

Centurion

May 2017

1ST ARMOURED REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



CO 1AR Lt Col Chris Gardiner (right) and RSM 1AR Jason Robinson (left) alongside the sign graciously donated by the 1AR Association team from South Australia. It is in an excellent location as everyone leaving the 'wire' must pass it during the move out to the training audience. Note the Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV) that the young members of A Squadron are crewing to provide mobility to our training teams.

Theatres of Operation

Japan

Vietnam - Battle Honours

- Coral - Balmoral
- Hat Dich
- Binh Ba

Rhodesia

Cambodia

East Timor

Iraq

Solomon Islands

Afghanistan

Our Soldiers Today

(Click on)

<http://armynews.realviewdigital.com/#folio=1>

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.

Important:

If you change home, postal or email addresses, please advise Treasurer.

If at all possible please provide an email address for Newsletter distribution.



Paratus

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From The Editor's Desk



In this Edition, we have been able to cover stories on some of our soldiers in the Middle East, including those celebrating on Anzac day, 2017.

Hopefully by the time this publication is sent out to our members the first lot of Care packages will have been received.

There is also a number of articles that are directed at the Battles of Coral and Balmoral, SVN May to June 1968, to recognise the 49th Anniversary leading up to the 50th Anniversary which will be celebrated at the 1ARA Reunion in Adelaide, November. 2018.

(See pages 16 & 17 for details and registration).

Please don't leave registration until the last minute as we need to know numbers to help in our planning.

Also see details of the Association's Birthday Weekend at Puckapunyal/Seymour in July this year.

(See details and Registration on pages 18 & 19).

A great result for BATTLE HONOUR CORAL-BALMORAL
Special thanks to 1AR Lt Col Bruce Cameron MC (Retd)

(See page 13-14)

This Newsletter is for all members of the Association and if you want to see articles or comment on particular issues, or your times in the 1st Armoured Regiment included in it please let me know and I will endeavour to research matters and include in future issues.

Your contributions on these topics, of course, is the best way to be represented.

A large percentage of the information that makes up this publication is researched from the Internet and sometimes it can be anything up to 3 months in arrears and I am conscience that a lot of it will already have been seen by a lot of our members already and that there may not be a lot of interest in seeing it again or perhaps it is important to see it in Magazine form.

Unfortunately, I don't hear from many people who would like to have a say in the content and I would like to encourage comment on your publication as currently I am flying a bit blind.

Please don't hesitate to call, mail or email me to let me know your thoughts on your Newsletter. I think it is important that everyone is represented.

"Say G'day and have your say."

News from Mary Badman, wife of Peter Badman
CO 1st Armoured Regiment, including the Time of Coral Balmoral SVN.

"Brig Peter Badman is comfortable and respectfully treated in the Dementia Ward of 'Estia' Nursing Home in Dalmeny, near Narooma. NSW"

"She is very busy with him now."

Gerry McCormack

Our thoughts and best wishes are with Peter, Mary and their family in this challenging time.

Update by John Dyson

Member of the UCG Committee,
Coral -Balmoral on behalf of 1AR

PROGRESS on the "UNIT CITATION for GALLENTY" for FSBs Coral and Balmoral for C Sqn. 1st Armd Reg.

The Committee first applied to Defence Honours and Awards with the original submission which was forwarded to the chief of the Army who rejected the submission. It was then appealed direct to the Minister with a petition containing almost 10 thousand signatures. He has now referred the appeal to the Independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal who will make a recommendation.

Your input is so important now!!

Here is where every person comes in. You do not need to be a member of the original C Sqn. You can be a friend, current member, wife, or member of the public.

BUT

1. It must be in the hands of the DHAAT by the 16th June 2017
2. It must be on the correct form at <http://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/>
3. It must contain information that will support a positive report to the government.

Remember this Citation is not only for the original C Sqn, but will be worn by all future C Sqn members from then on while the Unit is active.

Anyone one wanting further information or forms please contact me, John Dyson. [Driver 32 at Coral Balmoral].

dysonjk@bigpond.com

Yours Faithfully,

Peter

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#ref. 1st Armoured Regiment – Australian Army (Face Book) Operation Okra with Task Group Taji Rotation Four



Wondering what training Australian Army and New Zealand Army are delivering to Iraqi soldiers on the ground in Iraq? In this interview Commanding Officer of Task Group Taji 4's Training Task Unit, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Gardiner, explains how the TG is building partner capacity among Iraqi Security forces so they can Defeat Daesh and maintain security in Iraq:

(Click on)

<http://ow.ly/ZLRu30aUtyS> #OpOkraADF on Operations and Exercises

Our People – Anzac Day in the Middle East

Ricky Davies – Launceston



Ricky Davies will be a long way from his hometown of Launceston this Anzac Day because of an operational deployment to Iraq.

The 40-year old Lance Corporal is currently deployed on Operation Okra with Task Group Taji Rotation Four —a combined force of 270 Australian and New Zealand Defence personnel that has overall delivered military training to 21,000 Iraqi Security Forces.

For the coming months, Lance Corporal Davies will be based out of Taji Military Complex, providing transport and logistic support to the Task Group.



"My main job here in Iraq is transporting stores and ammunition around the training area, or to and from the flight line," he said.

"Sometimes, I'm attached to one of the training teams to assist with giving lessons to the Iraqis.

"The look of excitement and joy on the Iraqis' faces when they see you are Australian is definitely memorable."

"They are so happy for what they have and the help they are receiving." Lance Corporal Davies grew up in Newnham and attended Mayfield Primary, Brooks High School and Alanvale College.

Lance Corporal Davies said joining the Army in 2013 was the fulfilment of a life-long dream.

"I was awarded the best recruit in my platoon at basic training and now I'm here in Iraq," he said.

"This deployment is one of the most rewarding moments of my career.

"I enjoy the new challenges every day, jobs for different areas of the Task Group and working with people from different age groups, Corps and nations."

Anzac Day is a significant event for Lance Corporal Davies, and this year he will be celebrating it with his Anzac counterparts at a dawn service in Taji.

"I have uncles that served in the military, so Anzac Day has always been special to me," he said.

"The brave men and women who served in the past have forged the Anzac tradition before us.

"We need to show our respect to them, as well as remembering those who are currently deployed."

The support of his parents, siblings, wife and children have made the long time away from home easier to handle for Lance Corporal Davies.

"Missing family is hard but the letters and morale parcels that are received from home help to settle your emotions, and there is always someone there when you need a phone call home," he said.

"The family and I are based in Darwin these days, so I'm looking forward to getting back to the good weather for a barbecue and taking the kids out for bike rides and swimming."

Corporal Adam Dowling - Uralla



Corporal Adam Dowling is currently serving with Task Group Taji 4, a combined force of Australian and New Zealand Military personnel training Iraqi Security Forces.

THE DUSTY streets of Iraq are a far cry from Corporal Adam Dowling's hometown, Uralla.

Working with his father as a carpentry labourer in 2006, little did he know he would become a tank crew commander in the Australian Army.

"I was always interested in the military from a young age," Corporal Dowling said.

"Growing up on a farm as a kid, being around firearms and earth moving equipment, I loved anything to do with tracks and guns."

Now deployed in Iraq with Task Group Taji Rotation Four, a combined force of Australian and New Zealand allies, he trains Iraqi Security Forces to fight against Daesh.

"We're helping them to defeat Daesh by improving their combat capability in areas such as weapon handling, marksmanship, dismounted tactics, medical first aid and explosive awareness training," Corporal Dowling said.

"It's very rewarding to see the improvement in a soldier you have helped to train, knowing that they'll be using those skills to maintain the freedom and security of their own country."

As Anzac Day approaches, Corporal Dowling reflected on what it means to be part of a legacy of courage and mateship.

"When you're in the army you have a job to do, and Anzac Day is a reminder that you're part of something bigger," he said.

"Anzac Day is a reminder of our history and where our country has come from.

"It's also a time think about where we're heading."

When he is not on the range conducting training, Corporal Dowling spends his time preparing for the next day, going to the gym and listening to country music.

"We've been out here several months now," he said.

"I'm looking forward to getting back to Darwin and saying 'G'day' to the blokes back at 1st Armoured Regiment and having a cold beer.

"I'm also looking forward to taking some time out to see my family and mates back in NSW for a holiday."

Corporal Dowling's parents still live in Uralla and thanked them and his best mate Corporal Garwood for their support during his deployment.

Anzac Day is marked on Tuesday April 25 with dawn services and marches across the region.

Hawkesbury GAZETTE

Sharon Mascall-Dare
21 Apr 2017, 10:54 a.m.

Sergeant Adam Keegan – Kurrajong



Task Group Taji 4 member Sergeant Adam Keegan stands before the hulk of an old T-72 tank at the Taji Military Complex north of Baghdad.

Over the past 14 years, Sergeant Adam Keegan has travelled the world, completing two deployments to Afghanistan and taking part in international military exercises in the United States and New Caledonia.

This year on Anzac Day the 31-year old from Kurrajong will be in Iraq with Task Group Taji Rotation Four – a combined force of Australian and New Zealand Defence Force personnel that's training Iraqi Security Forces just north of Baghdad.

He'll spend the day delivering training to Iraqi soldiers in combat tactics, medical treatment and marksmanship as part of Operation Okra – Australia's contribution to the international coalition effort against the Daesh terrorist group.

"The training the Iraqis are getting from Anzac soldiers is improving their combat capability and helping them to defeat Daesh" he said.

"I feel the mission we are conducting here is very important and is truly making a difference in Iraq."

Sergeant Keegan joined the army as an 18 year-old, motivated by his grandfather's stories of Army life.

"I joined the army because I was inspired by my late grandad who passed away while I was in my early teens," he said.

"He also served in the Army and it had a great effect on my life.

"Growing up listening to his stories influenced me – I wanted to serve my country as a soldier."

In his youth Sergeant Keegan was a self-professed geek, who enjoyed computer gaming sessions with his mates.

After three years as a reservist, he transferred to the full-time Army in 2006.

His new full-time career started with training on the Leopard AS1 tank before converting over to the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank.

Before his current deployment to Iraq, Sergeant Keegan was posted to Darwin as a tank commander with the 1st Armoured Regiment.

"I used to enjoy the relaxed pace that the Hawkesbury provided as it's a far cry from the busy lifestyle I lead now," he said.

"It is hard being away from friends and family, especially my beautiful wife and daughter, but I know we're doing an important job over here, supporting the Iraqis so they can restore security to their own country."

Sergeant Adam Keegan is a member of Task Group Taji Four, a combined force of Australian and New Zealand Defence Force personnel training Iraqi Security Forces as part of Operation Okra to defeat Daesh and maintain security in Iraq.

There are about 300 Australians and 100 New Zealanders in the Task Group.

"This is my first deployment and it has been an amazing experience working with Australian, New Zealand and coalition forces in a combined environment, you couldn't ask for a more professional group of soldiers and officers," he said.

"Our role is to provide individual and small unit training to the Iraqi security forces before they move forward to fight Daesh in places like Mosul and elsewhere in Iraq." For Captain Chirgwin, this Anzac Day will mark another day working closely with members of the Iraqi security forces as part of his regular duties.

"They are amazing people," he said.

"Despite what they have been through in recent years, they are still some of the most generous and welcoming people you could ever meet.

"It's been a really humbling experience meeting some of the trainees and learning what they have been through."

But also on Anzac Day, as ever, Captain Chirgwin will draw strength from knowing he has the support of loved ones back home, as well as that of his local RSL.

"It's been fantastic to receive cards and gifts from family and friends, as well as care packages from the RSL," he said. "It's a brilliant boost to morale for everyone."

Captain Chirgwin – who moved to Bendigo with his family in 2000 where he attended St Peter's Primary School and Catholic College Bendigo – said while it was a shame not to spend Easter and Anzac Day with family in Victoria, he was committed to his "important work".

"From all reports we are achieving some very good results," he said.

Captain Adam Chirgwin monitors the work of an Iraqi Army tank crew during live-fire assault training at the Taji Military Complex, north of Baghdad, Iraq.

Bendigo Advertiser

Tuesday April 25, 2017
Jason Walls

Bendigo's Captain Adam Chirgwin



While many turn their thoughts this Anzac Day to those who lost their lives on the beaches of Gallipoli over a century ago, the loved ones of Bendigo army officer Adam Chirgwin will be focused on a much more contemporary conflict.

As the city pays its respects to soldiers past and present in the pre-dawn light, Captain Chirgwin will be half a world away continuing his work training Iraqi security forces north of Baghdad.

As part of Australia's contribution to the internal coalition effort against Islamic State – Operation Okra – the Second-in-Command of an Anzac training company is deployed with Task Group Taji 4, helping prepare Iraqi security forces to take the fight to the terrorist group otherwise known as "Daesh".



Major Brian Hickey – Toowoomba



AT THE age of 34, Toowoomba's Brian Hickey is already an experienced veteran, with three deployments under his belt.

Currently in Iraq with Task Group Taji Four (TGT-4), the Australian Army officer has an important role in the fight against Daesh.

"I'm the officer commanding of the Advise and Assist unit that works closely with Northern Baghdad Operations Command," Major Hickey said.

"Our role is to provide advice and assistance to the Iraqis in the northern Baghdad area of operations so they can defeat Daesh and maintain security in Iraq.

"It's an important job that means we are helping to protect our own troops from potential Daesh attacks and helping the Iraqis to succeed in restoring peace and security to their country."

TGT-4 is a combined force of Australian and New Zealand Defence Force personnel on a mission to build partner capacity among Iraqi Security Forces.

While most of the task group is deployed to train the Iraqis, Major Hickey's Australian team is providing advice and assistance - giving the Iraqi Army access to coalition know-how.

In one recent case, the Australian team was able to give the Iraqis access to surveillance data that led to the identification of a weapons cache and a Daesh safe house.

Iraq Security Forces then seized the weapons and prevented a suicide bomb attack, saving lives.

"We're making Baghdad a safer place," Major Hickey said. "The Iraqis tell us there used to be a high crime rate and regular explosions. Families were in danger and people were afraid to leave their homes.

"One Iraqi Army officer told me that his brother was shot dead on his doorstep in Baghdad. That kind of thing used to happen every day.

"We're helping the Iraqis to remove the threat from the northern Baghdad area and approach routes, by giving them access to the information they need to do their job."

"Coming to Iraq has been the highlight of my career," Major Hickey said.

"We're seeing a direct result of our activities by helping the Iraqis to stop weapons getting in and out of Baghdad and prevent suicide bomb attacks.

Major Hickey's unit is also strengthening protection measures for Australian, New Zealand and coalition troops based at the Taji Military Complex in the northern Baghdad area.

The Advise and Assist unit is also helping to keep Task Group Taji's training up-to-date so the Iraqis are shown how to deal with changing threats such as IEDs.

"It's also great to work in a dynamic team. As an army officer, you see your team go through the phases of 'storming, norming and performing'.

"Everyone is performing here and we can see we're making a difference in Iraq."

Before joining the army, Major Hickey attended Downlands College and the University of Southern Queensland, where he completed a business degree.

A keen Cowboys supporter, he also played rugby for the University of Southern Queensland Rugby Club.

At the Royal Military College - Duntroon, he joined the Royal Australian Armoured Corps and used his skills as a tank commander in Afghanistan before deploying to Iraq.

"A highlight was when I commanded a convoy transporting an Afghan Army battalion from Tarin Kot to Kabul to provide reinforcements," he said.

"The convoy included 180 Afghan vehicles and 12 Australian vehicles - it was around 20km long.

"The distance was 743km one way and we had to travel through multiple areas of operations held by other coalition nations. It was great to achieve our mission after many days of planning."

At the end of his deployment, Major Hickey is looking forward to seeing friends and family at home - particularly his wife and young son.

"I'm looking forward to a home-cooked meal," he said.

"I'm also looking forward to relaxing with my family and going to the beach."

Trooper Riley Tinning - Tongala



RILEY TINNING'S Anzac Day on Tuesday will be the real deal.

A trooper with the 1st Armoured Regiment – the senior regiment of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps – the Tongala local is right now on deployment in Iraq.

Stationed at Camp Taji, 30km from Baghdad, he is in the crew of a Bushmaster providing mobile security for the army's training teams working with the Iraqi army as it rebuilds.

His vehicle fits up to nine soldiers/trainers in an armour plated cocoon strong enough to deflect machinegun fire, mortar fragments and, most crucially in the Middle East, to protect against mines and IEDs (improvised explosive devices).

The Bushmaster's v-hull monocoque design deflects the blast of mines away from the vehicle and its occupants, making it understandably popular with its crews.

So for Trooper Tinning and his armoured cavalry comrades, April 25 will still be a partly traditional occasion, but depending on duties could also literally put him and the rest of his troop in a desperate firefight.

There will be the traditional Dawn Service, and most likely some two up as well. And it will certainly seem like Australia, the weather in Iraq is currently nudging into the mid and high 30s as its summer approaches.

Whatever the service it will be held inside the heavily fortified compound on the base, one of the very few places the Australians can consider themselves almost safe.

But it could always be worse.

"Some days it can be highly relaxed, while others are very hot and stressful, depending on the job for the day and its location.

"If the training team is shorthanded, they call on me to help out and I am convinced the training we're providing Iraqi soldiers is very important.

"It's improving their combat capabilities and giving them medical knowledge to save lives in combat situations.

"We are determined to help them defeat ISIS and to peacefully unify their country."

Riley makes no bones that the work he and the rest of the Australians are doing in Iraq is making a difference, a positive difference.

"Serving my country this way gives me a feeling of great pride and honour."

Camp Taji is in the heart of the volatile Sunni Triangle, a stronghold for Saddam Hussein and, since the 2003 Coalition invasion, a hotbed of jihadi opposition to the western forces.

It was also a centre for the production of chemical weapons – the UN forces found thousands of 122mm rocket shells ready to be armed when they captured the site.

But taking a phone call from home gave this soldier bigger fish to fry.

"We are well protected here, but the rooms are quite small. Two people living in a smallish area can get pretty cramped," he said.

"And I think of home every day.

"The time away from loved ones is extremely tough. "And my mum's cooking, that's something I really miss – I just can't wait to have it again. Seeing all my loved ones again will be a sweet moment."

And Riley already has another part of that homecoming planned – hoping his beloved Tongala football club has built some momentum following its flogging at the hands of reigning premier Nathalia at the weekend.

But most of all he is "really looking forward to catching up with family – and my mates for some beers".

Riley joined the army in 2012 after encouragement from a teacher at Kyabram P-12 College – advice he now sees as being invaluable.

"I never thought I'd be fighting to help secure a country, I always thought I would have a normal job in Tongala – I feel I've flown pretty high," he said.

"The military is a great career. We're well paid, it's challenging work and the camaraderie is like nothing else."

Riley expected to be rotated from his first deployment in two months – plenty of time to check out Tonny's performance in the Murray Football League – and said he's keen to return to a more normal life.

"No one hopes to come back here because we want it to become a safe, united and independent country, but I would gladly return if we were still needed to help achieve that."

Tongala is a small town in the north of Victoria, boasting 1150 residents - most who seem to have relative connections to the Victorian Mounted Rifles.

In November 2003 a monument, commemorating those who had to leave their (Yarramen) horses behind in Palestine, to the 24 Australian Light Horseman, who enlisted from Tongala and their horses, was unveiled by Maurice Watson, aged 84, the last Light Horseman, who enlisted from Tongala.

The statue standing 2 metres high, is of a horseman carrying an empty saddle, bridled and saddle cloth, walking away, head lowered. On a plaque beneath the statue is the poem *Farewell old Horse*, a tribute to the 120,000 Australian Waler Horses that went overseas in the First World War.

Due to Quarantine restrictions, only one horse returned to Australia, "Sandy," the mount of Major-General W.T. Bridges, who died at Gallipoli in May 2015.

The man behind the statue, Michael Thompson, a young resident with a proud Light horse heritage, then turned his energy (with heavy local support) into expanding the surrounding area in the centre of town, by adding the Avenue of 24 Iron barks, each with a small plaque commemorating a member of RAAC who died in Vietnam. All within sight of the town's main industry, the Nestles factory.



Avenue of Honour, Tongala



Thus in November 2004 His Excellency the Governor General Major General Michael Jeffrey, Governor General of Australia (2003-2008) and the Chief of the Australian Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, opened the Avenue after taking the salute from a surprisingly long march-past of hundreds associated with Light Horse in some way, whether having served in a RAAC unit, or as part of a commemorative mounted troop, owner of a military vehicle (all sorts), or a serving member. At least four excellent bands participated (including the 4/19 PWLH Band). I was given the privilege of unveiling L/Cpl John McCarthy's plaque. Wreaths were laid by a broad range of persons, including Lt Gen Peter Leahy, the CO and RSM of the Armoured Centre and CO and RSM of PWLH, senior police and RSL representatives, etc. [From 1/15 RNSWL Lancers' Dispatch]

Michael Thompson

Michel, the driving force behind the Avenue of Honour, has just organised for all the original plaques to be replaced with brass ones.

(The sealant used to cover the aluminium base of the plaques had degraded over time.)

Michael has now acquired a Centurion Tank and it is soon to become part of Tongala's Avenue of Honour. It will be positioned between the plaques of 1st Armd Regt's Tpr Michel Hannaford and Tpr Jim Kerr, both tank drivers who died as a result of enemy action while serving in Vietnam.

Refurbishing the Centurion to an acceptable standard is now Michael's primary task. He would welcome any assistance that can be provided.

Another on-going project of Michael's is to obtain copies of the service records of both tank drivers so that local school children can form an affinity with each of those they honour each year.



1st Armoured Regiment Association Sponsored Award



I attended the presentation Student of Merit for SUB 4, Cpl Crew Commanders Course and March out on Friday 28 April.

The Student of Merit was TRP Rowan.

The 1AR association sponsors this award along with the Tank Gunners Course and ROBC Tank

– John Brooker OAM



Enough is enough!



In Mt Warren Park shopping centre, (Qld) no Anzac badges were allowed to be sold, because the owner of the complex is from the Middle East, and refused permission.

Coles (Bi Lo) put up a big fight but he owns the land and the buildings and had complete control over the business people renting from him.



Well at last a politician who speaks the truth!!!

On the basis of this email, the day will come when the ANZAC Day Parade will be banned, RSL's will close and Australian soldiers will wear a different uniform.

As Bob Katter says below, the Australian flag is already forbidden in some public areas. Sometimes I wonder if we can still call this place Australia – it's already owned by many foreign countries now with huge investments in place.

Whether you love him or hate him, he hits a raw nerve!

Bob Katter Saying it as it is:

My great, great, great grandfather watched as his friends died in the Boer War. My grandfather watched and bled as his friends died in World Wars 1&2.

My grandfather watched as his friends & brothers died in the Depression of 32. My father watched as his friends died in Korea.

I watched as my friends died in Vietnam, East Timor & Desert Storm. Our sons and daughters watched & bled as their friends died in Afghanistan and Iraq. None of them died for the Afghanistan and Iraq Flag. Every Australian died for the Australian flag.

At a Victorian high school foreign students raised a Middle East flag on a school flag pole. Australian students took it down. Guess who was expelled...the students who took it down.

West Australian high school students were sent home, because they wore T-shirts with the Australian flag printed on them.

Enough is enough.

This message needs to be viewed by every Australian; and every Australian needs to stand up for Australia. We've bent over to appease the Aussie-haters long enough. I'm taking a stand.

I'm standing up because of the hundreds of thousands who died fighting in wars for this country, and for the Australian flag.

And shame on anyone who tries to make this a racist message.

AUSTRALIANS, stop giving away Your RIGHTS!

THIS IS OUR COUNTRY!

This statement DOES NOT mean I'm against immigration!

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE, IN MY COUNTRY, welcome to come legally:

1. Get a sponsor!
2. Learn the LANGUAGE, as immigrants have in the past!
3. Live by OUR rules! Dress as we Australians Do
4. Get a job!
5. Pay YOUR Taxes!
6. No Social Security until you have earned it and Paid for it!
7. NOW find a place to lay your head!

If you don't want to forward this for fear of offending someone, then YOU'RE PART OF THE PROBLEM!

We've gone so far the other way...bent over backwards not to offend anyone.

Only AUSTRALIANS seem to care when Australian Citizens are being offended!

AUSTRALIANS, stop giving away Your RIGHTS!

THIS IS OUR COUNTRY!

WAKE UP AUSTRALIA!!!

If you do not Pass this on, may your fingers cramp!

**Made in AUSTRALIA & DAMN PROUD OF IT!!!!!!"
AMEN**

Written by Bob Katter



1st Armoured Regiment Association Committee 2016/17

Patron

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



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ACT, Queensland and Far North Queensland (new position) Representatives Wanted!

Michael Dunn has volunteered to take over the position of Operations Manager. Richard Stanios has volunteered to take over position of Treasurer. Peter Still has volunteered to be the NT Rep., Kevin Briant WA Rep., Jim Soul Tasmania Rep. and Mick Payne NSW Rep. They have been approved as stand in positions until all positions are advertised and voted on at the 2017 AGM. ACT and QLD Reps, Currently vacant

All State Rep positions will be advertised prior to 2017 AGM.

Expression of Interest to the Secretary Trevor Watts 0467 327 562 or secretary@paratus.org.au



The following Honour Roll is dedicated to those 1st Armoured Regiment soldiers that have made the ultimate sacrifice.



Killed In Action

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

Died of Wounds

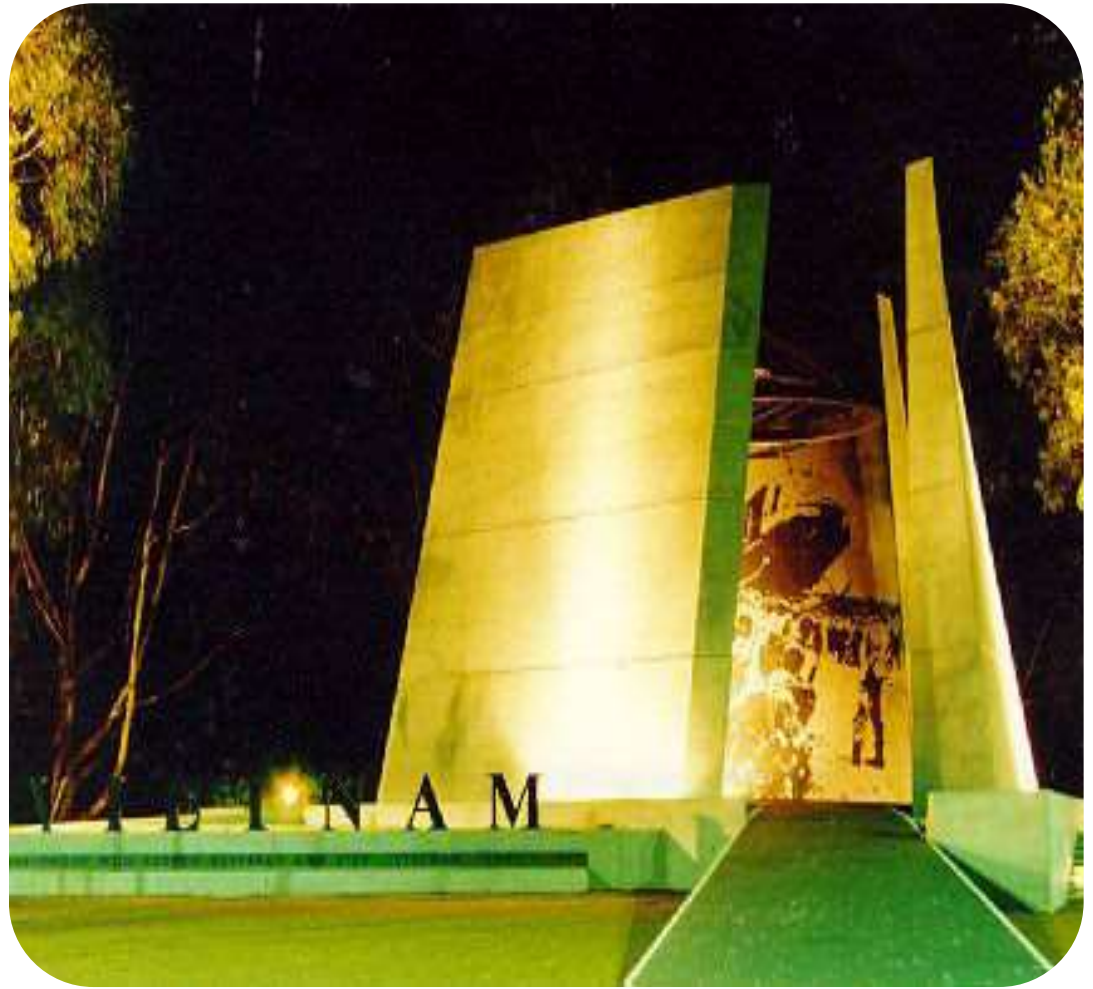
TPR M. Hannaford
WO2 T. Phillips

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)



Donations:

Care Package

Colin Toll
Michael Kuilboer
Lou and Barb Walker
Bill Stanfield
Bob Sheppard
Peter Still

VALE

Lt Col John Crossman (Ret)
Lt Col E J (Jim) Ellis (Ret)

From Simon Williams:
Sadly Today I have heard that Gronk has passed away. He was a gentle giant who always had a good word for everyone. He was also in SEQ AKA (Gorilla Tp). May he R.I.P. and never be forgotten.

New Members

Tony Schwerdfeger - SA
Paul Quentin - VIC
Christopher Brennan – NSW
Paul Lewin - QLD
Jason Beasleigh – VIC
Wayne Stevens – SA
Edward Stollery – SA
Francis Adrian Roberts – ACT
Dale Wallace - VIC
Mark Harris - VIC

Q Store

Sorry, but the Q Store is, unfortunately, temporarily closed for maintenance.

Mick Dunn has recently taken over the role as Q Master, and this means the current stock needs to be moved to S.A.

He needs some time for shipping, restocking, and accounting.

Stay tuned, as Mick waves his organisational wand, and keeps the store working at peak efficiency for you the members of the 1AR Association.

We are aiming for the store to be re-opened in mid-May

Anyone with outstanding orders please contact opsmanager@paratus.org.au

Well done that man, & thanks to 1AR Lt Col Bruce Cameron MC (Retd)

BATTLE HONOUR CORAL-BALMORAL

Lieutenant Colonel Cameron MC (Retd) recently wrote to Minister Tehan and requested that the 1st Armoured Regiment's Standard be emblazoned with the Coral-Balmoral battle honour before the 50th Anniversary of the battle in 2018. Previous Army protocols limited the number of Theatre Honours, Battle Honours and Honour Distinctions that may be emblazoned on Unit and Corps Colours, Standards or Guidons to two Battle Honours against each Theatre Honour. This restriction was reviewed and amended by the then Chief of Army on 1 February 2013 with the release of Defence Instruction (Army) 38-2 which states:

- a. Theatre Honours, Battle Honours and Honour Distinctions will be emblazoned on Unit and Corps Colours, Standards or Guidons.
- b. Previous policies regarding the number of Honours that may be emblazoned will continue, namely
 - i. The maximum number of emblazoned Battle Honours for any one war or conflict will be 10, and
 - ii. Theatre Honours are not included in this number and are automatically approved for emblazoning.

Lieutenant Colonel Cameron is correct in stating that the Theatre Honour from 'Vietnam 1968-72' be amended to 'Vietnam 1968-71'. His troop and Squadron did leave Vietnam in August and September 1971 respectively.

While some serving members of the Tank Squadron remained in Vietnam in support of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment until its withdrawal from Vietnam in 1972, 1st Armoured Regiment's service in Vietnam officially ended in September 1971 when the Regiment's last main battle tanks were withdrawn from Vietnam.

Outcome
Therefore, the request to change the Theatre Honour from 'Vietnam 1968-72' to 'Vietnam 1968-71' is fully supported.

There is no administrative impediment to emblazing Coral-Balmoral and amending the date to reflect 'Vietnam 1968-71' on the 1st Armoured Regiments Standard. Army Headquarters, 1st Armoured Regiment and the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Cooperation will endeavour to have the emblazing amended and completed by the 49th anniversary of Coral-Balmoral at the end of May 2017 Regards

Peter Swinfield

Warrant Officer Class One

HQ CATC

Bld 1680 Bridges Bks

Puckapunyal

VICTORIA 3662

Australian tanks at the battles of Coral and Balmoral



Bill Burton Crew Commander, General Westmoreland, Jock Kaye Driver, Phil Payne Gunner, Peter Lukeis Loader/Oper.

The above photograph depicts General Westmoreland, Commander, US Military Assistance Command Vietnam, speaking to members of 1 Troop, C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment (call sign 31B) about the enemy attack on Fire Support Base Coral. Both Fire Support Base Coral and Balmoral had been attacked a few days before General Westmoreland made his visit.



UPDATE 7: 4 APR 2017
George Hulse,
Officer 1st Field Squadron
FSB Balmoral Vietnam.
Committee member, Unit
Citation of Gallantry (UCG)
Award for Coral Balmoral

There is a much hackneyed expression used in general conversation, "Game-changer". It generally means that something or someone has made such an impact on proceedings that their contribution to the outcome was critical. That was the case with the arrival at FSB Coral and Balmoral of the Australian Centurion tanks of Charlie Squadron, 1st Australian Armoured Regiment.

On 25 May 1968, eight main battle tanks (that's the name given to tank-vs-tank machines, aka MBT), together with their armoured support vehicles arrived at FSB Coral. The 2nd Troop (2 TP) of four tanks was detailed to support 3RAR at FSB Balmoral and the 1st Troop (1TP) of four tanks was assigned to FSB Coral.

On 26 May 1968, to get to FSB Balmoral from Coral, a journey of about 4,000 metres or so, 2 TP was escorted by Bravo Company of 1RAR. On the way, they came across a large NVA bunker system. They investigated. A fierce fire-fight broke out for about an hour, when it was decided that the bunker system was too big and too hot to handle, and in any case, 2 TP had a deadline to meet with 3RAR at FSB Balmoral. They broke contact and continued on their way to FSB Balmoral. The tanks arrived at Balmoral in the afternoon of 26 May and were immediately deployed on the perimeter of the FSB. That night, 3RAR was attacked by a battalion of 165 NVA REGT as described in Update 5. The tanks opened fire with their main armament of an 83.4mm gun firing canister rounds (like an enormous shotgun) high explosive rounds and their machine guns. They also used their night-piercing white light searchlights to illuminate the battlefield. The NVA tried to silence the tanks with rockets, anti-tank recoilless rifles and mortars. Didn't work. These were MBTs not "infantry tanks" which are much lighter and with thinner protective armour plating. The tankies ("tankies" is what we call the guys who man the tanks and armoured vehicles in general) just hammered and blasted away into the ranks of the charging NVA. They withdrew at daylight without making much of a dint into the Australian lines.

28 May and the whole of 165 NVA REGT attacked FSB Balmoral, through two minefields and straight into Delta Company 3RAR and of course, the tanks yet again. This time, the NVA did not stick around for too long. With daylight approaching, they withdrew their three battalions of infantry soldiers. They were unsuccessful against the Australian diggers on the ground combined with the United States air power in the sky plus the US, Australian and New Zealand Artillery and mortars on the ground.

At FSPB Coral on 28 May 1968, 1 TP and Delta Company 1RAR were tasked to go back to the bunker system that was discovered on 26 May and conduct a reconnaissance-in-force to determine the extent of it.

They went back in to the NVA bunker system with tanks, flame-throwers and infantry. This battle was intense, up close and personal and lasted for three and a half to four hours.

The system was so well sited and self-supporting that the Australians could only penetrate a short distance into it. This confirmed that the bunker system was immense and would have required an Australian battalion strength battle group to deal with it. The Australians didn't have another battalion to assign to this mission and so the recon-in-force had done its job and no more could be done. The MBT support included the tanks driving right up to the slit of a bunker, firing a shell into it and raking it with machine guns. In some cases, the tanks drove up on to the bunker roof and crushed it with the 50 tonnes of steel that makes up a Centurion MBT. Some of the jungle was cleared using canister rounds. The Australians withdrew. But this is the good part. Thanks mainly to the tanks - not one Australian soldier was so much as scratched. No KIA - No WIA. The boys were elated and morale went sky-high. The lads brought back a heap of materiel and gear that was of high interest to the military intelligence community.

On 30 May 1968, Charlie Company 1RAR went on a company-sized reconnaissance-in-force mounted in armoured personnel carriers (aka "Tracks" or "Buckets"). They arrived at a spot about 3,000 metres away from FSB Coral when their company commander ordered his diggers out of the vehicles and conducted a foot patrol through a suspicious area. They no sooner re-commenced their patrol on foot when the company was engaged by a large force of NVA from a bunker system. It was a big one and it became apparent very early in the fight that Charlie Company needed to consolidate its position and fight an aggressive dug-in opponent. But then, the NVA came out of their bunkers and began surrounding Charlie Company. The Australians were taking casualties and had lost a machine gun in the melee. After some hours of fighting and manoeuvring, the Australians were in trouble but their counterparts on the other side had not made a significant hole into them. Tanks were called for. Two MBTs 1 TP with a number of cavalry vehicles closed in on the NVA and within minutes of their arrival, the tide turned against the NVA. They bugged out and left their war dead behind - an unusual occurrence. They would have normally carried as many of their dead away to frustrate our intelligence and to lower our morale on the real outcome of the battle. The tanks were the game-changer.

The Battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral was the first time that Australian Centurion tanks had engaged an enemy force as a part of a combined infantry/tank engagement since the Bougainville Campaign of World War Two. If there had been any doubts about the value of this MBT operating in the jungles of Vietnam, FSB Coral and Balmoral totally dispersed any such misgivings. The Centurion tanks and the tankies had proven themselves beyond any shadow of a doubt. With these assets around, there would definitely be: NO Surrender - NO Retreat.

David Hay has written a short book on the action at Binh Ba on 6th June 1969, for which 1st Armoured Regiment, 3rd Cavalry

Regiment and Royal Australian Regiment were all awarded battle honours.

A brief synopsis of the book ...

On 6th June 1969 the troops of 1 Australian Task Force fought their last major urban action in Vietnam at the small rubber hamlet of Binh Ba. Up against a force of regular soldiers from the 33rd NVA Regiment and outnumbered almost three to one, the outcome was a decisive and telling victory for the Australians.

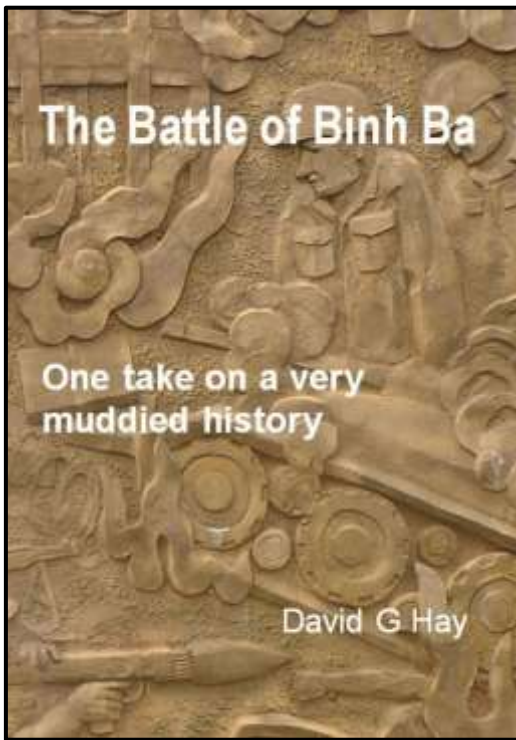
The battle has been recorded in history as armour's greatest day, and yet controversy and uncertainty cloud many written accounts. This retelling, by one crewman of a Centurion tank at Binh Ba, sets out to shed new light on the story.

David has agreed to sell copies to fellow 1ARA members at cost price, \$15, to cover printing and postage. Visit his web site at:

www.talesfromthetreehouse.com.au

Under the SHOP page, add the book to the shopping cart, then use the coupon code 1ARAmemb (note, case sensitive) to apply the discount. The price should adjust to \$15.00 which includes postage within Australia.

Payment can be made via PayPal or credit card. If for any reason you'd like to buy from David directly, his email contact is: davidghay@optusnet.com.au



Important Notice!

Everyone is most welcome to attend

The Unveiling of the Light Horse War Memorial in Hay (Country NSW)

- WHEN:** Saturday 11th November 2017
- WHERE:** Marchers are to assemble at the Memorial Hall, Lachlan Street. HAY. NSW
- TIME:** 10.30 AM for the Hay R.S.L Sub Branch Remembrance Day Service.

At the conclusion of the service the march led by the Kapooka Military Band will proceed to the site of the Hay Light Horse War Memorial for the unveiling at 11.30 AM by the Deputy Chief of the Australian Air Force, Air Vice Marshall Warren McDonald who is a local boy, having grown up in Hay and completed his Schooling at the Hay War Memorial high school.

A luncheon will be held at the Hay Services Club at 1 PM.

Persons wishing to attend must book by Friday 8th September. Charge for the luncheon is \$25 PP. This must be paid when booking for the booking to be accepted. This is so catering can be organised.

CONTACT: Lurleen Mitchell
PHONE: 02 6993 1086
EMAIL: lurleen.mitchell@bigpond.com

1AR Association 21st Birthday Weekend

7th, 8th & 9th July 2017

Attendees for July 21st Birthday Dinner thus far (see pages 18 & 19 for details and Registration) Register now – Don't miss out

01	T. Watts
02	J. Payne
03	M. Payne
04	S Williams
05	M. Williams
06	W. Stanfield
07	P. Moore
08	R. Joyce
09	G. Joyce
10	G. McNabb
11	H. McNabb
12	R. Williams
13	P. Williams
14	M Dunn
15	P. Quentin
16	I. Reynolds
17	C. Orme
18	J. Brooker
19	M. Harris
20	B. Coutts
21	I. Smith
22	J. Blackwell
23	P. Branagan



Two 1st Class Upcoming Association Events

***1 - 1ARA 21st Birthday Weekend July 2017**

***2 - 1ARA 2018 (November) Anniversary Reunion**

***2
Reunion
Details**

**Don't Miss Out – 'Register and Pay \$50 Now'
Or
'\$50 Plus *total cost Now' - (See Registration form)**

1st Arm. Reg. Association 50th Anniversary Reunion 2018

Commemorating 50 Years since C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment fought at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral South Vietnam (May / June 1968)



Adelaide

Friday 16th, Sat 17th and Sun 18th, November 2018



The 2018 Reunion will be held in Adelaide. Details such as they are at this stage are contained in this brief. These are correct at the time of printing, but be aware some may change slightly as the planning process continues.

Functions & Venues:

Fri 16 Nov: Registration 1100-1600 Registration Intercontinental Hotel.

Meet & Greet 1800-2230 Intercontinental Hotel. Cost: **\$80 pp, food & drinks.**

Sat 17 Nov: Back to the Regiment Edinburgh military precinct. Exact details of the visit will be released closer to the event once the Regiment releases the day's activities. At this stage all attendees will be bused out and back to the Regiment, due to base security arrangements, **(Minimal pp, for bus. TBA closer to the date)**, if any other costs are incurred they will be passed on in due course.

There is a plan B, if for some reason the regiment can't host on base, but at this stage it is unlikely this would happen.

Sun Nov 18: Gala Dinner William Magarey Room Adelaide Oval Cost **\$125 pp, food & drinks.**

1830-1900 Pre Dinner Drinks.

1900-2359 Seated Dinner.

Accommodation and Function pricing will be placed on the association web site as soon as they are confirmed by the SA organising committee.

See you in Adelaide

Contacts for registration and payment are:

Mark Reid reid54@bigpond .com .au 21 James Harrold Court Golden Grove SA 5125
Des Thompson desthomo@bigpond.com 18 Edinburgh Cres Reynella SA 5161

Table bookings: **Mark Reid** reid54@bigpond.com.au
 Grant Lane grant.lane@outlook.com

Tables of ten only please.

Adelaide Reunion 2018 Registration Form

To avoid disappointment and to help us organise proceedings please complete this Registration form now and send to:

**1st Armoured Regiment Reunion
 18 Edinburgh Cres Reynella
 SA 5161**

OR

You can scan it and Email it to:
 reid54@bigpond .com .au
 OR
 desthomo@bigpond.com

Please also send Registration Fee for \$50 or \$50 plus *total cost, via either of the following methods of payment:

Cheques / Money orders payable to
 1st Armoured Regiment Reunion
 18 Edinburgh Cres Reynella SA 5161

Online Banking
 BSB 065112 ACC 10229270, Reference **"your name"**
 and the word **"2018 Reunion"**

PARTICULARS	Given name	Surname/ Post Nominal	Preferred Name
Title: Rank/MR/MRS/MS			
Member Name			
Wife / Partner Name			

CONTACT DETAILS

Address:	Phone	
Suburb / Town	Mobile	
State	Post Code	Email.

REGISTRATION FEE \$50.00, Is non Refundable.

I /we would be interested in attending all /some of the following events

Event	Please circle preference	Cost
Meet & Greet, Intercontinental Hotel \$80.00pp	Me only/both	\$
Trip to 1AR Bus fare approx. \$15.00-\$18.00pp TBC	Me only/both	\$ TBA
Reunion Dinner Adelaide Oval \$125.00pp	Me only/both	\$
*Total Cost		\$

Note: All accommodation will be self-book.

Association Member	Yes	No
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Any special diet / accessibility requirements

Disclaimer

All members and or their partners attending the 1st Armoured Regiment Association Reunion, Adelaide 2018 do so at their own risk. The reunion committee accept no responsibility for personnel injury, property damage or any other loss that may be suffered through participation in any event/s comprising the 1st Armoured Regiment Reunion, Adelaide 2018

SQN FOR NAME TAG CIRCLE ONE ONLY
 HQ SQN A SQN B SQN C SQN TSS OSS LAD

Dates Served in SQN
 Corps RAAC, RAEME, ORDNANCE, TRANSPORT, CATERING, MEDICAL, SIGS
 Other list.....

**REGISTRATIONS CLOSE
 16TH SEPTEMBER 2018**

***1
Detail**

1AR Association 21st Birthday Weekend

7th, 8th & 9th July 2017

See costs on the following Registration form



Friday 7 July: For those arriving early, there will be a Meet & Greet from 1800, in the upstairs bar of the Seymour Club. Drinks will be at member's expense. If you plan on attending the Meet & Greet can you please advise the treasurer Richard Stanios at email address: treasurer@paratus.org.au The M & G will also enable you to collect your name tag. The name tag also doubles as a ticket for the dinner plus you will also be able collect your tickets for the Saturday BBQ and Sunday breakfast if you have paid for them.

Saturday 8th of July: At 10:00 be at the front gate, then at 10:30 there will be a visit to the Australian Army Tank Museum and a tour of the tank hanger to see our current armoured vehicles. A BBQ lunch will be served at the Waler Club where you can also buy drinks. **Lunch will only be available for those that have pre – paid. We will only be catering for those that have already paid,** you will need to produce your ticket to get served. The AGM will be held in the SOA SGTS mess at approx. 1400hrs. Dress for this activity, neat casual. It could be cool so be prepared with warm clothes.

Instructions for getting onto the base: If you have indicated you are coming out your name will be on a list at the front gate, you will need to produce a photo ID (drivers licence) to get on the base. You will need to arrive between 10.00 and 10:30. The front gate will match your ID to the list. If you haven't indicated to us you are coming out your name will not be on the list and it may take you extra time to get in. **You will be directed to go straight to the museum, resist the urge to go touring around the base, if you are caught you could be removed from the base.**

Saturday night July 8: 1800 for pre- dinner drinks in the upstairs bar of the Seymour Club, dinner from 1900. The birthday dinner, will be ala-carte, **drinks will be at members own expense.** Dress for the dinner is coat and tie with miniatures. Ladies always know what to wear. You must wear your name tag to get in. Once you are in if you wish you can remove the name tag. You can book a table by contacting Richard Stanios email address: treasurer@paratus.org.au the tables will only hold six we can't accommodate any more than six per table.

Sunday morning 9 July: from 09:00 there will be a breakfast at the Seymour RSL. Once again this is only available to those who have paid you will need to produce your breakfast ticket.

Cut off for dinner **June 24, 2017.** Any payment not received by that date will see your name/s removed from the attendee list, **unless another arrangement for payment has been discussed with the treasurer**

Note there will be no walk up starts to any of the functions.

Accommodation self-book at the range of Seymour Motels and cabins listed below

Auto Lodge Motor Inn

20 Emily Street, Seymour

Phone: 5792 1700

E: autolodgeseymour@gmail.com

Best Western New Crossing Place

53 Emily Street, Seymour

Phone: 5792 2800

Email: newcrossingpace@bestwestern.com.au

Comfort Inn Coach & Bushman's

66 Emily Street, Seymour

Phone: 5792 3744

Email: info@coachandbush.com.au

Seymour Motel

144 Goulburn Valley Hwy Seymour

Phone: 5792 1500

Email jilldoolan@yahoo.com

Wattle Motel

9 Emily St Seymour

Phone: 5792 1743

Email wattlemotel@eck.net.au

Goulburn Tourist Park - Cabins

30 Trevan St Seymour

Phone: 5792 1530

Email: goulburnrivertp@gmail.com

Highlands Caravan Park - Cabins

33 Emily St Seymour

Phone: 5792 2124

Email stay@highlandscaravanpatk.com.au

Be quick as Motels close walking distance to the Seymour Club will fill fast.

1AR Association 21st Birthday Weekend, 7th, 8th & 9th July 2017



Registration Form

I and my partner

Mobile:

Email:

Will be attending the following functions:

(Please circle your preference)

Meet & greet Seymour Club.	(Me only / both)	Nibbles \$10 pp	\$.....
Puckapunyal museum.	(Me only / both)	Lunch \$5 pp	\$.....
AGM Sgts Mess SOA.	(Members only)		
Birthday Dinner Seymour club.	(Me only / both)	Dinner \$45 pp	\$.....
BBQ breakfast Seymour RSL.	(Me only / both)	Breakfast \$5pp	\$.....
		Total cost	\$.....

If you are attending the Museum or AGM your car rego. No. is

And your driver's licence number is

Methods for payment and Registration:

On Line banking

BSB 033-682 Account Number 147333, Reference "your name" and the word "Birthday" then Mail this completed form to the Treasurer (Don't forget!!)

Treasurer

75 Bluehills Blvd

Pakenham VIC 3810

Or you can scan it and Email it to treasurer@paratus.org.au

Or

Cheque/Money Order

Made out to 1st Armoured Regiment Association,

Then Mail this completed form to the Treasurer (Don't forget!!)

Treasurer

75 Bluehills Blvd

Pakenham VIC 3810

Or you can scan it and Email it to treasurer@paratus.org.au

169005 UPDATE

By Tubby Brooker OAM

Work on 169005 is progressing and we have now refurbished or replaced damaged or worn out parts as best we can. We have replaced the cooling fins on the transmission deck with ones that are in better condition.



The next major task was to refurbish most of the heat shields on the engine. Some of the shields were ok some had to be replaced. Luckily we found some and repainted them with heat proof paint and installed them onto the engine.



We installed new fan belts, which was always a shit job and still is.

We had spent a huge amount of time on the Aux. Gen., especially the generator side. We built one good one out of a number of varying quality. We bench ran the Aux. Gen. to make sure it worked and were pleasantly surprised how quiet it was. Being a brand new one it should have run quietly anyway.



Next task as we were now happy with the Aux Gen was to install it back into 005



Air cleaners back in, next job clutch and gearbox.

OVERWATCH



AUSTRALIA

You're Never Alone

1 800 MYWATCH

1800 699 2824

YOU'RE NEVER ALONE

Through dynamic proactive monitoring and outreach OVERWATCH AUSTRALIA will provide first line, 'boots on the ground', assistance to any current or former member of the ADF.

OPERATIONS:

How we work. *Overwatch Australia is apolitical, we do not support or denigrate any political party, ESO, or person.*

Overwatch Australia mirrors an Infantry Battalion Radio Net using the social media platform of Facebook and utilises a peer to peer support model whereby wherever possible we try to match Service/Corps/Gender interaction with our clients.

To help facilitate the peer to peer support the umbrella Overwatch Australia organisation is split into individual Service/Corps pages on Facebook all linked to the Overwatch Australia Task Force page for ease of two-way flow of information.

Each individual page has a number of National Coordinators, State Response Coordinators (SRC) and Page Administrators that are also members of and feed up to a "Task Force" group. All groups also have First Responders (FR) and Observers (OBS) that assist with the Overwatch mission. If an individual page needs assistance with a person they are trying to help, then it can be escalated up to the Task Force page for wider distribution to the other pages.

Confidentiality is highly considered and identifying incidents are moved to a "Situation Room" to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of our clients. The Situation Room is administered by a core team who are responsible for adding and removing other personnel as required for individual incident responses. Our response to confidentiality is not only a question of maintaining professionalism, but it is an important way to gain trust. Without this sense of trust both veterans, First Responders, and others will fail to have trust in the process and may not share important information. Trust and confidentiality go hand in hand.

We actively encourage all members regardless of their role in Overwatch Australia to participate in some form of mental health first aid or suicide prevention training. Our responders are advised to never take risks and inform police or other authorities as soon as a situation becomes violent or desperate, and to retreat to a position of safety.

To contact Overwatch Australia you can use the following links:

www.facebook.com/OverwatchAustralia/
www.overwatchaustralia.org.au/Contact.html

OVERWATCH SAVES LIVES:

Essential reading.
Please ensure widest dissemination.

Noel

Noel Mc Laughlin
Chairman
RAAC Corporation

BACKGROUND

Overwatch Australia was founded originally as RAR Overwatch, and was created by Kyle Tyrrell, Kevin Lannaghan, Dean Bliss and Paul Sexton in early 2013 as a first response organisation for former members of Royal Australian Regiment, Special Air Service Regiment and 2 Commando Regiment, brought about by a spate of suicides within the veteran community.

In the first quarter of 2015 the original focus of RAR Overwatch changed to encompass all services and the name was changed to Overwatch Australia to reflect that. This expansion, although increasing our target population has not changed the core mission of Overwatch Australia.

WHO ARE WE?

Overwatch Australia is a peer to peer, boots on the ground, first response organisation formed to assist former ADF members who are at risk or in crisis. Once engaged, Overwatch Australia will then act as a bridge to other Ex Service Organisations (ESOs) better equipped to help with the specific needs of these personnel.

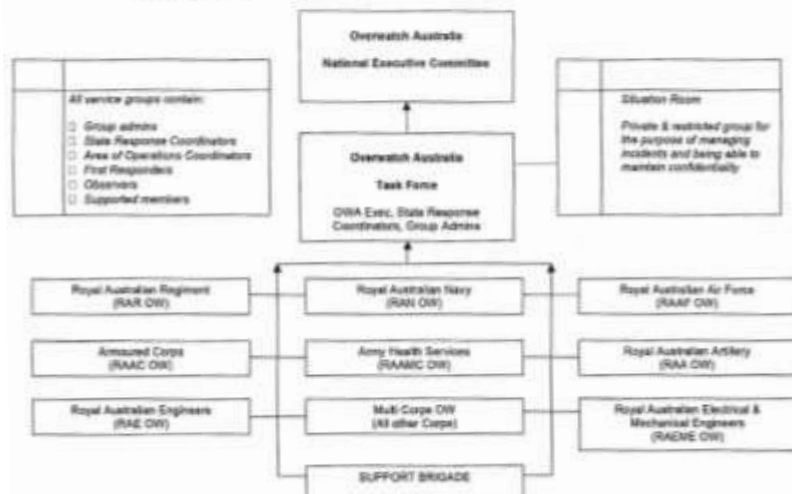
Our membership is constituted of former and current serving members of the Royal Australian Navy, The Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force, and the respective Reserve Forces. Supporting our mission, we also have a "Support Brigade" which provides us with a further 1300 ADF family members and other civilian personnel who are empathetic to our mission and are an effective intelligence gathering resource.

In fulfilling our mission, we have forged effective working relationships with DVA and other second and third tier ESOs including RSL Care, Legacy, VVCS, Soldier On and Veterans Off the Streets Australia (VOTSA). We recognise the expertise other organisations have to help former ADF personnel in their specialty areas and we are able to help the individual to link to the relevant services to ensure the best possible outcomes.

With over 4000 volunteers across the country Overwatch Australia has the reach and capacity to provide 'boots on the ground' support to most parts of Australia within two hours of confirming the location of our targeted client.

Email: contact@overwatchaustralia.org.au

OVERWATCH SUPPORT ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA INC. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Why nobody wants to fight America's Tanks: Uranium "Silver Bullets"



A tank is a fast-moving, well-protected, heavily armed behemoth designed to dominate the land battlefield. As the primary offensive weapon in any army, nations compete to field the best tanks in both peace and war. In the 1980s, the U.S. Army took the drastic step of arming its tank, the M1 Abrams, with the ultimate upgrade: a tank-killing round made of uranium, the heaviest naturally occurring element on Earth. The result is an unmatched tank killer capable of destroying any fielded tank.

The M1 Abrams tank was first fielded by the U.S. Army in the 1980s. The Army had preferred the 105-millimeter gun, the British-designed Royal Ordnance L7, also known in the United States as the M68. The M68 had armed the M60 series of tanks for decades and was considered a proven "good enough" gun. The M1's turret could only accommodate fifty-five rounds of 105-millimeter ammunition, a reduction from the sixty-two rounds the older M60 tank could carry. An even larger gun would further reduce ammo capacity to a mere forty rounds.

Pentagon officials, on the other hand, wanted to equip the M1 with the larger German-designed Rheinmetall M256 120-millimeter smoothbore gun. The civilian leadership felt obliged to use the gun in part as a way to offset German participation in the NATO AWACS program. A larger gun would also "future-proof" the M1, allowing it to defeat future tanks with heavier armour. A compromise resulted, in which the M1 would be initially manufactured with the M68 gun, but would be upgradable to the M256 at a later date. Moreover, a later version of the tank, later called M1A1, would come standard with the larger M256.

At the same time, the United States was researching the use of depleted uranium as an armour penetrator. A by-product of nuclear reactor fuel, depleted uranium was harder and denser than existing tungsten-tipped penetrators. Accelerated to extremely high speeds, this allowed a depleted-uranium (DU) round to smash through an unprecedented amount of armour. The pyrophoric nature of uranium and steel would cause the DU to catch fire upon penetration, causing catastrophic damage inside the tank. The standard tungsten anti-armour round for the M60 tank, the M735, could penetrate 350 millimetres, or 13.7 inches, of steel rolled homogenous armour (RHA), the standard measurement for armoured vehicle protection.

The M833 DU round, however, could penetrate 420 millimetres of RHA positioned at a sixty-degree angle for maximum armour thickness. By comparison, the larger Soviet 125-millimeter gun on the T-72 tank could penetrate 450 millimetres of armour.

Most importantly, the M774 could penetrate the T-72's frontal hull and turret armour, where armour was the thickest. Meanwhile, efforts to future-proof the M1's armament were coming in handy. The Soviet Union was known to be deploying a new main battle tank, the T-80.

U.S. intelligence believed that the T-80, like other modern tanks such as the M-1 and Leopard 2, had shifted away from an all-steel armour to a mixed composite matrix that included ceramic armours. The result was dramatically improved "composite" armour protection. The T-80 had a frontal turret protection of five hundred millimetres of RHA, and glacis plate (frontal hull) protection level of 450 millimetres of RHA. The 105-millimeter gun had finally run its course as an effective armament.

Improved M1A1 tanks equipped with the larger 120-millimeter gun began rolling off assembly lines starting in 1985. The 1991 Persian Gulf War against Iraq saw the M829A1 depleted-uranium round used by M1A1s against Iraqi T-72s with devastating effect. Nicknamed the "Silver Bullet," the round could penetrate an estimated 570 millimetres at two thousand meters, giving it good penetration against even a T-80 at typical range. Amazingly, the M829A1 has a flat, laser-like trajectory out to 3,600 meters, meaning it does not incur ballistic drop due to gravity over a distance of two miles. That gives one an idea of the pure power behind the 120-millimeter gun. The latest generation of the M829 series round, M829E4, is designed to penetrate even further than previous versions, the exact extent of which is classified, and to defeat active protection systems such as those built on the latest Russian tanks. Whether or not the M828E4 can penetrate the armour of the new Russian T-14 Armata tank is publicly unknown. The U.S. Army has not pushed to arm the M1 with a longer gun barrel (to increase muzzle velocity) or a larger diameter gun since Armata's introduction, an interesting non development in the face of a new threat tank.

The use of depleted uranium as a penetrator has resulted in superior armament for U.S. tankers crossing the battlefield. Nobody knows how long the one-two combination of the M256 gun and DU ammunition will continue to overmatch enemy armour, but given DU's superior armour piercing capability, it's a fairly sure bet DU will arm the next generation of Army tanks as well.

Kyle Mizokami is a defence and national-security writer based in San Francisco who has appeared in the *Diplomat*, *Foreign Policy*, *War is Boring* and the *Daily Beast*. In 2009, he cofounded the defence and security blog *Japan Security Watch*. You can follow him on Twitter: [@KyleMizokami](https://twitter.com/KyleMizokami).

CRVs put to test

LS Helen Frank (Army News)

A BAE Systems Australia Patria AMV35 combat reconnaissance vehicle and a Rheinmetall Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicle on the deck of HMAS Canberra during a series of trials at Fleet Base East. HMAS Canberra was introduced to the next generation of armoured fighting vehicles as Project Land 400 phase two carried out trials of two vehicles on board the ship late last year.

Project Land 400 will acquire and support the next generation of armoured fighting vehicles with the firepower, protection and mobility to defeat increasingly lethal and adaptive adversaries well into the future.

Phase two of the project seeks to identify a vehicle to provide a mounted combat reconnaissance capability, a replacement for the ASLAV.

The combat reconnaissance vehicle (CRV) will be required to perform up to seven different combat roles. These roles are reconnaissance, command and control, joint fires, surveillance, ambulance, battlefield repair and recovery. Rheinmetall Defence has offered the Boxer multi role armoured vehicle for test and evaluation.

This vehicle is in production, with 300 already delivered to other customers in six variants. BAE Systems Australia has teamed with Patria of Finland to offer the Patria Armoured Modular Vehicle as a contender.

This vehicle is in service with eight nations with more than 1500 vehicles delivered. During the trial on board

Canberra the vehicles were loaded over the ship's side ramps into the heavy vehicle deck where they were then positioned to drive on board the ship's landing craft.

The Project Manager Test and Evaluation – Land 400, Lt-Col Chris McKendry, said he considered the trial to be a success. “The trial was conducted in order to meet some of the objectives of the Defence Trial 943-3 Land 400 Phase 2 User Evaluation,” he said.

“Specifically, this was to determine if the tendered CRVs can be deployed to all designated theatres. “There is now the potential for some follow on work with the LHDs to confirm loads on the LHD landing craft.” Lt-Col McKendry said working with the crew of Canberra was enjoyable.

“Having maintained regular communications with the ship's amphibious department, made it all slip into place on the day,” he said. “These ships will provide the new CRV with the ability to deploy into any theatre of operations the ADF enters, providing a significant capability for deployed forces.”

The project will now continue the vehicle performance assessment at Monegeetta in Victoria before heading to Puckapunyal. RAAC soldiers will be trained on the operation of each CRV in order to start a four-month user evaluation.

Transportability testing for other strategic lift assets such as the Air Force's C-17 is due to start in the middle of this year.

After testing and evaluation, Defence will undertake a final evaluation of the tenderers' proposals and develop the business cases to government for consideration in 2018.



Rheinmetall Boxer CRV

A BAE Systems Australia Patria AMV35



The AMV35 and Boxer lined up on the mound, ready to commence the live fire practice.



AMV35



A Rheinmetall Boxer CRV drives off of the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Field Firing Training Area at Puckapunyal



Boxer CRV



Boxer CRV and ASLAV



AMV35



Trial troop personnel receiving instruction on the Rheinmetall Boxer CRV at Puckapunyal.



1 AR Association - South Australia – Mark Reid State Rep.



Dawn Service with A Sqn 1st Armd Regt. Mick and Bill Stanfield, Vicki Kingdom helps lay wreath, Brian and Margie Hatfield. Lesley and Geoff Cooper. Bruce Kingdom at Semaphore and the Two Up begins after the Dawn Service

Mark Reid



Chris Fenton OAM

A brilliant weekend catching up with the fellas at Quorn with many tall tales and true assisted by a drink or two around the fire. Eggs and bacon for breakfast, Barbs homemade soup and sausage rolls for lunch, tea on Saturday night was a camp oven roast of lamb, roo and vegetables with peas and gravy. A special thank you to Barb for the Quoandong pies for dessert. A big thank you to Mark Read and Lou for organising the weekend and to the owners of the property thank you. If laughter is the best medicine, then we have all gone home a little healthier after this weekend.

Anzac Day 2017 at A Sqn. Edinburgh SA; the weather was good and the OC & SSM coordinated a fantastic Dawn Service. An APC mounted white search light was aimed at the Catafalque Party that produced a spectacular sight when dawn was breaking.

It was also heart-warming to spend this very special morning with my old mates of 45 years and younger members of the Sqn. The tradition was continued, the old hidden hip flask come out a few times for old time sake.

I sincerely hope that all our men and women deployed overseas enjoy this great Australian tradition in remembering the huge sacrifices of those who came before us and gave their all.

Cheers Mick Dunn



Operation Quorn

Lou Walker OAM

The 'Crow Eaters Camping Trip 2017 had 14 attendees and with clear skies the weekend was a great success. I would like to thank all that attended, especially those that travelled long distances to join in the activities, Chris and Barry from NSW, Noel from ACT and Simon and Bill from VIC. Special mention to Barb who provided heaps of food for all to enjoy and the various property owners who provided support whether it was the venue, meat, the grand old 21 bed homestead that we visited and for those that joined us for a BBQ on the Friday night. Thanks to Andy who came up from Port Augusta to help with the fire wood collection prior to the event.

See you all in 2018.

Operation Quorn



Night debrief before Operation Quorn at Mick Dunn's backyard and having a few Coopers with Betsy James and the boys. Next stop Snowtown, outside the bank! We are looking forward to a barrel of a weekend, with Richard James, Bill Stanfield and Simon Williams.



Mark Reid, Lou Walker, Bill Stanfield, Mick Dunn



Looking for gold L to R Andy Rule, Richard James (with detector) Barry Hodges



Group photo in the old Quorn bank, now a quaint gallery



Having a "barrel of fun" outside the Snowtown pub Mark Reid, Bill Stanfield, Mick Dunn, Richard James, Simon Williams



Sitting in the beer garden





Old historic homestead, ruins, and camp site



Our camp site was absolutely fabulous. It was situated 10 kilometres from Quorn at the foot of the Flinders Ranges, a truly beautiful place to camp.

Fantastic views in the morning and at sunset, there were plenty of activities over the weekend. Lou took us to this historic homestead, built in the last half of the 1880's, had 21 bedrooms, underground water storage and cellars, dams and outbuildings.

Richard James tried his luck with his mine detector, only found beer ring pulls. Billy Stanfield was a little concerned because goats were walking past his swag at night.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves immensely. Thank you to everyone that made this a memorable weekend.

Special mention to Lou & Barb and the land owners that made us feel so welcome.

Community spirit is very infectious in Quorn.

Cheers
Mick Dunn



The Anzac Long Lunch was again held at the Emerald Hotel on Friday 21st April. It was well attended with 21 members, including Lt Jordynne Winsor, Paul Saunders & the other members of Tank Troop SOA. Everyone had a great time, especially the guys from Tank Troop & it would be a pleasure to have them attending future events.

1st Armoured Regiment was well represented in Melbourne for Anzac Day with approximately 48 that marched to the shrine of remembrance. Once again we were all kept in order with Thomo calling the step. With being near the front of the march this year, we had a fairly clear run up to the Shrine with minimal stop/start. The weather was not kind to us this year with us getting rained on during the march. Drinks afterwards were supposed to be at the Water Rat Hotel, but with the venue refusing to open till 12:00 most of us went to separate venues. We will look for other venue options for after next year's march.



Anzac Day 2017



L- R Ron Dawes, Bob White, Ian Thompson, Russell Cunningham, Bob Mundy, Graham Atkinson, Terry O'Neill, Ron Laing (106 Fd WKSP), Bill McIntyre, Mike Latimer and Chris Murnane.



1 AR Association



Queensland



Thanks Mark. Four A Squadron boys from 1970's to 1984 got together in Bris – Vegas Anzac Day 2017 and we had thoughts for you all "POSSUMS"

1 AR Association - Tasmania – Jim Soul State Rep.



With Kevin McNaughton, Dennis Austin, Garry Millar, Garry Miller, PJ McNeill, Hap Hanlon, Alex (Roo) Simpson, Geoff Millar and Dave Harling.



With Kevin McNaughton, Anthony (Dutchy) Souter Dennis Austin, Garry Millar, Garry Miller, PJ McNeill, Hap Hanlon, Alex (Roo) Simpson, Geoff Millar and Dave Harling.



Bun fight at Long Tan - a report on the 50th Anniversary troubles at the Long Tan cross site...

By Dave Sabben

Prior to 17 August 2016

There had been warning signs from all sides prior to the 17th of August 2016 concerning arrangements – or lack thereof – for the approaching “50th Anniversary” commemorations. Problems were disappointing but not surprising.

Morning – 17 August 2016

Our Vietnamese tour guide advised us that Hanoi had voiced concern at the prospect of 3000+ Australians who were anticipated in the Vung Tau and Long Tan areas over the next few days. Their fears were in three parts:

(1) The sheer numbers were a potential problem. The largest crowd previously had been around 1000 in 2014 and 15 and that had been handled with some difficulty. Apparently the Australian Embassy on those occasions had agreed to compensate the local farmers for loss of crops around the cross. But 3000...? The infrastructure does not exist at the Long Tan cross site – there are no loos, no running water, no electricity, no wet-weather options, no separation between site and crops.

(2) There was increasing apprehension that the ANZACs were coming to “celebrate” the victory at Long Tan rather than to respectfully “commemorate” the sacrifices made by both sides during the 10-year war. This was exemplified when it was found that a concert was being planned which featured artists and musicians who had entertained the troops during the war – and they were coming back to entertain those at Vung Tau again – an entertaining “celebration” rather than a respectful “commemoration”.

(3) The sensitivities of the local population were thought to be a huge consideration in the Vietnamese government’s attitude. It was stressed that many of the Vietnamese dead at Long Tan were the fathers and brothers and sons of local (Phuoc Tuy) people. How would they feel with all these visitors “celebrating” their victory over them?

Despite these fears, we understood that while visiting numbers might be restricted, the planned 3:40pm memorial service had not (yet) been cancelled. But we also understood that things were very brittle and we would be well advised not to do anything to make the situation any worse.

Midday – 17 August 2016

An Australian TV news team, including camera and sound men, took visiting Keith Payne VC to the Long Tan cross and recorded an interview, which was streamed to the news services shortly afterwards.

Whenever people visit the cross they need to go to the Long Tan police station and register their visit. For the

registration fee, they are loaned the Long Tan cross plaque, which, when hung on the cross, indicates official approval for the visit.

A still from the recording shows the plaque was not on the cross, leading to the conclusion that the visit was not authorized. As an aside, the choice of Keith Payne VC – our most highly decorated Viet Vet – as the person to represent the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Long Tan surely reinforced the impression held by the Vietnamese that Australia was “celebrating” a military victory rather than commemorating the war dead.



Both the D/6RAR Company Commander at the battle, Harry Smith SG MC and one of the platoon commanders, Dave Sabben MG, had been asked to speak at the cross but both had declined due to the wrong perception it would have encouraged.

Once the Vietnamese locals and authorities realized that the TV recording was happening / had happened, they reacted swiftly. Hanoi immediately issued a statement that all visitors to the cross site would be stopped. One of the Tour members received the news via an SMS – hardly an “official channel”! The reason Hanoi gave was that “*there has been an ISIS bomb scare at the cross.*”

While the TV recording was happening, the Long Tan Trek Tour group was having lunch in the rubber plantation some 1000 yards to the west of the cross. We had earlier been approached by the media to be with us on the battlefield but had rejected the requests on the basis that we had obtained permission (and paid for) a specified number of Tour people, had provided the names and passport details as required, and we knew that others would not be permitted to accompany us.

It would appear that the locals reported the TV activity at the cross to the police.

As we were finishing lunch, the same news camera team arrived at the lunch site. After they had filmed Payne, and saw that the locals were making phone calls, and knowing they were still inside the police cordon on the access road, they came to us. They were not invited.

Given the state of sensitivity, we certainly did not want to bring attention to ourselves and jeopardise our visit. But they wanted an interview and would not listen to us or take “No” as an answer. Not having any authority to evict them, we answered their questions on camera until the police arrived.

When the police arrived, they sent the camera crew away but also forbade the Trek Tour to proceed to the cross. The damage we'd feared had now been done! Despite this, the Tour moved through the Western part of the rubber plantation to the place on the North-South Road where the first shots of the battle were fired – when 11 platoon's Sergeant Buick fired on an NVA clearing patrol at about 3pm.

There, while the 1966 events were being explained to the Tour group, the police arrived and stopped us from proceeding into the rubber plantation east of the North-South Road.



The Tour group was stopped on the road..

The Tour spent a further hour at that location, able to distantly see the cross about 500 yards away to the East, as the further development of the battle was explained. The plans (and the permissions obtained and paid for) were for us to go to the place in the plantation where CHQ had gone, go to where 10 Platoon had gone, and to where 12 Platoon had gone before going to the cross which was where 11 Platoon spent most of the battle.

The Trek Tour had done this on eight previous occasions, taking with us various Vietnamese authority reps without previous problems. It was most unfortunate that on this occasion – the 50th Anniversary – we had been stopped because we had in the Trek Tour group of 62, six men who had fought under the rubber at Long Tan, plus two more of Delta/6 who had not been under the rubber, plus two who had supported the action from Nui Dat, plus nine family members and next-of kin of people who had fought at Long Tan.

For almost all of these, this was their first visit after 50 years and none of them expect to be able to get back again in the future. Not to forget that each had paid for access to the plantation and conformed to the authority's need for names and passport numbers. In other words, the Tourists had done everything right and nothing wrong.

After leaving the battlefield on the afternoon of the 17th, and with the news of the bomb scare and the total closure of the cross area, the Tour group returned to Vung Tau to attend the Concert featuring Little Pattie, Lucky Starr and others.

Unfortunately, it was marketed as the "50th Anniversary Long Tan Concert" – a name once again drawing attention to the Long Tan action for which the Vietnamese authorities feared a "celebration" rather than a "commemoration".



Arriving at the Concert venue, we found that the banquet had not been cancelled but the entertainment HAD been – there would be no music or singing or entertainment. There was no talk of a \$refund for what had been a very significant outlay by each person attending. It was also thought that the Concert event had been organized without the formal and necessary approval of the appropriate officials.

Morning 18 August 2016

News this morning that the bomb scare had been cleared overnight and that the site was again open – but for very limited numbers. The 3:40 pm service was still supposed to be "on". BUT, the media was banned from filming at the Long Tan cross site – obviously due to the media activities on the 17th and was restricted to only filming people in Vung Tau getting onto the buses to go to the cross site.

The Trek group bussed to Long Tan, arriving at the turnoff to the Long Tan cross to find a police presence again, preventing entry to the cross site.



The road block at the Long Tan cross access site.....

As we waited, an Australian Federal Police officer boarded the bus and told us to "abide by the rules or the local officials will shut the commemoration down". That was good advice because we were later told at least one bus of visitors had bribed their way to the cross site ("...money changed hands"), and, when discovered, the decision was made to stop all access. How simple can the selfish actions of a few result in damage to the plans of the many!



Unaware of this, we waited for three hours but were denied entry. At first we were told that 100 people at a time were permitted for brief visits but, as we saw no traffic at all, we began to suspect a stall-job.

We then sent a local man with a camera to motorbike to the cross and take a few photos of whatever activity might be occurring there.

He arrived back with the report that the cross was deserted but for a single police or military guard and no preparations for a 3:40pm service.



Understanding that there would now be no service, the Tour group returned to Vung Tau where we hired the hotel's meeting room and prepared our own impromptu memorial service.

Accessing the internet, we dropped down a photo of 6RAR's placement of the cross ceremony from Aug 1969.



We held our own make-shift memorial service at the hotel - based on the original 6RAR service from 18 Aug 1969.

Mike Rogers (6RAR, Second Tour, and present when the cross was put in place) was one of the Trek Tour members and had brought with him the order of service held on that day. We then adapted the same service to our service, with members of the Tour group reading the same Scriptures and saying the same prayers.

As a make-shift stand-by, it was well received, under the circumstances.

The evening of the 18th was to have been the "Friendship Dinner" where we expected to mix with our former enemy over a lavish buffet dinner in a relaxed meet & greet atmosphere.

We of Long Tan had hoped to get an insight into what were the intentions of the former enemy at Long Tan and get a more accurate assessment of the outcomes than had so far been the case from the "official histories". This, of course, also failed to happen.

Unknown to us until arrival, the Vietnamese authorities had cancelled permission for any former NVA or VC other than those from 33rd Regt (who had not fought at Long Tan and had not been present in the Province until later in the 1960s).



Aussie Viet Vets meet the few Vietnamese Vets at the "Friendship Dinner".

Amid this further disappointment, the intention of the Dinner fizzled, made more disappointing by the presence of many plain clothed police present and the departure of the former NVA contingent as soon as the dinner had ended but while it was still early in the evening.

Again – as with the Concert – there was some talk of the correct permissions not having been sought or granted, and no mention of any \$refund consideration.

Morning 19 August – early!

The Trek Tour group took early-morning calls and were on the busses before full daylight. The intention was to get to the Long Tan cross early – before the police road-block was in place, visit the cross and get some photos (and a quick memorial service if possible) and then get on with our day's events. We were met at the cross site by the Australian officials and were able to spend about half an hour at the cross to take photographs before we were warned to keep moving.



Part of the Long Tan Trek Tour group at the cross - 19 Aug 2016.

So... why had it all happened...?

(1) The numbers arriving were indeed daunting. With some three times as many arrivals as had been experienced previously, the infrastructure was not in a position to cope.

(2) The Australian government, media and ex-service groups seemingly failed to make the distinction plain to the Vietnamese that the ANZACs were attempting to commemorate our part in a long war and to honour their part in the same war. The message received by the Vietnamese (rightly or wrongly) was that it was all a "celebration" of the success at Long Tan.

(3) The deliberate breaching of local media restrictions was taken as evidence of the "I don't care" attitude of the visitors, and that apparent attitude was returned.

And what of the future...?

The Long Tan Trek Tour has obtained assurances that it will once again be able to walk the Long Tan battlefield in October 2017 and likely beyond. The Vietnamese authorities recognise that on at least 8 occasions previously, the battlefield had been "trekked" and memorial services held at the cross which have recognised both sides of the conflict. Indeed, the Vietnamese have been included in the short services we've held.

Lessons to be learned.

Viet Nam is a one-party communist state. All things are more tightly controlled than we ANZACs are used to. Hotels require passport names and numbers. Tours need permissions and approvals, often to be paid for.

As a simple example: We hired a boat for 20 people for a day cruising on Ha Long Bay. Only 19 people turned up, the authorities required to know who was missing, where they were, why they were not present and a new approval form needed to be generated and signed off for the 19. This would be considered strange in Australia but we need to understand that this is standard practice in Viet Nam.

We need also to display much more consideration of the losses sustained by the Vietnamese in their three wars of "liberation" or "reunification". While ANZACs can and do boast of the victories as at Long Tan, we must understand the sensitivities of the other side and of the civilians who still live beside the graves of their war dead.

And the media must understand that the "freedoms" they enjoy in Australia cannot be taken for granted and



The Viet Vets in the Trek Tour Group at the Cross 19 Aug 2016

exercised as a right in a Communist country. The mantra "...the public has a right to know..." does not apply all around the world!

Despite all the problems, the Long Tan Trek Tour got to the cross, saw the original at Dong Nai and achieved all the rest of the itinerary targets. A great group of folks, and all were in agreement: they wouldn't have missed it for quids.



Okay - the "ambush" is wrong but the sentiment is right!

ABC journalist **Bruce Atkinson**, from Queensland's Sunshine Coast, joined us on the tour. He has previously done numerous stories for ABC television news, radio and online on Long Tan, including the medal dramas. Bruce paid his own way and it was primarily a holiday to pursue his interest in military history.



He spent six of the nine days working, on a couple of days from 0430-1800. During this time Bruce filed interviews with several of the trekkers, including Harry Smith, Dave Sabben, Laurie Drinkwater and his grandson Lawrence and Bill Akell as well as Marnie Wickham. You can also check out his Twitter account @bruceatkinson17 to see some of his tweets from August 15-23, 2016.