to Holsworthy in September 1967.

Keith was posted to A Sqn 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment (Vietnam) on 7 October 1968 as a Troop Sergeant. He served for around five months (in Vietnam) with the redesignated B Sqn 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment until October 1969 when he was posted to Armoured Centre where he remained until discharged at own request on 14 February 1971 having completed nine years-service.

May he rest in peace in the green fields beyond.

Prepared by Russ James from information provided by Defence Records.



## **Dudley John TUDMAN**

Passed away on 16 October 2019, aged 82 years

Dudley was born on 11 November 1946 in Goomeri QLD. He initially undertook National Service Training for three months in 1955 followed by 10 months in the Citizen Military Forces in 1955/56. Dudley joined the Australian Regular Army on 7 February 1956 and served for 21 years before completing a further three years in the Army Reserve.

Dudley only spent a short time (comparatively) at 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Training Battalion from mid-February to early April 1956 prior to being posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment where he underwent Corps Training.

He was posted to the Armoured School/Armoured Centre in August 1957 and remained there until posted to 2/14 Queensland Mounted Infantry in August 1963. He remained there (redesignated as B Squadron 1 Cavalry Regiment) until posted to the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam on 22 April 1966 as a WO2 Advisor.

Dudley spent 12 months with 2/1 ARVN HQ in the Phuoc Tuy Province. On return to Australia, he was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment for 15 months before being posted to Armoured Centre for nine (9) months, and then back to 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment in April 1969. Just eight months later in December 1969 Dudley was posted as the SSM of 1<sup>st</sup> Forward Delivery Troop located at Nui Dat in South Vietnam. On his return to Australia In December 1970, Dudley was once again posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment as a SSM. In October 1972 Dudley was posted to B Squadron 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment (Medium Tank Trials Unit) as the SSM until June 1973 when he once again was posted as a SSM of Headquarters Squadron 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment.

Dudley finally escaped the grip of Puckapunyal (and the Regiment) when he was posted as the RSM of 12/16 Hunter River Lances (Tamworth) in February 1977.

Dudley was discharged from the Australian Regular Army in 1977 as a Warrant Officer Class. He then served for a further three (3) in the Army Reserve. Of 22 years in the Regular Army, Dudley spent a total of 15 years in Puckapunyal, the home of Armour.

Comments published in various locations include:

A great mentor and one of the reasons I joined the Regular Army.

A great bloke, always to be trusted – one of the best SSMs I served with.

Highly respected by all those with whom he served.

A fine soldier, always impeccably dressed.

May he rest in peace in the green fields beyond.





## Geoffrey Vincent COOPER (Coops)

Geoffrey Vincent COOPER (Coops), passed away on Thursday 16 January 2020, aged 68 years. Coops was born on 14 November 1951 and he joined the Australian Army when he was nineteen and a half years of age on 13 April 1971.

After the normal spell (in those days, around 10 weeks) at 1 RTB, Coops was posted to the Armoured Centre on 22 Jun 1971 for initial employment training as a Crewman Driver Signaller. Just less than three (3) months later, Coops was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment where he was allocated to A Squadron on 17 September 1971.

Just a year later Coops was posted to B Squadron which shortly after was redesignated as the Medium Tanks Trials Unit. This unit spent some time in Puckapunyal and almost as much time in Northern Queensland testing the capabilities of the Leopard (German) and M60A1 (US) tanks.

On 27 March 1975 Coops was posted to the Headquarters of 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment where he remained until discharged at own request on 12 April 1977. Geoffrey had overseas deployment in Hawaii for around five (5) weeks in March/April 1976.

Geoffrey was a very proud Ngarrinderi man and worked tirelessly for his people both in and out of service. He was greatly respected by all who knew him for his commitment to the task at hand. Although only serving in the Australian Army for a relatively short time he made hundreds of friends, many who described him as a great mate.

May he rest in peace in the green fields beyond.

Prepared by Russ James from information provided by Defence Records and comments made on various face book pages



Geoff Cooper's funeral Attended by over 500 people.

Ex Service Members formed a honor guard inside the chapel along with other organisations

L – R Wayne Cailles - Roger Martlew - Lou Walker - Bob Cameron - Al Murphy - Bob Litchfield - Barry Filsell - Herb Mack - Mark Reid Grant Lane - Blue Chivers – 4 Cav - John Lane - Andy Preiss



## Vale Colonel John Haynes AM OAM (Ret'd)

It is with great sadness that I pass on news of the passing of our friend colleague and mentor Colonel John Sutherland Haynes AM OAM (Ret'd). John died peacefully at the Prince of Wales' Hospital after a short illness.

John Haynes joined the Royal New South Wales Lancers in 1948 as a trooper, he was Commissioned in the Regiment in 1950.

Soon after he transferred to the Regular Army, serving in 13 different Royal Australian Armoured Corps units.

He did a tour of duty in Vietnam in the early 1970s.

The late 1970s saw him as Chief of Staff 2 Div.

His last posting was Inspector of Administration for the Army.

He retired from the Army in the mid-1980s and became the President of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association, New South Wales Branch (RAACANSW), later serving as President of the National Association. In this role he instituted a number of successful initiatives for soldiers including the Army Combat Badge, the medal for National Service and the Australian Defence Medal.

For these good works he was awarded the OAM.

At the opening of the Light Horse Interchange west of Sydney in December 2005, Colonel Haynes struck up a conversation with the then Prime Minister John Howard. They noted that the service of Australian Soldiers in the Boer War was not commemorated at a memorial in the nation's capital, Canberra.

The National Boer War Memorial project was born. Colonel Haynes gathered a group of volunteers initially under the banner of the RAACANSW and work started. Committees were formed throughout Australia, and funds raised. Those whose relatives had served in the war were encouraged to tell their stories and these were published on the Memorial Association's internet site, a place where all matter of material was to appear. To garner support volunteers gave presentations to any group interested. A design competition was held. The designs submitted did not meet with approval, an amalgam of designs was agreed on. Then the costing came. For the result to be achieved a figure just short of \$4M was needed. Many thought this a bridge too far. Not John Haynes, he called on support from every quarter and eventually on 31 May 2017, His Excellency, General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Ret'd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia dedicated the memorial in Anzac Parade, Canberra.

For this effort, in the Australia Day honours 2019 Colonel Haynes was awarded an AM. Generous to a fault, he ensured that others on his committee were also honoured. Three received OAMs in the same honours list. And it was his insistence that as the AM and OAM were for different efforts, the OAM post nominal should in his case be retained regardless of protocol.

John is survived by his wife Gwen and every soldier who ever served in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps



Centurion Newsletter  
August 2016

*Renowned Melbourne sculptor, Louis Laumen Completed the first of four statues and has started on the second. NBWMA President, Colonel John Haynes (OAM) Retd stands In front of the 1.5 times life size Mounted Trooper which also features Detailed and accurate Boer War kit and equipment*





# Operation Hammersley 50 Year Anniversary

Long Hai Hills, Phouc Tuy Province South Vietnam February 1970

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Troops assembled after a B52 strike on Operation Hammersley, against VC Regt D445, 2 troop A Squadron 1 Armcd Regt with 3 troop B Squadron 3 Cav Regt and C Coy 8 RAR in the Minh Dam secret zone in Feb 1970.

3 Cav soldiers killed in action were LCPL Barry Wiston and Trooper Huey Carlisle. CPL Ron Macey was awarded an MM and MID's were awarded to 2 troop A Sqn 1 Arm Regt members LT J.H. Brennan, CPL Gary Gott and Trooper (Later LCPL) Peter Moore.

The photograph was taken from an M113A1 commanded by CPL Ron Hansen and driven by Trooper Danny Brookes. Callsign 33, B.O. PLENTY was commanded by SGT Bob Hunter, driven by Trooper Mick Battams and the radio operator was Trooper Warren Gardiner. The Centurion Tank, Callsign 12, was commanded by LT J.H. Brennan,





## Operation Hammersley - the OC's perspective

LTCOL J.A.N. (Jack) Chipman (Retd)

### BACKGROUND:

During my troop leader years the Regiment earned the motto "koala bears - not to be exported or shot at." This was a driving force to prove the ***combat power and shock action of tanks, operated by brave and competent troopers, could bring success to the battlefield.***

### Hammersley

It is 50 years since the operation and the following represents the recollections from a command point of view.

As has been established, Hammersley began as deployment of C Company 8RAR with 2TP A SQN 1AR, 2TP B SQN 3Cav, 101 FD BTY RNZA to FSB Isa to support and protect a quarry being used to upgrade route 44.

A successful ambush by a C Coy PI was reinforced by 2TP 1AR with another platoon mounted on tanks. The FSB came under attack and the Task Force ready reaction force of a Company mounted in APC's and a composite troop of tanks was deployed to FSB Isa.

Subsequent to the ambush 8 RAR and HQ A SQN 1AR and HQ B SQN 3 Cav deployed to Isa.

C Company mounted in 2TP 3 Cav and led by 2TP A SQN 1AR followed the enemy withdrawal from the ambush and made contact with an enemy bunker position which was destroyed and one enemy prisoner (Hoi Chan) taken. This Hoi Chan informed CO 8 RAR that there was a large bunker complex and identified the location. 2TP 1AR led the assault but had a tank delayed in a bunker, so the APC's continued until contact was made.

Carrier 83A was hit by 3 RPGs wounding the crew and some of Coy HQ.

The tanks now took fire positions to cover the brave recovery of the wounded infantry, while one tank attached a tow rope to try to recover the carrier and crew.

The rope slipped off the tow bollard and while replacing it the carrier was hit with a satchel charge killing the crew and badly wounding the tank Commander.

The attack was halted and wounded recovered.

At this time an urgent resupply of ammunition was being arranged with the RAAF, whose objection to carrying electrically initiated ammunition was overcome by use of rope slings.

The ammunition was delivered to each tank directly, as well as one replacement Crew Commander.

This took place as preparations for a second assault were underway with infantry dismounted.

1TP and 4TP deployed to Isa while 3TP continued training ARVN.

CO 8RAR was to continue assault with C Coy GP and to place B Coy and D Coy, mounted in APC's and led by a troop of tanks, into cut off locations.

With three (3) Tank Troops now involved, OC A SQN 1ARA decided that some coordination of tank effort was required since OC 3 Cav had requested that the tanks recover the stricken carrier and crew, to save his troops the trauma.

I agreed and sent 2IC and SSM to join with HQ C Coy in the FUP for the second assault.

As cut off groups of B Coy, mounted in APCs led by SHQ TP and D Coy, mounted in APC's led by 1 TP moved to their positions 1C hit a large mine which detonated under the turret and set the tank on fire.

The crew followed mine drill and escaped armed back along the tracks to avoid mines. Before recovery by the accompanying ARV it was necessary to ensure the fire had been extinguished and ammunition would not explode.

CO 8RAR granted OC A SQN permission to use a helicopter to fly over the stricken vehicle in order to clear recovery and to follow cut off progress.

Whilst flying, all radio channels were jammed and the pilot was able to determine that a "blue on blue" incident had occurred.

Since we were close to the action it was suggested we fly between the units and the situation resolved.

At this time the SHQ TP leading the B Coy out were ambushed and one tank engine compartment was penetrated stalling the engine, which restarted. The tank dozer main armament misfired but canister fire and MG fire suppressed the enemy and the infantry were able to dismount and prepare cut off.

Prior to second assault, preparation was made for bombardment by artillery, naval gunfire from offshore, fighter bombers and helicopter gunships.

The second assault proceeded, and 2 Troop fought through the position with support of infantry dismounted with 2IC A SQN providing cooperation with OC C coy.

As the tanks reached the rear of the complex the Hoi Chan told CO 8RAR that there was a minefield and an order to retreat was given.

The enemy counter attacked and 2TP fought a gallant withdrawal with all tanks being hit by RPG and small arms fire with minor injuries to some crew members.

It was obvious that another resupply would be needed and the echelon from Nui Dat base was prepared to bring resupply, once a firm base was established clear of bunker complex.

Following the withdrawal and resupply, the 2IC A SQN prepared the three troops he had, to blast their way back into the complex to recover the stricken carrier and crew.

This proceeded and the tank dozer moved the carrier back until the accompanying ARV could complete the recovery.

***At this stage OC C Coy informed 2IC A SQN that they were withdrawing and since the tank crews were fresh, they could prepare a night defence position.***

A night circular defensive position was formed with carriers including the now tarped stricken carrier in centre. With no infantry support the tanks fired canister rounds to clear the perimeter.

During the night the tanks used their searchlights to mark the bunker complex for night attack aircraft including Spooky.

A further attack was planned for the morning, but orders were received for a withdrawal to a safe distance to enable a B 52 strike.

This gave an opportunity to replace the destroyed tank, which was achieved within one hour and replace 1TP with 4TP.

The SQN was now fully committed with no reserves and FWD DEL TP and echelon personnel were to defend the allotted Nui Dat perimeter.

As 4 TP moved to replace 1TP, 4A hit a mine which caused a bushfire detonating other mines confirming we had discovered the minefield.

Though wounded the crew of 4A fought the fire with jerry cans of water to save the tank.

The engineers then cleared the mine field.

3TP now joined the operation having completed training with ARVN.

The B52 strike was delayed and many of the enemy could have escaped.

Following the B52 strike the CO 8 RAR invited the ARVN to join the operation.

Once the bunker complex was secure the engineers with ARVN explored the complex and gathered the weapons, explosives, medical supplies and a considerable amount of food.

R I F operations to seek and destroy any further enemy continued by the company groups mounted in APCs and led by tank troops.

Two APCs hit mines with crew casualties.

***Now that the situation was stable, I had a discussion with CO 8 RAR, suggesting that the tank actions and particularly 2TP be recognized. As commander he assured me that he would do so.***

A decision was made to deploy A Coy 8 RAR into the Southern Long Hais without any armoured support.

As A Coy proceeded they detonated mines suffering casualties and during recovery detonated more mines with further casualties to both infantry and engineers.

The casualties were such that political pressure ended the operation.

***Later as OC A SQN I discussed honours and awards with the Task Force Commander only to be told "Jack your armoured soldiers are not really brave because unlike the infantry who only show their shirt front ( pulls shirt) to the enemy you have armoured protection."***

*This was the environment in which we had to prove that we were not just Koalas but were prepared to cooperate without fear to combat a determined enemy and win every battle saving as many lives as possible. In Hammersley this was achieved thanks to the bravery, skill, teamwork and dedication of tank crews and their RAEME ARV and Fitters tracks who were with them on all operations. The engineer's mini teams also rode lead tanks in mine prone areas.*

***Their sacrifice may not have been acknowledged on earth but is in heaven. Bless you all. We are Koalas no more.***

## Biographical Details – Jack Chipman



1935	Born on 5 February 1935
1953 - 1956	Cadet at RMC Duntroon - Commissioned Lieutenant 12 December 1956
1957 – 1958	Troop Leader C Squadron 1 <sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment
1959 – 1960	Troop Leader B Squadron 13/18 Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) in Ipoh Malaya
1960	Promoted Temporary Captain 11 January 1960 - General Staff Officer Three (Captain) HQ Southern Command Melbourne, Promoted Substantive Captain 12 December 1960
1961 - 1962	Adjutant & Quartermaster Melbourne University Regiment
1962 – 1964	Tactics Wing Armoured Centre Puckapunyal
1964 – 1967	Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham United Kingdom Promoted Substantive Major 12 December 1966
1967 – 1968	General Staff Officer Two (Major) Weapons, Fire Control Systems and Ammunition, Army Headquarters, Albert Park Victoria
1968 – 1970	Officer Commanding A Squadron 1 <sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment in Puckapunyal, 4 February to 16 December 1969 then Officer Commanding A Squadron in South Vietnam 17 December 1969 -16 December 1970 (Note 1)
1970 – 1974	Staff Officer Grade One (Lieutenant Colonel) Armaments and Coordination D Equipment – Melbourne and Canberra
1975 – 1976	Commanding Officer/Chief Instructor Armoured Centre Puckapunyal
1977 – 1979	Staff Officer Grade One Armaments at Australian Army Staff Washington USA
1979 – 1980	Staff Officer Grade One Scientific Advisors Office Army Office Canberra
1981 – 1984	Deputy Commandant Land Warfare Centre Canungra
1984	Retired as a Lieutenant Colonel

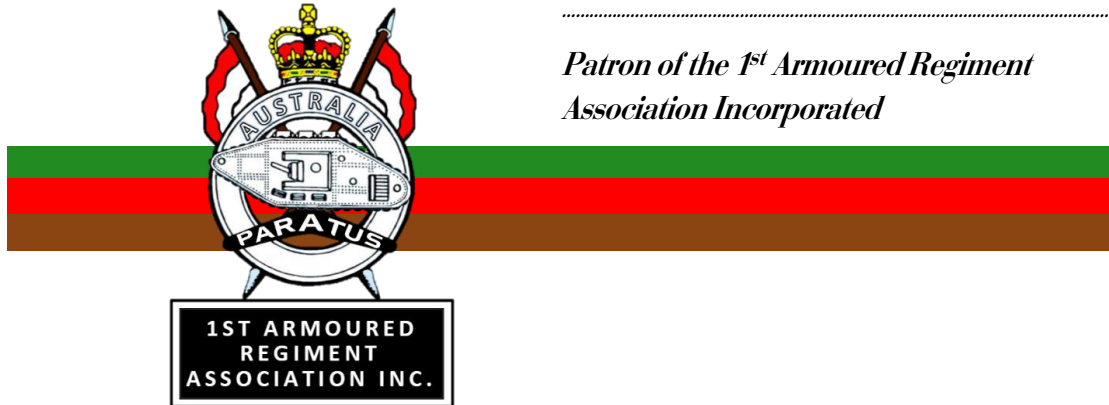
Note 1: The Department of Veterans Affairs Nominal Roll for Vietnam shows Jack as B Squadron from 17 December 1969 to 16 December 1970. This is clearly wrong.



**This is the framed certificate that our Association proudly sent to all our  
Veterans of Operation Hammersley**

# Operation Hammersley

*MAJGEN Craig Orme DSC, AM, CSC, (Retd)*



*Patron of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment  
Association Incorporated*

***B**E IT BE KNOWN that we are proud to recognise you as a member of our Association and in particular we thank you for your service with A Squadron 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment and for your participation in 'Operation Hammersley,' one of the most significant battles involving Australian forces during the Vietnam War.*

## Recipient

*The awarding of this Certificate was ratified at our full committee meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, where it was unanimously passed that the Association should commemorate and thank our veterans of this battle by presenting them with this Certificate which can be displayed with pride.*

*Citation for extraordinary action in Operation Hammersley, Phuoc Tuy Province, Long Hai, South Vietnam from 10<sup>th</sup> February to 3<sup>d</sup> March 1970.*

*I believe the dedication and sheer professionalism demonstrated by the tank crews and support teams was outstanding and that their efforts caused the enemy to lose battles he normally would have won and perhaps more important, saved valuable Australian lives.*

*Jack Chipman, OCA Squadron, 1970*

*Congratulations from all members of the committee.*

*Keith Meloncelli*



**All is not lost for the awarding of the RVN CGWP to members of the following three units involved in Operation Hammersley**

**A Sqn 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment**

**B Sqn 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment**

**1 Field Sqn RAE.**

Association members are advised that the Defence Honours and Awards Appeal Tribunal (DHAAT) has affirmed the decision, in the above own-motion personal appeal lodged by Bruce Cameron, to refuse to extend eligibility for the award of the RVN CGWP to members of the following three units involved in Operation Hammersley: A Sqn 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment, B Sqn 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment and 1 Field Sqn RAE. Members should note however, the detailed evidence-based submission made by the RAAC Corporation and the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association (under the auspices of Noel McLaughlin and Pedro Rosemond [our authorised representative]), which was originally tabled in 2017, is still with Defence and is still being assessed by their Historical Awards people pending final determination. There have been a number of unacceptable delays in dealing with this submission including inaction as well as setting aside by higher authorities dealing with the same matter. Constantly changing validation research staff has not helped.

That submission is tendered in favour of the above three Supporting Arms Units as well as the elements of 161 Recce Flight and 9 Sqn RAAF who also provided support during Hammersley.

The RAAC Corporation in conjunction with the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association as lead client is advocating on behalf of all five units and not three.

The investigation was suspended in August 2019 because of the application made by Bruce Cameron to the DHAAT which heard his appeal on 29 October 2019. As previously advised, the 2017 submission has been fully supported by the Management Committee and 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association since it was originally submitted. It remains fully supported.

Given that there are another four separate submissions plus the Corporation's submission to be investigated, it is anticipated that Defence may not make a decision concerning the original submission for a number of months. It has also been confirmed that the option to appeal to the DHAAT, against a rejection of the 2017 Submission by Defence, remains open to the RAAC Corporation and the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association.

Further information will be provided when available.

Keith Meloncelli

President

1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association



## Address to 1st Armoured Regiment

*On the 14 Nov 19 John Brooker OAM and Peter Rosemond CSC OAM, conducted a presentation to the soldiers of 1st Armoured Regiment on Operation Hammersley. On behalf of the association, committee and myself I wish to thank both gentlemen for making themselves available to provide insight into the Operation, from personnel who were there.*

*These types of activities strengthen the bonds with current serving soldiers and the association.*

*Hopefully future presentation can occur on other theatres of operations or on other aspects of being a member of Regiment, with the opportunity for other members of the association to give their stories.*

*Keith (Mel) Meloncelli*

*President 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment Association*

## Regimental visits November 2019

By John Brooker

Association members were involved in two visits to the regiment during November. The first to give a presentation on OP HAMMERSLEY and the second for the Cambrai day parade. The Hammersley presentation was LTCOL Jack Chipmans that he presented at the 2010 association Hammersley dinner. We cut and pasted the old presentation onto a later power point version. We were meet at the front gate by LT Finch our host for the day. We were taken to lunch at the officer's mess where we caught up with the CO and incoming CO and other officers of the regiment. After lunch we were escorted to the Monash Centre, where we were to do the presentation.

For the presentation we updated the maps on the original, with actual maps that were issued in country, and photos from the operation. We had recorded Jack's original presentation, so we tried where possible to reflect on the points Jack had made. John Brooker, OAM, gave a background to the operation and battle, and explained facts about the area, and the Viet Cong units involved in the contacts.

Pedro Rosemond, CSC, OAM, covered the tank assaults during the battle. The presentation was more of an overview of the operation and didn't go into minor details due to the time allocated for the presentation. At the completion of the presentation we took questions, there was immense interest on a number of subjects, not all related to Hammersley, questions about training, resupply and training with infantry and air support. We were impressed by the interest shown by those that were able to attend.

After the presentation we were taken on a tour of the unit's work in progress museum/history room. They were still unpacking boxes and trying to get it all on display for Cambrai Day.



Pedro, Tubby LT Nettleton



LT Nettleton, Tubby, Mark Reid. SGT Huang





LT Nettleton, Tubby, Mark Reid

After looking through we were taken to RHQ to have final discussions and farewells with the CO and RSM.



Association representatives with, RSM Alex Donnelly, CO LTCOL John Holloway

## Cambrai Day

Upon arrival at the front gate we located the Clugston and Callis families and made sure they were issued with passes. They were then met by their hosts from C SQN who escorted them to the parade ground area. After the parade the SQN vehicles bearing their names were assembled at the Rainey club. C SQN looked after the families and nothing was too much trouble. The families enjoyed the day.

The vehicles were already formed up on the parade ground when we arrived ready for the regiment to march on. The Regiment marched on and the parade commenced. The parade followed the usual format of the drive past and advance in review order. After the advance all crews dismounted and formed up for the regimental awards presentation. During the presentations there was a farewell from the CO and changeover of Commanders of 1 BDE. Awards to JNCO of the year CPL Luke Scott presented by Assoc VP John Brooker OAM and Soldier of the year TPR Carmine Signoriello presented by Assoc JVP Mark Reid. Once the parade concluded everyone moved over to the Rainey Club for after parade refreshments.



Pedro





## 2019 Cambrai Day B Squadron on parade

RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia

**2 Troop with Mine Clearing Blade fitted**



## Hammersley Awards and Cheque presentation to the regimental museum

The Hammersley awards are presented annually to members of A Squadron for crewman excellence in the field as decided by the OC and SSM A SQN. The awards are financed by the generosity of LTCOL Chipman (Retd) OC of A SQN in SVN and SQN members from SVN.

The winners this year were, Outstanding Crew Commander, CPL Wayne Leathley, Outstanding Gunner TPR Simon Halicki, Outstanding Driver TPR Carl Schwenke and Outstanding NON RAAC crewman CFN William Phillips. The Lou Walker award for outstanding Soldier, TPR Lachlan Phillips, this award is provided by former Assoc president Lou Walker OAM. The awards for 2019 were presented by John Brooker and Lou Walker on behalf of the members of A SQN SVN.







If you intend to travel to Adelaide next year for the Cambrai Parade (highly recommended) we will release details once we have them for next year. You will need to register with Mark so we can get you pass. We would also like to put an association table together for the Regimental Ball, we will also add these details as well.

The regiment is always happy to host association members wishing to visit the unit. If you are over in Adelaide and wish to visit, please contact our unit LO Mark Read. You need to do this well in advance of your visit. The regiment is happy to host you, however you need to plan for your visit, because due to training commitments the regiment may not be there. Please don't turn up at the front gate to visit the regiment, as they won't let you in, go through Mark.



The Regiment had contacted the association asking for financial assistance in establishing the regimental museum in their new surroundings. The association responded with a donation of \$2500.00. The cheque handover was done during Cambrai week



**CPL Luke Scott (Recipient of JNCO of the year) - award was accepted by LT Sutton on his behalf**



The final event for the week was the regimental ball held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. Mark Reid and John Brooker attended representing the association. A great night and a wind down for the regiment on what has been a busy year. In his final address to the regiment he commented that he was happy to see the association and the regiment working well together, and his hope that this would continue on into the future.



**Soldier of the year was TPR Carmine SIGNORIELLO**



## C Squadron - Vehicles Names in Honour of Coral-Balmoral

To honour the memory of those who served in Vietnam, C Squadron 1st Armoured Regiment has issued an 'Order of the Day' to name a number of the Squadron Vehicles after the battles of FSB Coral and FSB Balmoral in May/June 1968. Four soldiers of C Squadron with surnames starting with "C", and one vehicle, involved in the Battles



David Carra 32C - 2 Troop C  
Squadron FSB Coral 1968 SVN



CLUGSTON named after Barry Clugston  
31C -1 Troop C Squadron FSB Coral 1968 SVN

Barry and family inspecting vehicle at 2019  
Cambrai Parade



Ambrose Crowe (Decd.)  
32A - 2 Troop C Squadron FSB Coral 1968 SVN



31A Neville Calliss (Decd.)  
1 Troop C Squadron FSB Coral 1968 SVN







### **Russell Gannon presenting 1 Tp A Sqn with gift from 1 Tp A Sqn 1980/81 Butterworth Deployment**

See photo of what was in Tony Rigby's package - essentially a plaque to commemorate the 40 year reunion Penang of 1 Tp boys attached to D Coy 5/7 RAR.

Bottle Chivas Regal (1992), letter for CO (Tony worked with Lt Col Holloway when both Capt.'s at RMC in 2007), letter for senior trooper and photos of 1 Tp 1978-83.



1 Tp A Sqn after receiving Russell Gannon's box of memorabilia time capsule box from 1 Tp A Sqn's 1980/81 Butterworth Deployment.



John Schnaars, OAM (a WA Association Member) unveiling a Memorial at Bruce Rock (WA) on Saturday 2 November 2019 at 1000 hours. The Memorial, three sided and polished grey granite, is to be dedicated to veterans from Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, East Timor and Somalia.

This is John's 11th and final memorial. John has also placed over 200 plaques and headstones as well as organising an Australian War Grave for an old digger buried in Cairns. John is the President of WA Veterans' Retreats including the retreat at Meentheena which is managed and supported by members of the Committee and their wives, who have all done a brilliant job. Many people who visit/stay at the camp return on multiple occasions.

Further details on Meentheena may be found at <https://www.vrwa-meentheena.org/contact>







**Victoria State - Cambrai Long Lunch was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> November at the Emerald Hotel South Melbourne. State Rep - Iain Reynolds**



We had 14 members + 1 wife in attendance. We also had Mick Dunn make the trip across from South Australia. We took the opportunity to welcome & present our latest new member, Ken Thompson with his membership card & badge. A good lunch was had by all & we thanked Jane & her staff of the Emerald by presenting her with an Association plaque which will be proudly displayed in the hotel.

Attendees:

Bill Stanfield, Chris McLeod, Dave Key, Gerry Germaine, Henry Polis, Herman Herberts, Iain Reynolds, John Forresters, Ken & Henny Thompson, Mick Dunn, Phil Hoseason-Smith, Russ James, Simon Williams.

