



# 9RAR ROLL CALL!



OCTOBER 2015

JOURNAL OF 9RAR ASSOCIATION (NSW)

ISSUE 2

## Highlight:

COLLEEN  
THURGAR

A Vietnam News  
Story Pages 23

## Inside this issue:

Editor's Report	2
Vale	3
Anzac Day Notice	4
'Spooky' Aircraft	4
9 Batt on the Beaches	5
Gary Archer Update	6
Presidential Ponderings	7
Cover Story Cont	8
1st Fld Hsp Vung Tau	9
31st Plt Kapooka	3
Merchandise	14
Book Review	6
Our Nashos	17
Mates Corner	18
A New Car	19
Our Girls	9
Vietnam Websites	23



Martin Sanders (ex 8/9 Battalion) and his son Daniel (right) shared the honour of carrying our banner on ANZAC DAY 2015. Majella, Martin's wife, had an ancestor who was in one of the first boats of the 9th Battalion 1st AIF that landed in Anzac Cove on the 25th April 1915. We felt it was appropriate that these descendants lead us on this the centenary of that landing.

See the full story on page 8.

## 9RAR ASSOCIATION (NSW)

**MEMBERSHIPS and CORRESPONDENCE :** Eric POPE

9 Ingram Ave Milperra NSW 2214 Ph.: 02 9113

Email  
:ericpope@bigpond.com

**ROLL CALL:** C/- Barney (Rick) Bigwood

73 Barclay Road, North Rocks NSW 2151 Ph.: 02 9209

Email: barneybig@outlook.com

## EDITOR'S REPORT

Its now 47 years since we all saw service in the 9th Battalion of the Royal Australian in the Republic of South Vietnam. All those bright eyed twenty something year olds marched off to war to an 'adventure', not unlike their grandfathers did in 1914. These young soldiers were all too soon experience the reality of what war is, the brutality, the pain, the suffering but also the comradery of like souls with whom a life long bond would be established.

As we are seeing in these recent years, as we farewell many of our "brothers in different mothers", the care and respect that we give is living proof of that bond forged in in the fog of a distant shared experience.

Likewise we have an obligation to those young servicemen & women who have followed in our foot-steps. To this end I would like to thank Colin "Schoie" Schofield and Eric "ThePope" Pope who represent our organization by attending the March out parade for 31 Platoon at Kapooka. See pages 14 and 15 for full story,

For the last 6 years I also held the position of Secretary of the RAR Association NSW but at a recent AGM I stood down. However another 9th Battalion stalwart, Mick Shave, has now stepped into the role. I wish Mick success in his new position.

Cheers,

*Barney*

Never in their wildest dreams back in 1968 could these two have expected to be invited to the Sergeants Mess! Meet Honorary Schofield and Pope.

Full story page 12-13



## FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR



As you may recall, Andrew and I moved to the country last year. Anzac Marches are quite different here with contingents from all the local schools marching in the town events. Andrew volunteered to be the teacher in charge of a group of his students (from the Catholic high school that he works at) who were marching at the nearby small town of Boorowa. Our eldest child, now 13, attends the same school and so marched with Andrew (pic top left). Patrick laid the school's wreath at the Memorial (pic bottom right). We were amazed at the effort Boorowa had gone to to celebrate the Anzac Centenary. The entire town was decorated. Every school child that marched received a badge to commemorate the occasion. The weather was dodgy but the rain held off until after the March. The whole feel of the day was quite intimate and very touching. One of the day's highlights was Lugh Damen (musician and singer) who performed his new piece 'Cold Light of Dawn'. I encourage you to check out his work online, including his Vietnam song 'Home from the War'.



Anzac Day has always been a special day for us and it was extra special this year, both because of the Centenary and also because Patrick was chosen to give one of the Readings at the school's Anzac Day Service (pic bottom left). I was very impressed at the effort his school went to on the day and also particularly with the local Army Cadet troupe who provided a Catafalque Band and an Honour Guard. It is so good to see the tradition of honouring our soldiers being passed along to the next generation.

*Emma*



# VALE

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of several of our former comrades in arms. Our hearts go out to their families and friends as we extend our most sincere condolences.

**BRIG. ERROLD FREDRICK (FRED) PFITZNER AM (RETD)**  
On 9 March 2015  
3 RAR, 5 RAR, 8/9RAR



Royal Australian Regiment Association ACT Branch Members, Associates and Infantrymen. Many of you may already know that Brigadier Fred Pfitzner AM (Retd) died in Adelaide on Monday 9 March 2015 at about 0030hrs, of multiple myeloma [a cancer of the blood]. He had been ill for some years, although you would never hear it from him. News of Fred's death and funeral arrangements were in The Canberra Times Tributes section for Wed 11 March.

Fred was the CO of 8/9 RAR 1978—1980

**JEFFREY J RICE**  
On 28 April 2015  
Mortar Platoon



To all who knew Jeff, I have the sad news that Jeff has been unwell for some time, spending some 3 months in all going in and out of hospital for different ailments. Culminating,

when he totalled his car and was not hurt. The end result he was given a thorough examination, and sadly diagnosed with liver cancer.

In the last 10 days he has gone from just O.K to today being supported totally on morphine, unable to hear, speak or communicate with his daughter and son who sit by his side 10 hours a day.

I have visited Jeff, but he would not know it. So sadly we are about to loose another digger.

Sadly but thankfully with a little bit of mercy Jeff Rice passed away on Tuesday evening without any pain.

**IAN DOUGLAS MACDONALD**  
On 28 April 2015  
9 PI — C Coy



Received news this afternoon that Ian Macdonald, passed away at 0930 this morning following a

9 month battle with Mesothelioma; his was a courageous fight as this cancer is one of the most painful that one can suffer.

He was always in good spirits and we had several long talks on our coffee trips and he was never bitter or "woe is me". He even discussed his funeral plans with me and as his name would indicate, a piper was on the agenda.

A sad loss but he is now at rest and free from the awful pain he has suffered for many months.

We were volunteer guides together on the same shift at the Australian War Memorial so I got to know him very well, he loved his military history and will be greatly missed by the staff there.

Barry Price slipped away from us all on the 13th of August.

Barry was privately ~~ent~~ on the 19th of August and his ashes will be scattered at sea during a National longboard comp at Crescent during

September 2015

## The Regimental ODE

Rest Ye, Oh Warrior

You'll battle no more

No longer to live

The horrors of war

Your duty was done

With honour and pride

Farewell! Oh Brother

Until we march by your side

"Lest We Forget"

**IAN JOHN SCHICK**  
On 29 April 2015

9RAR members are advised that Ian Schick died last night 29 April 2015 after what was a fairly short illness.

**STUART HODGSON**  
On 20 April 2015  
4 PI—B Coy



I have been approached by many people in respect of Stu Hodgson, whose funeral was last Friday, as to whom he served with in 9 RAR.

Stu, who was a Yorkshire man, who never lost his accent, joined 9 RAR from 1ARU on the 28 Dec, 1968, and was posted to 4 Platoon, B Company, 9 RAR.

Stu was Wounded in Action on the 7 February, 1969, at the age of 22 and on the 26 of February 1969 was a Cas Evac to Australia.

For the record he was wounded at grid reference GR 240888.

I have met Stu and his wife Barb on many occasions and not withstanding all his health issues he never complained. He was just a really good bloke and I couldn't help but like him and respect him for his service.

RIGHT is a photo from Crombie of Baz Price and Phil Warren ~~id~~ their hearts out into a microphone. The photo was taken just after the 2006 Perth Reunion had finished. Phil Warren kindly held a ~~dobber~~ BBQ at his place south of Perth. Just a small group of us - ~~ab~~ shining after a few of Phil's home brews and Baz into his ~~Cl~~



# IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT ANZAC DAY

## RAR Regimental Square Service

Due to the construction of the Metro Light Rail along George Street and the total refurbishment of Regimental Square there will be NO RAR SERVICE on Anzac Day 2016. Also, for the same reason, the 2016 March will proceed along George Street.

Note that there are NO CHANGES to the FUP (Form Up Points) of the RAR Battalions, which is the corner of Hunter and Blight Streets.



## SPOOKY/PUFF AIRCRAFT

Another Vietnam War History lesson on the AC-47 (Spooky/Puff) Aircraft and of the men who flew in them and their outfits. In 1965 the USAF launched its first fixed wing gunship program in the Vietnam War. A C-47 WWII cargo plane was converted to carry three mini-guns and 24 MK24 flares which illuminated 1 million candle power each. Each gun had the capability of firing 3 or 6 thousand rounds per minute with every 5th round being a tracer. With this fire power, 3 mini-guns firing at a deadly fast 6 thousand rounds per minute could rain down on the enemy 18,000 rounds of 7.62 a minute. This fire power and flare capability proved to be invaluable to the ground troops, bases and hamlets.

During the 1st year, 1965 the gunships had a nickname of "Puff" because of its breath firing look when the guns fired at night. Later in 1966 the official call sign for the AC-47 gunship became known as "Spooky". The Spooky gunships received the distinction of "Ghost Riders".

In 1968 a Spooky gunship with the call sign "Spooky 71" flying out of Bien Hoa was in support of ground troops under enemy fire. During this mission Spooky 71 was struck by an 82mm enemy round causing severe damage and wounds to the flight crew. For his heroic actions after being struck by enemy fire, the loadmaster, Sgt John Levitow received the highest award, the "Medal Of Honor". Sgt Levitow was the 1st USAF enlisted man to receive this award in Vietnam. In March '69 the 14th Special Operations, Air Commando Wing (AC-47 Spooky gunships) was the "first" USAF unit in South East Asia to be awarded the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm. In its 4 year history of flying missions in Vietnam and Laos, the gunships provided close air support and successfully defended 3,926 hamlets, outposts, forts and LIMA sites in Laos under their protection. The AC-47 gunships had participated in virtually every major battle, including Dak To, Khe Sanh, Hue-Kontum, A Shau and An Khe. The gunships had fired over 97 million rounds of 7.62 ammo and have been credited with killing more than 5,300 enemy soldiers. During this four year period, the Air Force lost a total of 19 AC-47D gunships and 92 crew members killed. Three of the Spooky gunships with 20 crew members were lost while flying missions in Laos.



## 9th BATTALION ON THE BEACHES

### ANZAC CENTENARY CELEBRATION, 19th APRIL 2015

The Northern Beaches of Sydney put on a wonderful ceremony the week of ANZAC DAY with pipe bands and most local associations represented. There were sporting clubs, service clubs, SES, Police, Army and Air Force Cadet Corps, Reserve Forces and more.

The dignitaries included His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, the (now former) Prime Minister of Australia The Hon Tony Abbott MP, both state and federal members of Parliament and of course THE MAGNIFICENT MEN OF 9 RAR.



ABOVE: the privately owned Huey of Trent Sears (founder of Australian Native Landscapes P/L, ANL). Trent is a great supporter of all veterans.  
RIGHT: Spooky aka Puff (see on next page)

## UPDATE ON THE REPATRIATION OF GARY ARCHER FROM THE WAR GRAVE CEMETERY IN TERENDAK MALAYSIA



You will remember the great news of the Government's offer of repatriation of Australians interred in Terendak Military Cemetery, Malaysia and the single veteran in the Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore. Gary Archer is 9RAR's only casualty interred at Terendak. All of our thoughts were to how we would celebrate Gary's return to Australia when it finally happened. However the Archer family's attention was drawn to the fine print; it must be a unanimous agreement of family members to the relocation of Gary. Gary was one of ten children and the family had, long ago, lost touch with two of the brothers. The Office of Australian War Graves promised to do everything possible to locate the missing brothers but they were reluctant to advise what would happen if they could not be found.

I was talking to Laurie Lewis (9RAR SA) about another matter and mentioned this to him. I also mentioned how this was affecting the morale of the family especially, as they were on such a high and had now been kicked in the guts because of a previously, not mentioned originally, restriction. Laurie mentioned that he knew Brigadier Chris Appleton CSC (Retd), the Director of the OAWG, and that he (Laurie) would be pleased to make representations on the Archer family's behalf.

So the 9RAR SA team get to work. After an exchange of emails in early July Barry (Deputy Director OAWG) rang Lyn Vrouros [Gary's sister] to say that the relocation of Gary would go ahead. This was with the assistance of David Stacey (President 9RAR SA) and Chris Appleton CSC (Rtd) Director OAWG. This was affirmed on 30 July when Lyn received a letter from Chris Appleton confirming that Gary's remains will be returned to Australia, with his brothers, in June 2016.

The family are still to decide what city (NSW or Qld) Gary will be re-interred but I am sure that there will be plenty of 9RAR boys there to welcome Gary home. Lyn and the Archer family are extremely grateful for Laurie and Dave's assistance in sorting out this worrying situation. Well done 9RARSA.



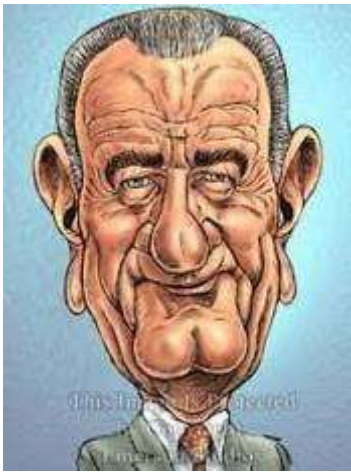
LEFT: The Scene from the ground as 18,000 rounds per minute thundered into enemy positions. It gave us diggers on the ground great comfort and a feeling of security.

RIGHT: A gunman firing a minigun into the darkness. On the ground torches with coloured lenses showed the perimeter of the friendly forces.





## PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS, FROM ACROSS THE PACIFIC



Left: La Jolla  
Memorial  
Wall

Some may know that our son Lockett works in California where he lives with Emma, his wife eight months. Lesley and I made a snap decision to surprise him for his 30th birthday, and flew out two weeks later. An ambush was set up in the bushes beside his car park and perfectly executed with the precision of an old warrior and a proud mum as he stepped out of his car. Among floods of tears we had started our American Odyssey.

The timing of our trip coincided with the RARC National Conference for which I thank D McDonald, our Qld Secretary, who represented 9RAR in my absence.

We were in New York City for our Vietnam Veteran's Day so, wearing my 9RAR cap, went to the beautiful Vietnam Veterans memorial in NY to pay my respects to those we lost then and in a very emotional afternoon. I must say, my observations are that the Yanks pay their serving members and veterans a great deal of respect and public acknowledgement.

Shortly after we visited the Memorial constructed to honour those lost in the destruction of the World Towers on 9/11. It is beautiful in its simplicity but an overwhelming sense of loss hangs over the area. We had been in NY half a day and I was a mess! Thankfully this pl and we experienced much of what is on offer in this remarkable city before journeying on to Maine.

Our southern Californian road trip started in San Diego before driving the coast road visiting all the famous beaches. In La Jolla we found another wonderful memorial with a difference. It encompassing anyone from the area who had served in the military from the Civil War onwards, a plaque has been erected by the families in their honour. It contains a photograph and the military history of each member who could still be serving. It is recognition of service. There were some prominent names listed there; Ronald Reagan, Jimmie Stewart and the most decorated US soldier Audie Murphy along with many from Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan. It is quite remarkable.

Back to reality, we will be home in two weeks via Hawaii and back to things 9RAR.

Stan and his team have the Melbourne reunion fine tuned. It will be a wonderful event. Be sure to complete your registration if you haven't already done so.

All the best,

Doug

## ANZAC DAY, SATURDAY 25th APRIL

### More on the Sanders Anzac connection from the front cover

A few years ago Martin Sanders asked our President Doug McGrath if he could join us for Anzac day as he had served in the 8/9th Battalion and there was no Association for that unit in Sydney. Doug welcomed Martin with open arms and he has been with us ever since. This year, as shown on the front cover, Doug extended the honour to Martin and his son Daniel of carrying our banner. This was more than appropriate as Majella, Martin's wife and of course Daniel's mum, is related to Oswald Williams who an original ANZAC. What a fitting gesture with this march being the centenary of the landing on ANZAC Cove in 1915.

What made it even more appropriate was that Oswald Williams was in the 8th Battalion 1st AIF and as such was in one of the boats to land on the beach. He made it as far as "Baby 700", where he was shot in the foot, he would not leave his mates on the front line for three days. He was then evacuated to the beach and entered the line later at Gallipoli. Having survived Gallipoli and served on the Western Front he was wounded several times before they called it a day for him. He was the personification of what bravery and mateship stood for; he was a true soldier of the 9th Battalion spirit. Martin's 3 sons are descendants of "Light Horsemen" of WW1 and attend with their Mum and Dad every Anzac Day. Altogether Martin and Majella had 6 family members on Gallipoli: what a service family. Martin served in 8/9 with a posting to Butterworth. In the centenary year of ANZAC I thought it fitting to honour the connection of the generations from 1915. Those diggers like Oswald Williams would be proud to see their legacy remembered.



From Left: (1) Oswald Williams. (2) Martin and his boys. You can see the Light Horse influence. (3) Martin, 8/9 Digger, on the range at Butterworth.



## 9RAR MEMBERSHIP FEES (2016) REMINDER

### MEMBERSHIP FEE STATUS

On the front of the plastic envelope containing this issue of Roll Call you will find a sticker showing your name, your six digit membership number and the year that your current membership expires. Our years start on Anzac Day so if the year shown on your sticker shows 2017 your membership fee should be paid by, or on, Anzac Day 2017.

When paying your fees by bank transfer please be sure to use your 6 digit membership number as a reference. This will enable the Treasurer to correctly identify your payment (which has been a problem in the past).

If you have a problem with the year shown on your sticker please contact me on 02 9 (home), 0422 522 110 (mobile) or ericpope@bigpond.com (email).

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Family name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Middle name \_\_\_\_\_ Partners Name \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No \_\_\_\_\_ mob \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Army No \_\_\_\_\_ 9RAR Coy \_\_\_\_\_ Platoon \_\_\_\_\_

Other Unit Details \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Fees are \$20 one year, \$50 three years.

Please send a cheque or money order in favour of 9 RAR Association (NSW) to:  
19 Ingram Ave, Milperra NSW 2214

Or you can make a direct deposit into our bank account:

Bank: Westpac

Branch: North BSB:

032-199

A/c Number: 184-308

Remember to use your membership number as a reference so we can track your payment.

## THE SYDNEY INFANTRYMAN LUNCH

The following extract from Trevor Murdoch (11 Event:

Infantry Luncheon

Purpose: To eat good food, drink good wine, talk old soldiers' talk and walk away feeling pleased.

Required: Infantrymen, ANY nationality, any army with service as long as whilst on the nominal roll of an infantry battalion; war service is NOT essential.

When: 1st Thursday of every month.

Where: The Royal Automobile Club of Australia; 89 Macquarie St, Sydney Time: 1200 for 1230.

Dress: At least, a collared shirt & shoes.

For notice of attendance contact Mick Shave: 0400 or Dave

Jeffrey: dave.jeffrey@yahoo.com.au

## 1st FIELD HOSPITAL VUNG TAU

9 RAR Wounded and sick were treated here during their tour of The Republic of South Vietnam. The "Vampire Pad" was the gateway into the operating theatres for our wounded who extracted from battle and mine incidents. Most of our casualties passed through here or the US 36th Evacuation Hospital.

BELOW (LEFT): Vung Tau, South Vietnam. 1969. Matron in Chief of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps (RAANC), Colonel Edna Doig of Manly, NSW, and the Commanding Officer of the 1st Australian Field Hospital (1AFH), Lieutenant Colonel Michael Naughton of Holsworthy, NSW, stop and talk with Private Steve Muller of Plympton, SA, a member of 9th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (9RAR), during a tour of the hospital.



Above: the Vampire Pad

BELOW: Vung Tau, South Vietnam. 1969. Red Cross girls, Rosemary Griggs of Cottesloe, WA (left) and Mary Gaynor of Hawthorn, Vic, regularly make the rounds of the 1st Australian Field Hospital, visiting patients. They are stopped to talk with Private Robert Enright of Glenelg, SA, who is a member of D Company, 9th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (9RAR).



ABOVE: South Vietnam, 1969-02. Private Merv Judd of NSW, takes his first steps, with the aid of a walking frame, since being shot size days before. Judd was shot whilst on patrol with 9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (9RAR), on operations in Phuoc Tuy Province. He was at the Army's 1st Field Hospital at Vung Tau, being assisted by Red Cross girl Caroline FitzPatrick of Edwardstown, SA, and Sister Barbara Black of Camberwell, VIC.





Clockwise from Bottom Left: (1) Air Force nursing prepare a digger for his repatriation flight back to Australia, via Butterworth in Malaya. (2) The sisters of Field Hospital always went the 'extra mile' for their boys. (3) The operating theatre staff were on call answering the demands of 3 Battalions operating at Phuoc Tuy and neighbouring provinces.

## 9RAR ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

<b>President</b>	Doug McGrath	panache26@optusnet.com.au	02 9411 1111 Vice
<b>President</b>	Trevor Murdoch	tmurdoch@customequitygroup.com.au	0414-015-204
<b>Secretary</b>	Eric Pope	ericpope@bigpond.com	02 9774-5113
<b>Treasurer &amp; Subs</b>	Steve Nugent	Cheryl.nugent@hotmail.com	02 9997-1552
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Rick "Barney" Bigwood	barneybig@outlook.com	02 9411 1111
<b>Assistant Editor</b>	Emma Bigwood	thebigwoods@bigpond.com	02 9411 1111
<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Trevor Murdoch	as above	as above
<b>Members</b>	Peter Nummy	panddnummy@bigpond.com	02 9411 1111
	Colin Schofield	cschofield1@optusnet.com.au	02 9411 1111
	Ross Coughran	cullychristine@gmail.com	02 9411 1111
	Warren Stickens	w_stickens@hotmail.com	02 9411 1111
	Phil Barry	philbarry@exemail.com	02 9411 1111
	Jeremy Ferguson	annel@bigpond.com	02 9411 1111 Tony
	Mullavey	tmullavey@optusnet.com.au	0416-231-993
	Gregg & Kelly Barr-Jones	0414-945-024	

## 31st Platoon Kapooka , proudly by 9th Battalion

In August Colin Schofield and myself were invited meet and address the recruits of 31 RTB and then to view their Marching Out parade the next day. On the evening we the troops where Colin presented a series of photos from his DVD, and later, took questions. The photos that raised most interest were:

- the close up shots of the Filipino entertainment girls
- the enemy skull sitting on the sand-bags surrounding a tent in 6 Platoon lines
- a couple of dead Vietcong bodies
- full frontals of 6Pl B Coy having a scrub-up in a thigh-deep creek.

In 31 Platoon there were six females in a Platoon of forty, ranging in age from 19 to 30. 50% were allocated to Infantry. The fitness standards since my time have been relaxed, no more "instep" exercise (which I could never do) and the "long run" is now 4.5 kms (not 10). The cries of "ef ri ef ri" were still echoing through the hills but they are no longer allowed to "have your guts for garters, you horrible little man" and, due to health and safety regulations you are no longer ordered to "slam your right foot so hard into the ground that they feel the tremor in China" when standing to Attention or to At Ease.

We had dinner in the OR's Mess where the meals were excellent; you could have as much you like of whatever you liked as long as it fitted on the one plate and no "seconds" were allowed. I had lasagne and vegies which tasted delicious but the lad next to me had a pork chop, curried mince, vegies, cold slaw, pineapple and cheese and it was consumed in a flash. And if you had a gold patch on your chest panel you were allowed to have ice cream with your dessert. We were both given the honorary rank of WO1 which enabled us to sleep in the Sergeants' quarters and partake of a hearty breakfast (including a couple of 50 cent after-breakfast Ports) in the Sergeants Mess.

The Parade went off without a hitch (no-one "passed" out as was usual in our days the Governor-General being represented by his flag-plus Pope and Schofield). The best recruits at their various crafts were presented with their trophies after which we adjourned to the OR's mess for the best smorgasbord lunch I have ever attended. This was the opportunity to meet with the proud parents and families of the new diggers, which was very revealing in view of the current situation with our troops serving overseas.

We had great couple of days and recommend it to anyone that can make the trip to K. 31 Platoon have 3 to 4 passing out Parades each year, the next one in early 2016.

We have been asked to sound out other Battalions to do something similar for the other Platoons, the OC RTB is very keen to renew the affiliate program.

*Eric Pope*



### Proudly carrying on the traditions of both the 8th and 9th Battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment

The 8th/9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (8/9RAR) is an infantry battalion of the Australian Army. It was originally formed in 1973 by linking together both the 8th and 9th of the Royal Australian Regiment. Over the next twenty-four years the battalion would remain on the Australian Order of Battle based at Enoggera Barracks in Brisbane, Qld, until it was disbanded in 1997 amid a number of Defence-wide cutbacks introduced by the Howard government. In 2006 it was announced that the battalion would be re-raised as part of a plan to expand the size of the Army and since then it has established itself as a fully deployable motorised infantry battalion as part of 7th Brigade.







Top Left: Dinner in the OR's Mess

Top Middle: The Marching Out Parade.

Top Right: Acting WO1 Pope having a quick port to wash down breakfast. Note that this picture has been digitally enhanced to enhance the appearance of the subject.

Left: Why who is this in the Sergeant's Mess?

**BELOW: The 8/9th Battalion has recently undertaken Exercise Tabre to fine tune military skills to ready-troops for deployment to A**



Top Left: Diggers of 8/9RAR on exercise at Shoalhaven Bay training area

Bottom Left: Stan the Ram



Right: Callsign B Charlie, 8/9RAR. Shoalwater, in the Crater, June 2015.

## MERCHANDISE: Plenty of stock



Ladies Scarves	\$25
Polo Shirts	\$35
T-shirts (all designs)	\$28
Caps	\$25
Hats (inc. puggaree & H)	\$90
Keyrings & badges (per H)	\$5
P&H for keyrings and H	\$3
P&H for other items	Ask for H



## ORDERS

Mr Warren Stickens w\_stickens@hotmail.com or 0



## PAYMENT

Please send a cheque or Money Order in 6 of 9 RAR Association NSW

Send to: Mr Eric Pope, 9 Ingram Ave, Milperra NSW 2

Alternatively you can make a Direct 0 into the Association's Bank Account:

Bank: VAB

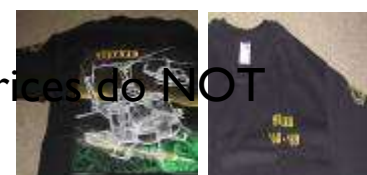
Branch: Northbridge BSB:

032 199

A/c Number: 184 308

Use your membership number and name as 6 NOTE: prices do NOT

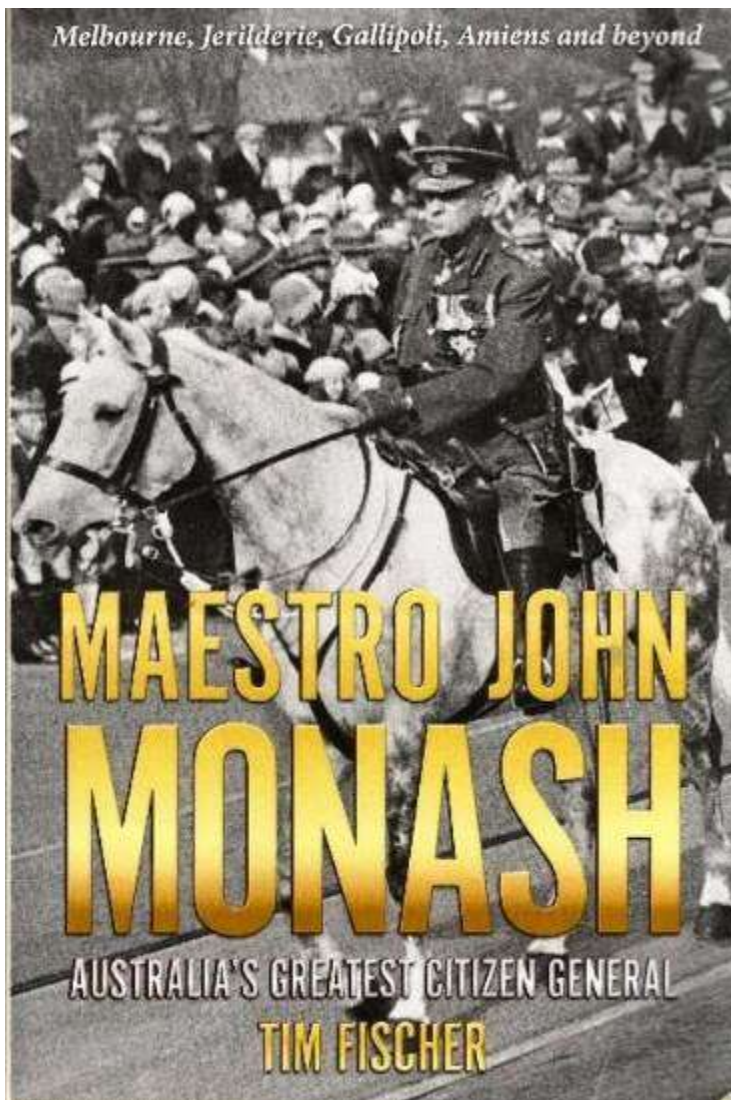
include postage and handling (P&H)





## MESSAGE FROM STAN SUTHERLAND:

It isn't too late to register for the Reunion in ~~Victoria~~  
Catering requirements need to be finalized, especially for the Saturday evening dinner.



## BOOK REVIEW

**Maestro John Monash Australia's Greatest Citizen General**  
(by Tim Fischer)

Review by our trusty Reviewer  
Extraordinaire Barry Wakefield

Tim Fischer has had a fascination ~~with~~ John Monash for some time and ~~after~~ reading this book I can see ~~in~~ Monash's father was born in Prussia in 1854 and came to Australia to see what it was like. After 2 years he returned to get a bride which he duly did. The original spelling of their surname was Monasch but as so many migrants do he anglicized it to Monash. The family settled in Jerilderie, just 140 metres from the Bank of NSW annex which would become famous when Ned Kelly robbed it. John was fluent in English, German and he had been taught Hebrew in keeping with his Jewish parents. He also had a smattering of French and could play the piano.

## BOOK REVIEW Cont.

The family settled in Jerilderie, just 140 metres from the Bank of NSW annex which ~~it~~ became famous when Ned Kelly robbed it. John was fluent in English, German and he had ~~taught~~ taught Hebrew in keeping with his Jewish parents. He also had a smattering of French ~~could~~ play the piano.

He went to Melbourne University where he studied Arts, Engineering & Law; he ~~h~~ joined the University Regiment. At the same time he held construction jobs as ~~an~~His first job of any substance was the Princes Bridge over the Yarra. He also opened up a quarry for blue stone and all was going well until a financial crisis hit in 1891. He was retrenched from his job so he joined with a friend to form Monash & Anderson Engineering and Advocacy firm. He appeared in court cases as an expert witness including big railway projects in WA and QLD where there were disputes over costing.

He was clever enough to use the new innovation of reinforced concrete, invented by a ~~En~~Joseph Monier. He harnessed this technique to strengthen the projects he was working on. His partner Anderson left for New Zealand in 1902 and it seems Monash spent most of his time suing councils who wouldn't pay for bridges he had built. A lot of those bridges are still standing today.

In 1891 he married Victoria Moss and they remained so until 1921 when she died of cancer.

As a reservist in the CMF (Citizens Military Force), he started off as a Private ~~and~~was promoted to Corporal in 1884. In 1887 we find him as a probationary Lieutenant at the North Melbourne Battery, guarding the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Interestingly the first shots fired in anger in WW1 were fired from this battery (Fort Nepean) across the bows of a merchant ship the SS Pfalz. Due to a cable from the new telegraph we knew at 9am on 5th August 1914 that we were at war. The ship was taken into port and later used as a troop carrier. Another ship to be apprehended was the SS Hobart which was boarded before she could destroy her code books. Monash was promoted to captain in October 1885 and by 1908 he was a Lieutenant-Colonel in Intelligence. With the start of WW1 and the horrendous death tolls officers were fast tracked, as indeed was anyone that showed promise.

From the very beginning Monash had several things going against him though, hard to ~~be~~in these enlightened times. The first was he came from Prussian Jewish stock and powerful figures like CEW Bean, Sir Keith Murdoch and the then PM Billie Hughes took every opportunity to criticise him. The other factor was he had not come through Duntroon or Sandhurst so other officers thought they were above him. Also having a mistress didn't help his cause; actually there were several.

At Gallipoli we find Monash being given orders that he knew would cost far too many lives. ~~It~~ seemed to him that the old Boer War generals had learned nothing. But all along he was ~~was~~for the chance to have a crack on his own terms. This came later when he was promoted to Corps Commander.

Probably the most extraordinary example of great planning and being in control of things ~~was~~ the Battle of Hamel. Here 1,000 men from the 33rd Illinois Division joined ~~an~~an Australian Army Corps. The planning was so precise that Monash allowed 90 minutes to capture all objectives. History shows that it actually took 93 minutes but that all objectives were taken with the minimum casualties as well as 1500 prisoners. He showed the way to do it by the concerted use of all forms of warfare, infantry, tanks, artillery and aircraft, all coordinated. At this stage he was a Lieutenant-General. Had he been in charge a lot sooner the lives that could have been saved would have been enormous. Tim Fischer makes the case throughout the book for Monash to be made a Field-Marshal and gives very good reasons why. It's hard not to agree with him once you read this book.



## OUR NASHOS DID US PROUD

Bloody rip snortin' mate, brothers in arms. We all got pissed side by side, shared a hootchie, shower, bunker and no one gave a shit if they were Reg or Nasho. UP THE OLD REDROOSTER!!

Story sent in by Rod Harlor, Mortar Platoon

### Our Nashos Did Us Proud

Perhaps you were working in a bank or shearing sheep  
Whacking a ball for six or flirting with a sheila down the pub  
When marbles rattled and your birthday tumbled in the draw Gawd, for  
dinkum, talk about the bloody short straw

You took the oath, then copped a medical and needles too  
Quickly learnt that in the army there was always a long queue  
Got to know the ARA mob who became brothers to you  
Then you went to war because Canberra Suits told you to

The rugged mountains and paddy fields became your home  
Soaking rain and stifling heat as with rifle and pack you did roam  
No matter if Regs or Nashos, you all drank from the same cup  
Sharing, caring and then grieving when a comrade's number was up

Choppers, ambushes, mines and bunker systems became your life  
The grim reaper was busy as was the surgeon's knife  
Long Tan, Balmoral, Coral, Binh Ba and other places you did go  
Always with purpose and for what you believed to be right

On return, how proud you marched through cheering crowds  
Carrying proud colours with Band and beating drums so loud  
The sweet unforgettable embraces with loved ones at last  
The curtain of war finally fell, leaving on stage a battle weary cast

As is always the way of life with shell, grenade, knife and gun  
The price you paid was a bitter and costly one  
The fallen are remembered on sacred walls with pride and pain  
Others with invisible wounds suffer sleepless nights again and again

Now in the early winter of life you reflect on where you've been  
Comes the pride and sometimes doubt of that military scene  
Let me proudly say of you and your regular army comrades too  
All of you were "chips off the old ANZAC block" and just as true blue

# MATES CORNER

## ROLLCALL SUBMISSIONS

GIVE US SOME INTERESTING NEWS OR HUMOROUS ANECDOTES ABOUT THE 9RAR FAMILY, SEND IT TO:-

Emma Bigwood [thebigwoods@bigpond.com](mailto:thebigwoods@bigpond.com) ph.: 0422-429-745

or Barney (Rick) Bigwood [barneybig@outlook.com](mailto:barneybig@outlook.com) ph.: 02 9873-5209



## ODDS & ENDS

**Alan Chandler** and Helene are still on the road (bloody Gypsies) . I heard from them in Yepoon, Qld. He said he caught up with Kev Lynch and Brian Vickery on the way North: ~~he~~ are very Busy. He is now about to head home because summer is coming to the Central Coast of NSW and this will warm his old bones. The wimp cannot take the cold.

**Graham Cook**, Charlie Company, has undergone a rebuild, having 2 new knees ~~in~~ Unfortunately it is very doubtful this will assist him in keeping in step during the Anzac Day March.



LEFT: Michael (Mick) Coble ex 10 ~~th~~ and son Shane RAN Medic and Diver, who carried our banner in 2014.

Mick and his long suffering partner Denise recently returned from Cairns. Mick had snaffled up a chep deal on the internet and decided to escape the cold winter in Nowra.

'Young' Shane met his true love Santha in Singapore and recently they married in Las Vegas, USA. Below is a picture of Shane and Santha after the nuptials, as well as a pic of Shane enjoying his last taste of freedom.





## A NEW STAFF CAR

### A Big Surprise for the Nurses of 1 Hospital, Vung Tau

Story told to Bob Meehan by Noel Hains

Way back in 1968-69, Victor Company, one of 2 Infantry companies of the New Zealand Army combined with 4 RAR to create the ANZAC battalion 4 RAR/NZ. While on operations near the Courtney Rubber Plan-tation in the north of Phuoc

Tuy Province, South Vietnam, a forward scout saw something that didn't look right in the thick scrub in front of him. A section of their finest moved forward to discover an old French Citroen car. As the photos show, they dragged it clear of the undergrowth, repaired the bullet holes and repainted it. They were instructed to get rid of it as it was not military issued. Not to be outdone by the authorities they mixed some red paint and white paint together, repainted it pink and donated it to Sister Pam terry (Nurse) of the RNZNC, to be used to drive to Vung Tau. It was then passed along to each of the Aussie and Kiwi nurses over the following years. Note the numberplate!

PICTURES (clockwise from top left): 1) the numberplate, 2) bringing it back to base, 3) checking it out, 4) pre-paint job, 5) showing the bullet holes, 6) the final paint job and (CENTRE) Sister Pam Terry, RNZNC



## OUR GIRLS : THE VIETNAM NURSES

### The Story of Colleen Thurgar, Vietnam 1967 –68

This story courtesy of Bob Meehan ex 4 RAR, Curator of Gold Coast War Museums told to him by Colleen herself

*Colleen Thurgar AM (Mealy) was born in Port Augusta. In her childhood she developed polio and attended a crippled children's home in Adelaide. She returned to primary school later with the determination to regain the full use of legs so she could become a dancer. She later trained as a nurse.*

I trained at Port Augusta Hospital in South Australia and from there I went to St Andrews in Adelaide and did my staffing. A year later I became a Registered Nurse. I joined the Army because that's all I'd ever wanted to do. I'd always wanted to join the Army. I don't know. It's like: why did you go nursing? It's just something you want to do. I was in the Army for two years before I went to Vietnam. I found out I was going in an unusual way. I came home from a function one night and it was late so I put the radio on and heard on the late news that four nurses had been chosen to go to Vietnam. I thought, 'Oh, the lucky devils', and they gave the names and mine was the last name. I thought, 'Oh, was I hearing right?' So I raced down, woke Matron up and asked, "I've just heard who's going to Vietnam. Is it true?" She said, "Yes, but it's a secret." I said, "Well, it's not anymore, it's on the ra-dio and my mother's most probably heard that." She said, "Oh yes, you are." I then asked, "When?" and she re-plied, "In ten days." I exclaimed, "Oh, that's nice. I haven't got anything to wear," to which she replied, "Oh well, you've got to have your shots and everything now you know." I then asked, "How long have you known?" and she replied, "Oh, for a little while." I thought, 'Oh you rotten sods. They've most probably known for months' be-cause there'd been rumours that you might go and the girls might be going and others might not be going. So I rang up my mother. I said, "Mum, I'm going to Vietnam." There was a dead silence on the end of the phone. You know, she... then she put me on to Dad and he couldn't talk, Oh! I couldn't work out what the problem was. I was really excited and they weren't at all. So then it was a real rush to get ready because I was posted to Kapooka near Wagga Wagga in NSW at the time and you're entitled to seven days' pre-embarkation leave. So I got my car home and got everything sorted out. And because I'd trained in a small country town, everybody knew I was going. I'd worked with the Flying Doctors before a little bit and the pilot there said, "No bird from Port Augusta's going off to Vietnam without a good send off." So they flew my parents and me down to Adelaide to catch the flight out, which was good. I mean, the town seemed to be behind me to send me off. I and the other three girls going to Vietnam met in Sydney. This was the first time we'd seen each other and we stayed at the RAAF bar-racks in Mosman Heights for a night before we went and got to know one another. I'd done a couple of major ex-ercises up north at Barrowunga and I think because I passed the test with the Second World War sisters up there that I got selected. Although they've never said, I really think that was the testing ground for their selection for the position. The other three hadn't been there. They also chose people because of theatre experience because there was a theatre sister. I was one of the first four. There was Terri, Amy, Maggie and myself. Maggie and I were the theatre sisters and I think that's why I won one of the caps. I was the youngest one and the most junior. When you look at captains who have been in the service for 10 to 15 years and there was lowly little old me get-ting a chance at this, you know, it was really great. It was a privilege to be accepted. When we first arrived in Vietnam we were posted to 8 Field Ambulance at Vung Tau from 1967-68. They didn't know where they were going to put us. They'd started to build huts for the padres, while everybody else was still in tents. They kicked the padres out. Well, they hadn't even moved in, but it was decided the padres couldn't have a wooden hut; we could have this long wooden hut. It was surrounded by canvas up to the roof line and no windows... Oh, windows, but no shutters or anything like that on. It hadn't been finished. They put partitions between each of the beds but only up to about six foot or something. It as absolutely bare, nothing else, you know. We had a two-hole toilet and a shower with only cold water. That was our accommodation. I know it wasn't what I'd expected. I thought we'd have a little bit more pleasant accommodation. The base was constructed in sand hills. They put partitions between each of the beds but only up to about six foot or something. It as absolutely bare, nothing else, you know.



We had a two-hole toilet and a shower with only cold water. That was our accommodation. I know it wasn't what I'd expected. I thought we'd have a little bit more pleasant accommodation. The base was constructed in sand hills. The sand got everywhere – sand in your ears, in your teeth, in your bed every night. It just got into everything. The hospital was four tin huts with doors and sand. When we first arrived, there was no running water. To scrub up, you had to fill the basins with water out of the jerry cans and scrub up that way. There was no drainage and no running water. We had electricity. Our choofer was run on petrol. Our sterilising machine was a portable job that ran on kero or some-thing. You know, it used to explode now and again, so they had to put that outside in between the theatre block and one of the wards. Near where you could go down to the chopper pad. And then we had the wards.

From the time we were there we went from very primitive conditions to semi-primitive conditions. When we became 1 Aus Field Hospital our equipment scale went up and therefore we were entitled to more equipment. By this stage we had painted cement paths; we even had lawn planted so the patients could sit on the lawn, very important to make them all feel at home. We had white railings, People thought we were mad but it was a good morale booster. It's was the same with our uniforms. Our sisters from the Second World War had taught us that you must always look like a lady at all times and you'll be treated like a lady and you must wear your veil so the boys will know who you are. So we wore full starched uniforms, starched veils, stockings with seams in them and shoes in the middle of the tropics. The American girls wore their greens around and what-have-you; the Red Cross girls walked around in sandals and little light dresses. Whenever the boys came in they knew where they were and they knew we were the sisters and we were very well respected by the boys. I still call them the boys even though they're getting on now. They all call me bonkers! The boys, you know, respected us and knew as soon as they got there that they were safe, even though it was a hardship having to wear that type of uniform. It certainly paid off in the long run and I can only say thanks to the sisters from the Second World War who'd been through it and who'd said, "Look, go as ladies, don't go as soldiers." Some of the articles that are coming out about the nurses who served in Vietnam, not from Australia but from Ameri-ca, talk a lot about things like sexual harassment and discrimination and the problems that the American nurses had. We had none at all. I say, we were treated as ladies, always in the Service we were treated as ladies. You were trained as officers and you were an officer. We couldn't go to a mess without another female to accompany us so that this innuendo couldn't be put into it. You had to do things in pairs. When we got to Vietnam, of course it was very hard to do things in pairs, but we'd had it pretty well drummed into us. "You are the first four. If you screw up..." It wasn't put in these words but "If you screw up, you will ruin it for every other nurse who wants to come to Vietnam," was implied. It was a big thing to have, you know. You'd think, 'God, if I do wrong I'm going to muck it up for everybody else.' So there was a lot of pressure to do the right thing, and we did. But, see, our guys looked after us too. I mean, if we went out, we didn't walk around like the American girls for a start. We wore our bathers on the beach but we certainly didn't run around in shorts or hardly any-thing on. I'm not saying they brought it on themselves. I'm just saying that the four of us were fairly strictly controlled and it was self-control because there was a barbed wire fence around us but there are ways and means of getting in and out of there. But, no, we had no trouble at all. All different types of incidents hap-pened in Vietnam: the funny ones and then the ones you don't like to talk about: the really serious ones. The ones that keep coming back to me are the RAAF girls who used to come and take our boys away from us and fly them home. That was fine for the guys, but we'd worked so hard on them to get them to that stage, putting our own sweat, blood and emotion into the job. If you've ever worked in the tropics you would know that you sweat most of the time. The boys used to take their theatre skivvies off and just wring them out and put them back on. You know, you sweat like that all the time. Our grey uniforms would have big sweat rings around them and no matter how much perfume you put on, you were always a bit whiffy. In the wet season one side of the veil would drag down. Then off the plane would come the RAAF girls: beautiful in permanent-press slacks, clean blouses, hair set at the hairdressers, make-up immaculate, perfumed, and they'd take our boys. I used to get so angry. I used to think, 'How dare they come in here looking like that!' I was talking to this RAAF sister and she said, "You know, we used to work for two days before we'd go to Vietnam. We would try our hardest to look as best we could so that we could look nice."

## THE VIETNAM NURSES: PICTURES



ABOVE LEFT: Colleen at 8 Field AMbulance Vungers. ABOVE ~~M~~he 1987 Welcome Home Parade with Frankie Hunt, the boy from "I was only 19". ~~R~~IGHT: Colleen as she is now.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE COLLEEN and ALL YOUR SISTER ~~S~~

## VIETNAM RELATED WEBSITES

<http://vietnamvetradio.com/> For all the hits of the sixties



<https://vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au/>

A fantastic site showing every contact in A area of involvement Vietnam . You can add your personal notes of your involvement and add to the history of the war for future generations.

“A Duty Done” a history of the Regiments involvement in Vietnam . Available through the RARA SA on

<http://rarasa.org.au>

Download order form and payment instructions.



© Copyright on all original items in *ROLLCALL* is held by the author and should not be reproduced for profit without the written permission of the author. Reproduction for non-profit newsletters, military archives or study purposes in proper context is encouraged, but acknowledgment should be given to the author and source. Items reproduced in *ROLLCALL* are acknowledged wherever possible.



#### The 9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment:

The Battalion was formed on 13 November 1967 in South Australia. The Battalion served in South Vietnam from 5 November 1968 to 25 November 1969. The Battalion then remained at Enoggera until the 31 October, 1973 when it merged with 8 RAR to become the 8th/9th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (8/9 RAR). The Battalion's service in South Vietnam resulted in the award of a Distinguished Service Order, two Military Crosses, seven Military Medals, and eleven members of the Battalion were Mentioned in Dispatches.

With the end of Vietnam War lists the OC A Coy Major W. McDonald had his MID (mentioned in Dispatches) and a Medal of Gallantry and 2nd Lt Geoffrey Locke was awarded an Commendation for Distinguished Service

See more at:

[http://www.9rar.org.au/battn\\_history.html](http://www.9rar.org.au/battn_history.html)

*We're on the web. Find us at:*

*[www.9rar.org.au](http://www.9rar.org.au)*