



1ST ARMoured
REGIMENT
ASSOCIATION INC.

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER 1 ARMD REGT ASSOCIATION | JAN – MAR 26 | NO. 108

PARATUS

ABN 16 930 055 791

W: www.paratus.org.au

ISSN 2208-2433 (Online)

PATRON: BRIG Ted Acutt (Retd)
PRESIDENT: Keith (Mel) Meloncelli
SECRETARY: Russ James
TREASURER: Richard (Dick) Stanios



“The Train Party-1994”. 24 tanks of the Regiment and their rail escort party ready to depart Adelaide freight yard bound for Alice Springs and EX Northern Predator 94 in the NT.

Back L-R TPR Jamie Delareux, TPR Dean Martin, SGT Graeme Walker, TPR Brett Kinnemont
Front- L-R: LCPL Andrew Church, WO1 Jim Bailey (RQMS), CAPT Peter Branagan (QM), Unknown.

(Photo courtesy Peter Branagan OAM)

1st ARMoured REGIMENT

Theatre Honour
STH VIETNAM 1968-1971
Battle Honours
Coral – Balmoral
Hat Dich
Binh Ba
Theatres of Operation
Japan (1st Armd Car Sqn)
Sth Vietnam
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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Links to Web Sites and Face Book Pages

Web Sites

1st ARMoured REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC.
www.paratus.org.au

RAAC CORPORATION
www.raaccorpltd.org.au

ROYAL TANK REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
www.royaltankregiment.com

Facebook Pages

1st ARMD REGT ASSOC MEMBERS ONLY
www.facebook.com/groups/112757492512931/

1st ARMD REGT ASSOC SOCIAL PAGE
www.facebook.com/groups/106848019339045/

1st ARMoured REGIMENT FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/1ArmdRegt/



Report from the Secretary - Russ James
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Mentone. VIC 3194
B: Bendigo Bank
1st Armoured Regiment Association Inc.
BSB: 633-000
Account: 161498159



Due to Russ James' absence at the time of preparing this issue, the Secretary's Report is not included in this issue of Paratus.

Donations

The Association gratefully acknowledges the following members and veterans who have made donations to the Association since the last Newsletter:

- Ken Hudson
- 'Vandy' Vandeduim
- Jan Fenton
- Stan Hanuszewicz
- Kingsley Maguire
- Mary Bell
- Rex Harris

Association Gatherings - \$10 per Association Member Subsidy

The Association can provide a subsidy of \$10 per head for gatherings of Association members in regional/remote areas to subsidise the cost of the meal. Any gathering of four (4) or more Association members for lunch and/or dinner is entitled to claim the \$10 per head. The money is to be used to offset food costs only. A list of the members attending is required as well as a photo of those in attendance. Recently, this subsidy has been paid to offset direct members costs for the AGM in July 2025 and the Tolmie Camping Trip in March among others.

Claims should be submitted to the Secretary (secretary@paratus.org.au) or Treasurer (treasurer@paratus.org.au)



Mixed Black Hat Dinner at Epping RSL 21 March 26.

Left to right: Bob Kennard, Trevor and Brenda Watts, Graeme Walker, Penny Burke, Chris and Lisa Morris, Glenniss and Peter Duncombe and Lyn Kennard
(Photo courtesy Peter Duncombe)

The O'Donnell Centre

On the 31st of October 2025 the School of Armour's new simulation centre was officially named in honour of LTGEN (Rtd) Laurie O'Donnell AC, former Royal Australian Armoured Corps officer and Chief of the General Staff. Soon after the event, Laurie's wife June O'Donnell contacted the Association Secretary to share her thoughts from the day.

Dear Russ,

Re the Paratus Newsletter which I received just recently:

I continue to be impressed by the activities of the Corps and the young men who obviously love being Armour!

Perhaps in the next Newsletter there will be an article about the Naming of The O'Donnell Centre at Puckapunyal on the 31st October'25. It was magnificent event carried out in the Tank Hangar (The Peter Branagan Tank Hangar) because of the weather forecast. However, the perfect venue!

Unfortunately, because of the delay (in years) of the completion of the building it was impossible to consider taking Laurie. He was represented by all the family and our eldest son, Grant, spoke on his behalf. Lt Col. Aaron Cimbaljevic was the Commanding Officer School of Armour.

I hope this note finds you well. Laurie is failing but well cared for.

Best wishes for the New year.

Kind regards,

June O'Donnell



**Laurie's son Grant O'Donnell addresses the parade.
(Photo courtesy WO2 Mick Hunter)**



**June O'Donnell unveils the O'Donnell Centre plaque. The Light Horse vignette in the background paid tribute to Beersheba Day which was commemorated during the second half of the ceremony.
(Photo courtesy WO2 Mick Hunter)**



**The O'Donnell family with distinguished guests in The Peter Branagan OAM Tank Hangar at the conclusion of the ceremony.
(Photo courtesy WO2 Mick Hunter)**



The O'Donnell family is joined by distinguished guests and the School of Armour staff in front of The O'Donnell Centre which now houses the School's growing range of simulation systems. Tactics Wing will also reside within the imposing three storey building. (Photo courtesy WO2 Mick Hunter)



June O'Donnell proudly stands in front of The O'Donnell Centre after the official naming ceremony. (Photo courtesy WO2 Mick Hunter)

VALE

The 20th of March 2026 marked the passing to the green fields beyond of esteemed RAAC officer and former Australian Army Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General (Retired) Lawrence George O'Donnell AC. In tribute, The Office of the Chief of Army released the following statement.

CHIEF OF ARMY

PASSING OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL LAWRENCE O'DONNELL AC

30 MARCH 2026

Lieutenant General Lawrence George O'Donnell was a servant of Australia in the truest sense — a soldier, a leader, and a man whose life was defined by commitment to his country and to those he led.

Across more than three decades in uniform — from the wheat belt in Western Australia to the parade ground at Duntroon, from Malaya to Vietnam, and ultimately to the highest levels of military leadership — Lieutenant General O'Donnell embodied the best of our profession.

Graduating from the Royal Military College as the Queen's Medallist, the top of his class, he began a career characterised by excellence, humility, and courage. Through his operational service in Malaya and Vietnam, regimental service in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, and his stewardship of the Army as Chief of the General Staff from 1987-1990, his leadership shaped generations of officers and soldiers.

His service was recognised with appointment as an Officer and later a Companion of the Order of Australia — honours that reflect a lifetime of service, dedication and integrity.

Lieutenant General O'Donnell was a rare blend of intellect, humility and compassion — qualities that left a lasting mark on the soldiers, units, and ultimately the Army he led.

He was deeply committed to service, and to the responsibility leaders have for the soldiers entrusted to their care. Those privileged to serve with him remember not only his decisiveness and clarity of thought, but his generosity of spirit and unwavering belief in the potential of others.

Lieutenant General O'Donnell's commitment to the community continued well after retiring from the Army — he championed national recognition of migrants, served as Representative Honorary Colonel of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, and proudly represented Australia on the world stage.

His life was testament to the idea that service does not end with retirement. That one is a soldier for life.

To Lieutenant General O'Donnell's family, we offer our deepest sympathies, respect and gratitude. Your strength enabled his service. Your sacrifice is part of his legacy.

As today's Chief of Army, I am proud to recognise one of our own — a leader, a steward, an Australian soldier. We honour Lieutenant General O'Donnell not only for what he achieved, but for who he was. His life reminds us what it means to lead with purpose, to serve with humility, and to place country and duty before self.

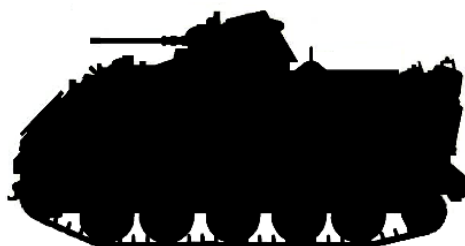
Lieutenant General Lawrence George O'Donnell's memory will endure in the Army he led, the people he inspired, and the history he now joins.

Signed

Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, AO, DSC
Chief of Army



Portrait of LTGEN Laurie O'Donnell AC that hangs in the School of Armour Officers Mess in Hopkins Barracks.
(Photo courtesy Derek Simpson via Facebook)



Bits and pieces from around the Association

B&P 01 – Epping Leopard gets covered.

Many of us have seen recent photos from around the country of the gifted Leopards that have become quite dilapidated due to the weather and conditions of the locations where they are now placed. Not so the Epping RSL Leopard, 27762, which has been provided with not only overhead cover but also lighting, thanks to the Epping RSL sub branch. Association member Trevor Watts has been instrumental in bringing the improvements to fruition and has sent in the following photos. Excellent work by all involved.



B&P 02 – A Little Centurion CORRUPTION

Many of you may be familiar with the crew commander in the first photo below, however can anyone identify the crew members in the following photo. These pictures are believed to have been seen on Facebook quite some time ago, however were sent in by the Secretary. Send your answers for the two mystery crewmen to the Secretary at secretary@paratus.org.au or editor at newsletter@paratus.org.au



The unmistakable face of DMS McDonald alongside 32A



Two of the unidentified crew of 32A – do you know their names?

B&P 03 – Putting Names to Faces

Herman Harberts has set himself quite a challenge. Having secured a high resolution photo of C Squadron prior to deployment to SVN in 1967, Herman has embarked on identifying each member. So far 85 of the 171 faces have now been identified. The photo has been broken up into seven parts on the following pages so the faces can be seen a bit more clearly in addition to the names attached to those already known. Please take a close look and if you can identify any of those not already named please contact Herman at [hgharber@gmail.com] or the Editor [newsletter@paratus.org.au].



C SQN 1st Armoured Regiment December 1967

The following is the list of names of those already identified:

Neil Adams
Geoff Adams
Len Allen
Bob Ambrose
Des Askin
Dicky Baker
Chris Bavistock
Ron Bell
Geoff Bennett
Michael Bidey
Blue Bowman
Dennis Britten
Rod Burgess
Bill Burton
Joe Busuttil
Mick Butler
Len Cadzow
Nev Callis
Don Campbell
Dave Carra
Barry Clugston
Brian Coward
Tom Cowburn
Ambrose Crowe
David Davidson
Blue Dyson
Joe Dziedzic
Alex Efimov

Colin England
Peter Francis
John George
Werner Golla
Ian Goss
Bob Gould
Allan Hackney
John Haddrick
Herman Harberts
Charlie Harris
Mick Holland
William Howell
Trevor Howlett
Ken Hunter
Peter Hutton
Bluey Jay
Leigh Jukes
Russ Kiellerup
Ed Lancaster
Bob Lees
Trevor Lowe
Jack Luff
Peter Lukeis
Des Mahar
Jock McConnel
Gerry McCormack
Ken McKeon
Ian McMaster

Barry McMullan
Don McRoberts
Peter Merril
Graeme Millington
Barry Munari
Gas Murphy
Gavin Neville
Dan Octigan
Paddy O'Loughlin
Phil Payne
Neil Phillips
Mick Rainey
Barry Rainey
Phil Reeves
Eric Rowley
Peter Simpson
Bob Snape
Len Swarbrick
Bruce Tarran
Dave Thompson
Ian Tregenza
Gerry Veldhuis
Allan Vickers
David Weigall
Gary Willits
John Wilson
Barry Wyllie
Andy Zsolt



Photo 1

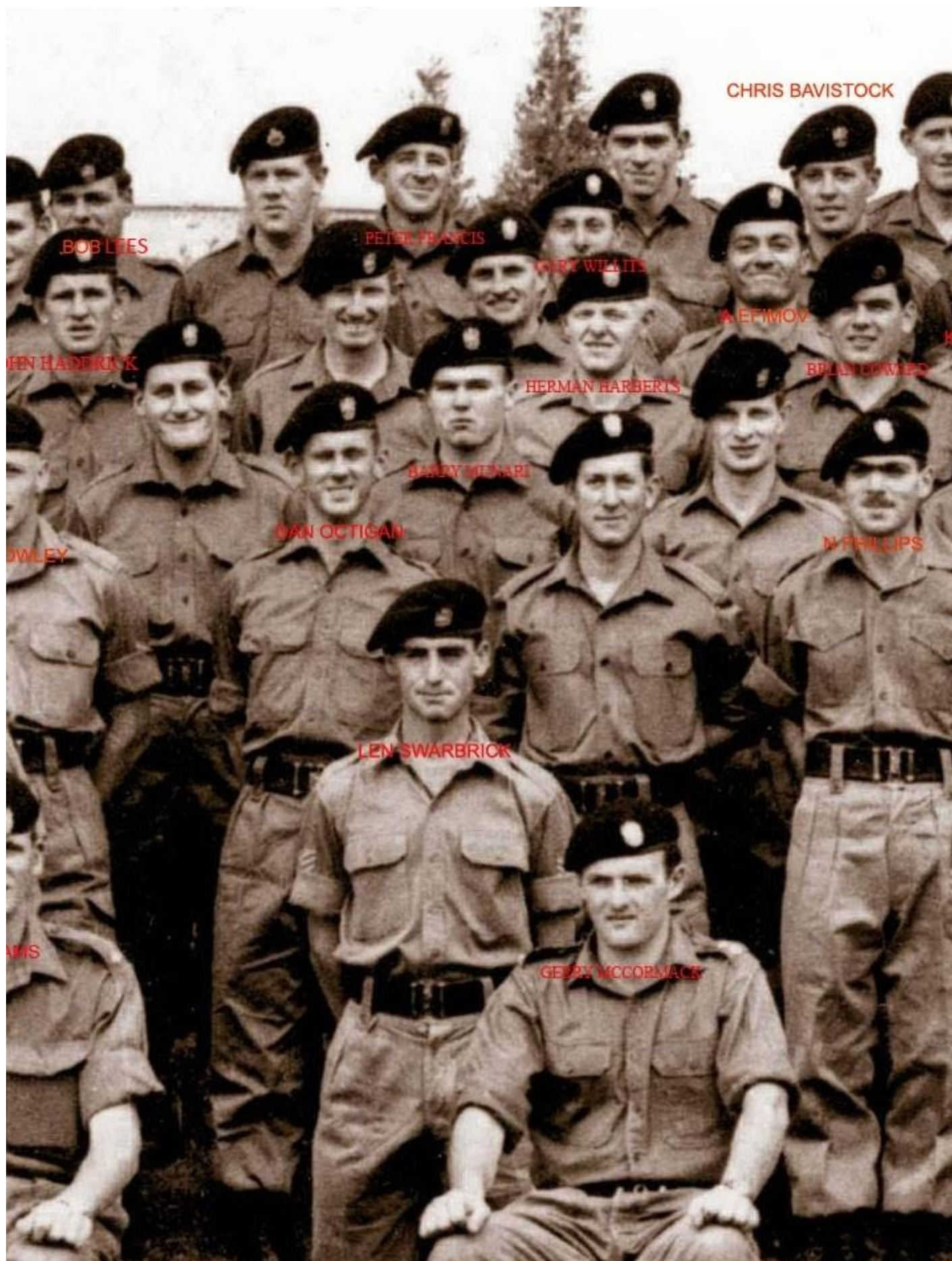


Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

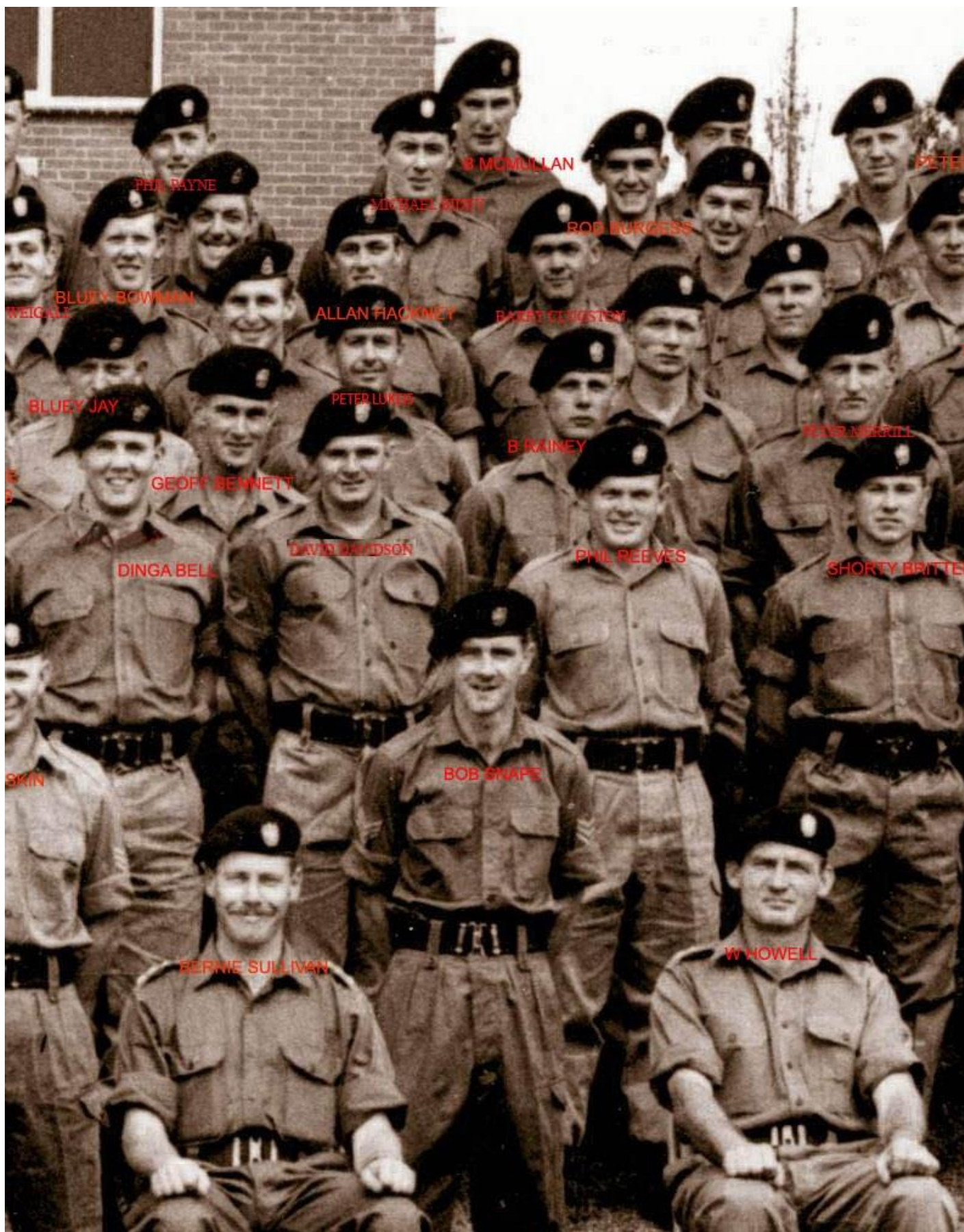


Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

On behalf of Herman, many thanks for taking the time to look across the many faces of C Squadron from December 1967.

Crow Eaters Veteran's Retreat Update

As you may have seen across the various 1st Armoured Regiment and RAAC Facebook sites, Lou Walker has posted an update on this year's veteran's retreat.

March/April Update

There is still time to attend this yearly event. Contact Lou by 17th of April 26 on the Facebook sites that this notice is posted or ring: 0491 817 720.

I realise that the fuel shortage may have an impact for travel for a lot of the attendees, and understand fully if you choose not to attend, but please advise me NLT 17th April 26 if you have already indicated your attendance.

Preparation is well under way for the start of the retreat at 1200hr on 30th April 2026 at the Quorn Bowling Club car park. 20 additional outside chairs have been sourced from a local donor that are of a sturdier design for some of your muscular frames for use in the outdoor area. Raffle donations have been coming in thick and fast for our yearly donation to the RFDS and Claude (the mascot) and his murder of crows have been busy gaining further support for the event. There will be a final update for the Retreat on the 17th April 26, and we are all looking forward to catching up with you.

Lou Walker – Retreat Organiser/Coordinator.



Retreat mascot 'Claude' awaits the 2026 crew.





Honour Roll

Dedicated to those 1st Armoured Regiment Soldiers that made the ultimate sacrifice

Killed in Action

TPR James Kerr (13 May 1969)

Died of Wounds

TPR Mick Hannaford (14 December 1968)

Died within the prescribed period

WO2 Noel Lowes (6 July 1971)

Killed Accidentally whilst on Military duty in a Training environment

TPR A. M. Jordan (14 October 1962)

CFN B. Silver (LAD) (19 November 1962)

SGT R. Morrison (17 August 1965)

LT A. J. Massey (7 July 1982)

TPR A. Patterson (7 June 1984)

SGT R. G. Murray (9 July 1986)



The Association recognises and acknowledges those former members of the Regiment who were either KIA or DOW whilst serving with units such as the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, 3rd Cavalry Regiment or any other units in any conflict since the Regiment was formed in 1949.

The Association also recognises and acknowledges those former members of the Regiment who have passed since the end of a conflict and who may or may not have been recognised by the Department of Veterans' Affairs as entitled to an Official Commemoration. Hundreds are known to have passed of wounds or illnesses and diseases that may have been contracted during military service.

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary then, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.
'LEST WE FORGET'**

Members passed away since the last newsletter:

Lawrence George O'Donnell AC - 20 March 2026



REGIMENTAL NEWS



There is no Regimental update for this edition however the Editor has been informed that the Regiment continues with their mission conducting trials with ground vehicles (UGVs), small unmanned aerial systems (SUAS) and remote weapons systems (RWS) under the Army Accelerated Capability Pipeline (AACP).

The Regiment's Facebook page can be found at this [LINK](#).

Knock-off Note from the Editor

Greetings fellow members,

We're at the end of March and also at the end of another full edition of the Paratus Newsletter. So much so that the Long Weekend Tolmie camping trip report has had to be slipped to Edition 109.

While the naming of the School of Armour's simulation centre was a highlight late last year, the recent passing of LTGEN Laurie O'Donnell has been sobering news indeed. Having seen inside the O'Donnell Centre, I can report that it is an impressive facility and certainly a fitting tribute to LTGEN Laurie O'Donnell as it not only caters to RAAC trade training but to all trainees of other corps who attend courses and utilise any of the current simulation systems installed there. I will endeavour to put together a feature article on the capabilities of The O'Donnell Centre in the future.

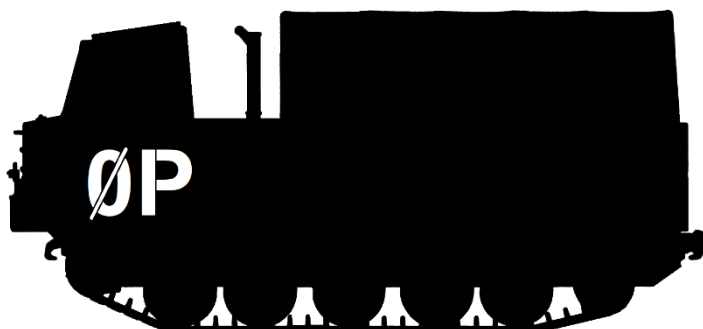
The next few months have plenty in store; Anzac Day of course, the Crow Eaters Veteran's Retreat among others.

If you have a chance over the next couple of months, dig out some of your old photos, take a photo or two of your crusty old 'memories' from your trunk or send in a Bits and Pieces story contribution. There will be room in a future edition for all of it. Send them straight to: newsletter@paratus.org.au and/or: graeme14b11a32a@gmail.com.

Enjoy your Easter break next weekend. Travel safe and I'll see you in the next edition of Paratus.

Cheers,
Wol Walker
Editor

"Zero Papa – Out"



NOTICES

Scholarships – Educational and Sporting

Applications for both the Educational and Sporting Scholarship – up to \$500 each – may be obtained from the Secretary at secretary@paratus.org.au



Looking to submit DVA Claim?

If you or anyone you know is considering pursuing claims through DVA and aren't too confident of the process or who to approach to commence your claim, please contact the Secretary who can put you in touch with an advocate to ensure your claims will be dealt with thoroughly, correctly and to ensure the most favourable outcome for you, the veteran. The Secretary's contact details can be found on the front page of this issue of Paratus.

1st ARMoured REGIMENT ASSOCIATION Q STORE

The Association Q Store has plenty of scarves, ties, lapel pins and stickers, among other items, still in stock. Contact the Q Store and proudly display your association.

LINK TO THE ASSOCIATION Q STORE WEBPAGE [HERE](#)

