



# TIGER TALES



Issue 65 December 2023 Newsletter of 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment Association (Inc) We are all Tigers together.

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## GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH



Australian Army soldiers and Indonesian soldiers conduct a night assault at the Darwin Military Museum at East Point, NT.  
Photo: Captain Annie Richardson

There were a lot of big smiles and hugs in the small receiving terminal at RAAF Base Darwin as the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR) didn't just welcome a visiting company of soldiers for an exercise, but old friends from Indonesia's 412 Raider Battalion Kostrad (412Bn) back to the Northern Territory.

Exercise Wirra Jaya 2023, the latest in a rich series of training between the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and 5 RAR, wrapped up at Robertson Barracks in Darwin.

Running for more than a decade, the Wirra Jaya series alternates annually between being hosted in Australia and Indonesia, and in all that time the purpose of the exercise has never wavered – partnership.

Officer Commanding Charlie Company 5 RAR Major John Moulton has been actively involved with Wirra Jaya for years.

"One of the highlights this year has been the level of integration that we've been able to achieve between our two units, which has seen us working together right down to section-level, building our individual soldier skills and learning how to work with each other to conduct infantry minor tactics," he said.

Exercise Wirra Jaya was nested this year within the 1st

Brigade's major annual training event, Exercise Predator's Run, putting a heavy focus on littoral operations.

In order to maximise integration, 5 RAR established two combat teams: Alpha and Charlie.

Combat Team Charlie was a 5 RAR-led company with a TNI platoon from 412Bn attached and Combat Team Alpha was an Indonesian-led company with attached elements from 5 RAR and other 1st Brigade units.

The combat teams patrolled, carried out raids in and around Darwin, conducted blue bolt force-on-force training, urban breaching and even crossed more than 75km of open sea by Zodiac in order to insert soldiers onto Bathurst Island.

"It's been just fantastic," Major Moulton said.

"It's seen interoperability – the ability of 412 and 5 RAR to come together to achieve complex tasks in difficult terrain. It's been wonderful for us to get the chance to reconnect with this battalion we've got to know so well."

1<sup>st</sup> Brigade also hosted TNI Commander of the Army Strategic Reserve Command, or Pangkostrad, Lieutenant General Maruli Simanjuntak, who got to see his soldiers up close, training alongside 5 RAR.

A small closing ceremony was held at 5 RAR, where sol-

*(Continued on page 2)*

**THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST TIGER TALES!  
PLEASE READ THE NOTICE ON PAGE 9 FOR DETAILS.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

G'Day to all members of the Tiger Battalion Association, families and friends,

There is a lot to report on in this issue of Tiger Tales so I will get straight onto it.

As you would no doubt be aware now, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion will merge once again with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion to re-form the 5<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion as part of significant changes to the Army's Order of Battle (ORBAT). This change will likely come into effect in December 2024. The reasons behind this change – among others – are many and varied but reflect the changing strategic situation within our region, the threats and missions that our Defence Force is likely to face in the coming years and yes, different Government spending priorities. While we would all much prefer that the Battalion remained on the ORBAT in it's own right, a merge is better than being removed completely which may yet be the fate of others.

Importantly from our perspective, this change does not impact our Association aims and mission. We must remain focused on what we can influence and who we can support. Having been a member of the 5<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in it's previous iteration I can confirm that all Associations were considered an important part of our community and I have no doubt this will remain the same from the Battalion's perspective.

However, there do remain some significant issues for our Association and it's members to consider and these have been discussed at the recent RAR Association Committee Meeting and our own Annual General Meeting this year. The Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) landscape remains overcrowded with over 3500 ESOs purporting to support veterans and their families in some form. Our Association can proudly lay claim to being a truly effective contributor in this community, but we are dwindling in numbers, modern veterans – including myself – have different time constraints and commitments that preclude heavy involvement, and many Associations are drawing from the same small pool of volunteers for their skills commitment and time.

In the next 8 to 12 months we need to have some serious discussions about the future of the Association. Should we consider a merger with the 5<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Association – something that was agreed for planning purposes only in 2022 but overtaken by events described above, some other form of mergers with other Associations or continue to operate as our own entity. While I do not know the exact answer, what I do know is that at our current rates of membership reduction there is a definitive end to the Association without an injection of new members.

These are complex issues and what I request of all of you is to participate in these discussions. Keep an eye out for proposals, take part in votes and meetings and have a say in the future of your organisation. The turnout of non-committee members at the AGM was incredibly disappointing and not reflective of the deep commitment and passion that I know our membership have. We need more people to get involved.

On that note, I publicly thank again our Committee mem-



Dave French

bers the majority of whom have been in their roles for many years and continue to serve you and your families with great passion and dedication. A number have made the necessary decision to reduce their commitments and decided not to continue on the Committee. I thank Kev Mulligan in Tasmania and Ted Harrison as our Webmaster in particular. We will shortly be rebooting our website which will carry on the fine work that Ted has done for 20 years and also enable our members to more securely interact with our history.

Interesting and challenging times are ahead. If you want a say in the future of your Association then I urge you to make your voice heard in the meetings, forums and votes to come in the coming year.

Lastly, I with most heartfelt thanks and best wishes for the future thank LTCOL Chris Gilmore for his leadership of the Tiger Battalion in these past two years. Chris has been a Champion for the Battalion in many forums, deployed soldiers to training missions within the region and Europe, responded to disaster relief missions domestically and did all of this while converting the Battalion from a standard Infantry Battalion to one skilled in small boat operations and littoral manoeuvre; a key component in securing the future of the Tigers. Chris and his family leave with your love, respect and best wishes for the future and we look forward to him always being a Tiger. Thank you Chris.

As always, Duty First.

Dave French

*Editor's Note: As Dave has said in his report, the 5 RAR Association National Committee work to keep the Association members well informed and also to keep the Association on an even keel. We currently have two vacancies on the committee and need volunteers to fill them, they are the Vice President and Tasmanian State Representative. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested please contact our Secretary, Geoff Pearson, to gather more information.*

## GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH - CONT.

*(Continued from page 1)*

diars from both nations had the chance to share a meal and exchange gifts.

Major Moulton summed up what interoperability means for soldiers in the Indo-Pacific preparing to face whatever might lie ahead: "To share that hard training. To train together, to eat together, to live together, and to fight together."

Next year, 5 RAR will be hosted in Indonesia, where ties between the TNI and the Australian Army will be deepened.

Courtesy of Defence website



G'day Tigers,

It is a privilege to write to you for the last time to provide an update on what the Tiger Battalion has been up to for the past few months. Our Tigers have performed to an excellent standard on both Operations in the United Kingdom (OP KUDU) and at home through the execution of Exercise Predators Run 2023 and the completion of our Basic Support Company Course period.

Firstly, I would like to offer a warm welcome and introduce the Tiger community to the incoming Commanding Officer of the Battalion, LTCOL Hugh Grogan. LTCOL Grogan comes to the chair as call-sign 'India 9er' having served for over 25 years in the Royal Australian Regiment. He brings a wealth of experience with him, and it is also very pleasing to see that he and the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Brad Foster will reunite having previously served together as the Officer Commanding and CSM as a Company Command team. Personally, I have known Hugh for many years and there is not an officer better prepared or more suited to assume the role as the Commanding Officer of 5 RAR.

As always, the focus of the Tigers has been on training, and they have represented all Tigers past and present with a sense of purpose, humility and most of all, with focus on capability. Since I last wrote to you, Charlie and Delta Company participated in Exercise Predators Run 23, a littoral manoeuvre focused activity in and around Darwin and Melville Island. Bravo Company deployed to the United Kingdom for Rotation III of OP KUDU, training several hundred Ukrainian recruits to return to Ukraine and defend their homeland against Russian aggression. Support Company completed a number of courses to qualify the next generation of soldiers in the specialist skills required to keep the Battalion moving. Our Logistic Company have been working at 120% capacity, maintaining our Protected Mobility Vehicle fleet (Bushmaster), keeping our small boat capability on the water, receiving the first two Regional Patrol Craft (and adding to our capability on the water) and also receiving the first tranche of Supercat vehicles. As we currently stand, Charlie Company deployed off the line of march from Ex Predators Run to the United Kingdom for the fourth Rotation of Operation KUDU and we farewelled our brothers and sisters of the United States Marine Corps of this year's Marine Rotational Force – Darwin.

Exercise Predators Run 2023 was an opportunity for the 1st Brigade to test and evaluate the level of capability that we have been able to reach in our Littoral development over the past two years. As a brigade, we task organised into two multi-national battle groups; BG TIGER with C Coy, an Indonesian Company from 412 Bn TNI-AD, an Engineer Squadron and Log Company. Delta Coy regrouped with a Company from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and an Engineer squadron under BG GOAN-NA and we commenced the exercise. We focused on moving across the water at distance, using both contracted civilian landing craft and our own small boats. The activity was tough and an immense amount of professionalism was needed from the Tigers, and as our teams al-



LTCOL Chris Gilmore

ways have, they stepped up to the challenge and moved to the point of friction. The exercise had some highs and lows; the low being the tragic loss of three of our U.S. Marine mates in the MV 22 incident on Melville Island, of which our Direct Fire Support Weapons Platoon supported the response to. The highs were many, however Delta Company's securing of strategic firing systems was exceptional, as were the efforts of Charlie Coy, covering more than 200 nautical miles over open water (including several night-time over the horizon) transits in a flotilla of small boats – a feat not conducted before on that scale by an RAR unit. The exercise concluded with a visit by LTGEN Maruli

Simanjuntak, the current PANKOSTRAD and commanding General of the TNI-AD contingent that we had the privilege to host.

Our continued contribution to OP KUDU in the United Kingdom has continued to be a highlight of the year for the Tigers who have deployed to train the recruits of the Armed Forces of the Ukraine. In what has been a mission with much of the world watching, I cannot state how proud I am of the level of dedication, focus and professionalism all four of our contingents have displayed. In other regional operations, a platoon sized team from Delta Company deployed to Timor Leste for six weeks since I last wrote to you. Our Logistic Company and Motorised team lead the delivery of two Bushmaster driver training courses to the Indonesian Army, which in turn enabled the delivery of Bushmaster's donated to Indonesia by the Australian Government, inclusive of OC Log leading the team to receipt the vehicles in Indonesia.

Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge the work of the men and women of the Tiger Battalion over the past two years. The Tiger Battalion has been heavily tasked, and the teams have always stood up to be counted; completing 13 separate security cooperation activities with near region partners, five separate named operations, three separate domestic operational deployments and 17 separate field training exercises and courses. The work of the unit's commanders, from Company to Fire Team has been the glue that has enabled the team to sustain such a tempo, and all of this could not have been achieved without the resolute support that WO1 Foster and WO1 Casey before him have provided the Battalion.

As I sign off, I will be forever grateful that I have had the opportunity to serve in this fine Battalion. To have served in the Tiger Battalion has been an absolute honour, and to have been a custodian of the Battalion's Colours has been the most humbling experience of my career. I wish all Tigers out there a safe and Merry Christmas. Please continue to look out for each other as you always have and always do.

Duty First!

Chris Gilmore

*Editor's Note: This report is LTCOL Chris Gilmore's last, as LTCOL Hugh Grogan will be appointed as the incoming Commanding Officer on Monday 4 December. Due to operational commitments there are no subunit reports.*



# AROUND THE STATES

## WA



Thursday the third of August had our President, Alan McNulty along with Peter Armstrong, Peter Chapman and Ray Ward, join with the members of 7 RAR at the Karrakatta Cemetery, to honour our Vietnam Veterans who are buried in this cemetery.

The vigil was in keeping with the request nationally, to honour our Vietnam Veterans, in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Australia, ceasing our involvement in the Vietnam War.

At the graveside of Gordon D'Antoine where we were joined by members of the family including Gordon's sister who laid a wreath. This was followed by a few words about Gordon and his service, with Last Post and Rouse being played.

Having completed our time with our 7 RAR comrades, it was time to move to the other gravesites of the remaining 5 RAR veterans, buried in Karrakatta. The first of these was Nick Cassano, Nick's brother Con spoke fondly of his older brother and the times that they had enjoyed while growing up.



Members who attended Karrakatta Cemetery, with on the right of the grave Con Cassano and on the left is Peter Chapman, (Tracker PI 1969-70) who was with 5 Platoon on the day that Nick died.

We then moved to the other gravesites of Tony Waring, Bryan Watson and James Webster, where we paid tribute to their service and placed a poppy on each of the graves.

Of those 5 RAR veterans who were buried elsewhere, our President had arranged for these graves to be visited either by a 5 RAR veteran or a member of the community.

Those visited were Tich Thomas, buried in Nannup, Jimmy White of Collie, Andrew Drummond of Carnarvon and Donald Clark of Geraldton.

It was an honour and privilege, to make this vigil and to remember mates from so long ago and yet in other ways it seems it was only yesterday, that we trained, drank and experienced the hardships of battle with them.

**'Lest we Forget'**

## WA - Cont.



We once more gathered on Friday the 18th of August, to remember all members of the battalion killed in action.

Although, we did not have a large roll up we did have some members from the country attend and this was greatly appreciated. A number of partners and wives also came along to support the veterans. Alan McNulty DCM, read out all 50 names that were killed in Vietnam, whilst John (Blue) Burrige MG, recited the Ode which brought complete silence to all who were in the venue. Of course this may have been more to do with not being able to hear yourself speak, over John's booming voice.

What was most appreciated, when a couple of patrons not associated with 5 RAR, chose to place a not insignificant sum of money over the bar for us to enjoy a drink or two, in total \$850.00. In doing so none of the veterans or the ladies needed to put their hand in the pocket to purchase a drink during the entire time we were together. This was most generous and we thank our benefactors most sincerely.

Our next function will be our Christmas lunch at 43 Below in December 9.

Ray Ward



## NSW

**GREAT NEWS:** It is very pleasing to announce that the Association's SYDNEY home (The Crown Hotel) has reopened after renovations and is ready to accommodate us again next ANZAC DAY and our other get togethers Christmas and Battalion Birthday. The renovations did take quite some time, with the Dining Room still in the same place, BUT they have added an inside and outside rooftop bar, plus a LIFT for us older blokes (remember the stairs). Let's get together at Christmas, 12 noon on Friday 1 December at The Crown, cnr Elizabeth and Goulburn Sts SYDNEY - Just down Elizabeth St at the end of the March.



For those I do not see Have a Merry Xmas and a great festive season.

Barney Ruttle



## QLD

Well, here we are in December 2023 and what a year it has been. Looking back there has been a few significant moments for veterans both young and old to gather and commemorate the service and sacrifices many have made to our nation. In late August Tigers from across Queensland attended services in recognition to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. This commemoration having particular significance for our older Tigers, with 5 RAR being raised in March 1965 and 14 months later being deployed into the Vietnam War. Our collective thoughts and prayers remain with our fallen and their families. Step forward a few months and again our nation takes a moment of pause to reflect and pay tribute as we remember all Australians who have served our nation on Remembrance Day. Having spoken to a number of veterans on the day it is always inspiring to know that people from far and wide come together to attend formal services, quietly pause work meetings, or put down their tools of trade and give a meaningful thought to those that have stepped up to the call to defend the freedoms we enjoy. Their memory lives only as long as the last person who remembers them.

Looking to the future there are a number of matters to be addressed arising from recent AGM discussions. Some will fall into place; others will need some consideration and consultation with our brothers in arms from across different associations, as Army postures itself for future contingencies and our members put thought to how that will affect our association. Our QLD Tigers will be on standby to support discussion and decisions as they arise. On broader veteran matters, the Australian government has released The Veteran Transition Strategy, a first of its kind. The strategy is a joint initiative between Defence, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), and Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC). The Strategy aims to align supports and establish a shared vision for what it means for a veteran and their family to transition well. The Australian Government has also announced greater incentives for general practitioners to treat members of the veteran community who use their Veteran Card as payment. This is part of the Government's 2023-24 investment in DVA, to ensure veterans and their families have access to health and wellbeing services they need to live well after service. More information on the incentives and the services covered is available on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au/news/latest-stories/gps-incentivised-accept-veteran-cards](http://www.dva.gov.au/news/latest-stories/gps-incentivised-accept-veteran-cards)

For our tigers both young and old the DVA MyService application is also continuing to have a number of enhancements turned on, making it even easier to navigate your DVA business and access personal information. For those of you not familiar with the application or need to know how to register, there is great information about MyService available on DVA TV at the following link: [www.youtube.com/c/DVATVAus](http://www.youtube.com/c/DVATVAus)

In closing, It is amazing to see the wonderful work our



## QLD Cont.

young tigers are doing in littoral operations, and the close working relationships being developed with our regional partners. On behalf of the QLD tigers 'Train hard, Fight easy'.

Jason Johnson



## SA - NT

It has been very quiet in SA since our last Tiger Tales report as life has just been rolling along for our members. I early August I sent out a note to all our SA 5 RAR members whose membership needed to be renewed or had lapsed, I am pleased to say that there were quite a few that renewed after being given the nudge.

We have booked into the Lord Melbourne Hotel for a Xmas lunch get together on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November, look forward to hearing from our South Australian comrades.



Mick von Berg and members of the Recce Platoon who joined him to celebrate his birthday.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November Michael von Berg MC celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at the home of the RAR SA Association. Mick was joined by 7 still surviving members of the original Reconnaissance Platoon, formed by 5 RAR on the first tour, along with family and friends. 'Dogs' Kearney revealed many stories of the formation of Reconnaissance platoon, mainly of their antics 'non-tactical'.

To all Tigers past and present we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Greg Dwiar

**Quote: "The ties that bound us together are of the most sacred nature; they had been gotten in hardship and baptised in blood"**

**Theodore Gerrish, Army Life: A private's reminiscence of the civil war. (1882)**



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# IN MEMORIAM

## 18163 ARTHUR RAYMOND CRUMMER 29 May 1945 - 15 June 2023

We have belatedly been advised that CPL Arthur Crummer, of Ormeau, Queensland, died on Thursday 15 June of this year.

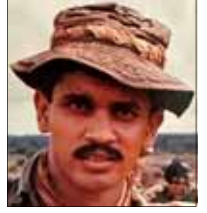
Arthur deployed to South Vietnam, on 2 May 1966, he served with 4 Section, 11 Platoon, Delta Company. Arthur's position was as a Lance Corporal and a 2IC of a section. He was later, in the battalion's tour, was promoted to Corporal and a section commander. Arthur returned to Australia aboard HMAS Sydney, with the Battalion, docking in Sydney on 12 May 1967 in Sydney.



## 5411149 HYLTON LOUIS FRUGTNIET 28 January 1939 - 23 June 2023

CPL Hylton 'Hyl' Frugtniet sadly passed away on Friday 23 June, after a long battle with illness.

Hyl enlisted in 1962, he deployed to Vietnam with 5 RAR Vietnam on 8 May 1966. I believe that he served with Alpha Company as a section commander. After the Battalion returned to Australia, he remained in Vietnam to help complete the handover to 7 RAR. Hyl returned to Australia on 17 May 1967. Hyl served a full 20 years in the Australian Defence Force, retiring as a WO1 instructor at Land Warfare Centre in May 1982.



## 53116 GERALD AUBREY BRENDISH 28 August 1937 - 23 June 2023



WO2 Gerald Brendish, formally of Mulaloo Western Australia, died on Friday 23 June.

He was a member of Royal Australian Army Service Corps and deployed to Vietnam with the Battalion on 12 May 1966 as the Pay Sergeant in BHQ. Gerald was returned to Australia on 25 October 1966, due to a medical condition. He was promoted to

WO2 and visited Vietnam again two times in November 1969 and July 1970.

## 2781297 MICHAEL FEDERICK BELLINGHAM 3 January 1945 - 15 July 2023



PTE Michael Bellingham passed away on Saturday 15 July, in Nepean Hospital, Penrith, after over a six month stay,

Michael was a 1<sup>st</sup> intake National Service man who completed his recruit training at 2 Recruit Training Battalion. He was then posted to 7 Platoon, C Company, 5 RAR to receive his Infantry training. Michael was then transferred to the Signals Platoon, Support Company. He deployed to Vietnam on 28 April 1967 and remained with signals for the full 1966-67 tour. Michael returned to Australia aboard HMAS Sydney, docking on 12 May 1967.

## 21161 ROSS RICHARD BURNS 27 July 1927 - 25 July 2023

WO1 Ross Burns passed away in the care facility he had been residing in at Manly Vale, NSW.

Ross enlisted in the AIF in August 1945 serving in Japan (1946-48) and with 3 RAR in Korea for 5 months where he was WIA. Ross served twice with 1 RAR and 3 RAR. He served with 5 RAR 1967-68 as the CSM of Admin Coy and then as the RSM of the Battalion. Ross also was deployed to Singapore, Malaya, Indonesia, Vietnam and Biak (Irian Jaya). He had very many posting during his 37 year career in the AIF and ARA.



## 44571 MAXWELL COLIN HEDLEY 12 January 1949 - 30 July 2023

PTE Maxwell Hedley died on Sunday 30 July in the care facility that he was in SA.

Max was one of the original members of 7 Platoon, Charlie Coy for the battalion's second tour of Vietnam. He was involved in all the Australian training and served a full tour in Vietnam until 23 February 1970. As the platoon medic, he was close to the action the whole time. Max was wounded in the final operation in January 1970. It was a severe shrapnel head wound and he was still able to instruct the person nearest him on how to apply the field dressing.



## 1734035 LUBERT JOHAN MOSTERD 19 July 1947 - 5 August 2023



PTE Lubert 'Luke' Mosterd passed away on Saturday 5 August in the Gold Coast University Hospital.

Luke was conscripted in February 1968 and completed recruit and Corps training at 3 TB, Singleton. He was transferred to 5 RAR in August 1968 and deployed to Vietnam, with the Battalion, on 17 February 1969. In-country Luke was attached to 1 Platoon, Alpha Company and then Delta Company as a stretcher-bearer. He returned to Australia, on 3 December 1969, when his term of NS enlistment was almost completed.

## 254979 JOHN RAYMOND STURLA 8 August 1948 - 31 August 2023



PTE John Sturla died on Thursday 31 August in the care facility that he had been residing in.

John originally joined the CMF in 1967 with 4 RNSWR. He deployed 1 ARU in Vietnam in March 1969, he then transferred to 4 Section, 11 Platoon, 5 RAR, on 2 April, as a rifleman. He completed the Battalion's 1969-70 tour and returned to Australia with 5 RAR aboard HMAS Sydney. On return, John joined 1 RAR and served in Singapore/Malaysia. He returned to the CMF in 1972 with 1 Commando Company until discharge in June 1973.

# IN MEMORIAM - Cont.

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## 61609 JOHN ACKERLEY 21 October 1946 - 2 September 2023



CPL John Ackerley died on Saturday 2 September in New Norfolk, Tasmania.

John enlisted in the CMF in 1963 and transferred to the ARA in 1964. After initial training he joined 2 RAR and in 1966 was transferred to 5 RAR. He deployed to Vietnam with the Mortar Platoon, Support Company, 5 RAR serving in that position for the full 1966-67 tour of duty. He returned to Australia arriving home on 12 May 1967. Serving with 8 RAR, John re-deployed to Vietnam on 17 November 1969 and returned to Australia on 3 September 1970.

## 235352 MICHAEL KEITH M<sup>C</sup>DERMOTT 13 December 1946 - 9 September 2023

LT Michael 'Mick' McDermott passed away on Saturday 9 September after a long illness.

Michael graduated from RMC-D in 1968 when he joined 1 RAR. While serving in Malaysia, he was transferred to 1 ARU in Vietnam in August. On 4 September Michael became the OC of 10 Platoon, Delta Company, 5 RAR. He returned to Australia on Board HMAS Sydney and remained with 5 RAR until transferring to AATTV June 1971. Michael had many other postings and took his discharge in August 1990 with the rank of LTCOL.



## 3792428 DOUGLAS ALLAN KENT 10 December 1947 - 29 September 2023



PTE Douglas 'Doug' Kent, formerly of Caboolture, QLD, died on Friday 29 September.

Doug did his initial training at 2 RTB and Corps Training. He deployed to Vietnam, on 8 February 1969 as a carpenter, with Assault Pioneers Platoon. Doug was returned to Australia on 13 August 1969 when his NS term was ending. Doug rejoined and later returned to 2 RTB as staff. He also served with 7 RAR and 5/7 RAR (twice to Malaysia), 11 Armoured Regiment and 4/19 Prince of Wales Light Horse before taking his discharge in 1985.

## 3786751 JOHN WARREN COLE 9 March 1945 - 7 November 2023

PTE John 'Gomer' Cole died at home in Melton South, on Tuesday 7 November.

John was a National Serviceman, 1<sup>st</sup> intake, he completed his recruit training at 2 RTB. He was transferred to 9 Platoon, Charlie Company, 5 RAR to receive Corps Training. At the end of this training, John joined Mortar Platoon, Support Company. He deployed to Vietnam on 30 April 1965. He served the Battalion's full 1<sup>st</sup> tour of duty with the Mortar Platoon. John returned to Australia with the Battalion aboard HMAS Sydney, which docked in Sydney, on 12 May 1967.



## 213559 ROBERT NEIL M<sup>C</sup>KENZIE 15 September 1941 - 7 September 2023



CPL Robert 'Neil' McKenzie of Lake Munmorah, NSW, died on Thursday 7 September with his family present.

Neil enlisted and did his initial training, joined 1 RAR in Malaysia and then stayed on with 2 RAR. On his return Neil rejoined 1 RAR and when 5 RAR was formed he became a founding member. He deployed to Vietnam in May 1966 in command of section of 4 PI, B Coy. He was WIA in the Long Hai Hills incident and was medivaced home. Neil also served with 6 RAR and 9 RAR taking discharge in 1982 with the rank of SSGT.

## 1411186 JOHN HARRY HARRINGTON 20 November 1943 - 11 September 2023

CPL John 'Shifty' Harrington died on Monday 11 September on the Sunshine Coast, QLD.

John did his initial training at 1 RTB and Infantry Centre and in September 1966 deployed to join 1 ARU in Vietnam. In November he joined 5 Section, 5 Platoon, 5 RAR as a rifleman, returning with the Battalion in May 1967. John re-deployed for 5 RAR's 1969-70 as a Corporal in the Pioneers Platoon arriving back in Australia in February 1970. His last posting was 2 RTB, Puckapunyal and he took his discharge in 1972



## 2787373 MACKLAN GORDON GRIDLEY 12 September 1946 - 18 October 2023



PTE Macklan 'Mack' Gridley passed away on Wednesday 18 October, at his home in Narrabeen.

Mack, a National Serviceman, did his initial training at 1 Recruit Training Battalion and his Corps training at 3 Training Battalion (Infantry Corps Wing). He was transferred to D Coy CHQ, 5 RAR in December 1967 and deployed, with the Battalion, to Vietnam on 27 January 1969. Mack returned to Australia on 4 June of that year. This early return was because of the fact that his National Service commitment was due to end on 11 July 1969.



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### MORE THAN A 'LIKE' OR A LETTER



Over close to an 18 month period in 2010 and 2011 I had the privilege of leading the soldiers of Combat Team – Charlie, Mentoring Task Force 2. During this time, we trained, worked, deployed, and fought together in some pretty complex situations.

While the bulk of the force was made up of soldiers from Charlie Company, 5th Battalion – of which I was Officer Commanding – many others came from units from within the 1st Brigade and much further afield. We bonded and grew to trust each other through hard training, shared values and a belief in our mission. As we left Australia together I was confident that bond would keep us strong during the course of our tour.

About eight months later we were planning our departure towards the end of a very long tour in Afghanistan. It became apparent that due to the staggered exit of our team, some soldiers would be gone from our base in Darwin prior to the last of us coming home. The close connection forged by training, living, working and fighting together would be lost to some straight away. So I began to write.

Over the course of a few weeks I wrote 180 letters to the next-of-kin of the soldiers who had served in Combat Team – Charlie.<sup>1</sup> It was an attempt to inform our families of what we had achieved and suffered, how we had thrived and survived. It was a short salute to the work of the soldiers of the Combat Team, some of whom would not get the chance to be thanked in person; an attempt to retain the esprit-de-corps which kept us functional while isolated from hearth and home.

The bonds of our Combat Team remain strong – but not because of the letters. It is strong because of the efforts our team made to remain in contact with each other. Members of our team have travelled together, worked together and make the effort to call and talk to each other. On Anzac Day five years after our return we held our first reunion in Launceston, Tasmania, where we visited the graveside of our fallen brother Richard Atkinson and marched proudly with his family in the parade. Our next reunion was planned for Anzac Day in Canberra in 2020 – COVID cruelled that but even then the communications between the team were strong. Delayed but not deterred, we met again in Canberra and Sydney in 2021. Each time we meet in person is an opportunity to connect again and check in on each other, to relive our trials and tribulations, and even to forgive past grievances.

Leadership in the Army can be a lonely affair. Like many Officers, the friendships forged in training and as a junior leader are as strong as ever for me. Every year for almost ten years my Army brothers from the old days of the 5th/7th Battalion have gathered to play cards, drink, talk and enjoy each other's company – unless Stu is winning cards or Josh is presenting a 100% true fact of science of dubious credibility. Even though three of our crew live within kilometres of each other it is the opportunity provided to talk and spend time together in person that makes a difference to us all.

The point of this is, that while modern technology and social media have allowed us to retain some sense of connection, we really need to check in with each other face to face, or talk on the phone in the worst case. When my friends and colleagues have needed help as they wrestled with their own issues, it has always been in a personal conversation that they, or I, have been able to say "Mate, I'm struggling a bit, and I need a hand."

As we end this year, I ask all of my network in general, and veterans in particular, to pick up the phone, RV at a pub or café, and ask someone how they are doing face to face. Don't let a passing connection on social media stand in place of true esprit-de-corps, real friendships and genuine interest in someone's well-being.

It doesn't take a letter to let someone know you care.

Dave French

Courtesy of Soldier Tales website [soldiertales.com](http://soldiertales.com)

<sup>1</sup> This number reflects all soldiers who served in the Combat Team including reinforcements, leave replacements and other detachments. Not all 180 soldiers were on the ground at the same time.

### SNIPER TRAINING



Soldiers from the 5 RAR practicing lethality during the Sniper Basic Course at Mt Bunday Training Area, NT.

Sniper outfits in the Australian Army are nicknamed '**yowie suit**' (also called 'ghillie suits'), named for their resemblance to the yowie, a mythical hominid which is said to live in the Australian wilderness.

#### Origin of the Ghillie Suit

The ghillie suit was adapted by Scottish gamekeepers as a portable hunting blind. The original design was created by shepherds to protect their flocks against predators and poachers. The shepherds would hide until unsuspecting poachers or predators, such as wolves, were close enough to apprehend or attack.

The suit gives the wearer's outline a three-dimensional breakup, rather than a linear one. When manufactured correctly, the suit will move in the wind in the same way as surrounding foliage.

It is believed that the British first used ghillie suits in combat during the Second Boer War (1899-1902), when the first British sniper unit, the Lovat Scouts, used them.



# SNOW TIGERS

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Snow Tigers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment demonstrate section level attacks to Ukrainian recruits during Operation Kudu in the United Kingdom.



## 5 RAR ASSOCIATION DUES

The 5 RAR Association triennial membership period ended on Tuesday 28 February 2023. To the right of your name on the address sheet of this Tiger Tales, you will find a date or text shown. This will tell you to when you are financial to. If this date is shown as 2023 you will need to pay \$50.00 to extend your membership to 28 February 2026.

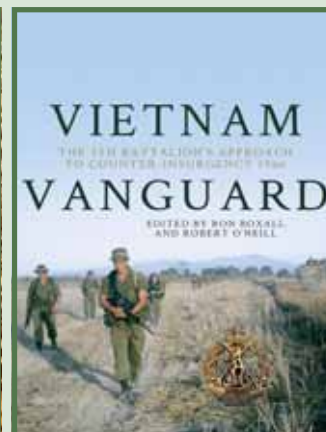
If the date shown is later than 2026, email, Patron or ESO you have nothing to do. But if **'Lapsed'** is shown, this will be your last Tiger Tales unless you renew. Currently there are 167 who have not renewed this year.

Payment can be made by Bank Transfer, cheque or Money Order, for details see the form on page 20, please note new Bank Account details.

If you are not sure about your membership please contact Gary Townsend at [garyt.5rar@gmail.com](mailto:garyt.5rar@gmail.com) or 0412 767 975.

## 'VIETNAM TASK' AND 'VIETNAM VANGUARD'

Discounted hard copy printing is now available for 5 RAR Association Members for the following.



Having solved arrangements with a new contracted printer, our publisher ANU Press, have advised that hard copies of both *'Vietnam Task'* and *'Vietnam Vanguard'* are now available for purchase at a discounted rate for 5 RAR members via their shopping cart.

Members are reminded that this Third Edition of *Vietnam Task* has been enhanced with improved maps and a new Appendix C which is a nominal role of all who served on the 1966-67 tour of Vietnam. This makes this new edition an important family keepsake.

The RRP for *'Vietnam Task'* is \$44.95 and with a 20% discount is \$35.96. Go to the shopping cart at website at <http://doi.org/10.22459/VT.2022> and apply the discount code **5RAR20**

The RRP for *'Vietnam Vanguard'* is \$79.95 and with a 20% discount is \$63.96. Go to the shopping cart here <http://doi.org/10.22459/VV.2019> and apply the discount code **5RAR20**

Shipping within Australia is a flat rate of \$9.95 and is inclusive of multiple copies.



# 18 AUGUST 2023 PHOTOS



Clockwise from top left; Kel Ryan, 12 PI 1966-67, Ian 'Bear' Hutchison 4 PI 1969-70, Geoff Pearson 8 PI 1969-70 and 8 PI 1966-67 L-R: David "Stretch" Bryan, Roger Wainwright, Doug Bishop, Holger "Curly" Koblitz, John Searle and Daryl McCombe under the 'Wainwrights Warriors' sign at the AWM.

# D COY 1969-70 TOUR WAUCHOPE REUNION

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Wauchope RSL was HQ for a D Coy Reunion over 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> May. Ray Knapp, ably supported by partner Jill, organized a great and memorable reunion. The Wauchope Sub-Branch and RSL Club did a magnificent job to welcome and support the Dynamic Delta and their respect generously shown to us was humbling. I don't think we have been received such genuine and authentic appreciation at any previous reunion. A superb DVD was produced by Rosemary Butler to mark the event. Rosemary, who has for many years volunteered exceptional support for the Wauchope Sub-Branch and Veterans, created a montage of Vietnam era images focused on 5 RAR and backed by music of our era. Thank you Rosemary, your contribution was above and beyond, simply exceptional. We had 65 people attend, including 36 ex-Delta men. The "Tiger Spirit" remains unbreakable, as is our respect and memory of the 10 mates we lost in Vietnam; also the 50 (that we know of) who have since passed. It was most touching to have Next of Kin lay wreaths, Jenny Ross-Henry (widow of 2Lt Brian Walker) for 10 platoon, Linda Minton (widow of Pte Eric Minton who passed away in 2009) for 11 platoon and Karen Patterson (eldest daughter of Cpl John Kennedy) for 12 platoon.

There was a small surplus (\$220) that Ray has forwarded to the 5RAR Museum Funds through the 5RAR Association, so in every way a very successful outcome, well done Ray, thanks mate. If anyone is passing near Wauchope, drop in to the RSL, a great club and now has wonderful painted murals of the district heritage that are worth seeing.

Bob Fenwick



## NUI DAT, SOUTH VIETNAM, 1969



A RAAF Caribou aircraft turns around after landing at Luscombe Airfield, 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force (1 ATF). The airstrip was named after Lieutenant Bryan Taylor Luscombe, the first Australian army pilot killed in the Korean War.

Work on the airstrip was started soon after 5 RAR arrived at Nui Dat in May 1966, but several extensions had been made to it.

The sign and commemorative plaques are now long gone but the rock they were attached to and footings of the square border remain today. The strip is now the main street of Nui Dat village.

Courtesy 5 RARA Website

*Quote: "Infantry men are they who in the frosts and storms of night watch over the sleep of camps, climb under fire the steepest crests, fight and die, without their voluntary sacrifice receiving the award of heroism."*

*General Fransico Franco  
Diario de Una Bandera (1922)*

## NOTICES

### MEMBERSHIP CHANGES AND ENQUIRIES

All enquiries regarding membership, or changes and amendments to your contact details should be forwarded to:

Membership Officer, 5 RAR Association,  
82/117 Palm Meadows Drive, CARRARA, QLD, 4211.  
07 5594 4780 or [garyt.5rar@gmail.com](mailto:garyt.5rar@gmail.com)

### 5 RAR DARWIN VISITS PROCEDURE

If you are going to Darwin and would like to visit the Museum, please email [5rar.welfare@defence.gov.au](mailto:5rar.welfare@defence.gov.au) with your available dates and one of the team will get back to you with arrangements.

The Battalion will strive to arrange security requirements, if it is at all possible, to suit your travel time frame for you to visit Binh Ba Lines and the Museum.

### B COY 1969-70 - NEXT REUNION

The next reunion of B Coy 1969-70 will be held in the Yarrowonga/Mulwala area, from 22 to 26 April 2024 over 5 nights. For more information please contact Pauline Frauenfelder, at [paulineray@bigpond.com](mailto:paulineray@bigpond.com) or 0428 284 282.



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Remit this form and payment due to:

**The Secretary  
5 RAR Association  
P O Box 698  
CARINGBAH NSW 1495**

**Current at 1 December 2023**

**Please indicate use of this form**

<b>Joining/Renewing Membership</b>	
<b>Change of Details</b>	
<b>Purchase of Memorabilia</b>	

<u>Surname:</u>		<u>Christian Names:</u>		<u>Known As:</u>		<b>Membership 1 March 2023 - 28 February 2026 \$50.00</b>		
<u>Partners Name:</u>		<u>Regimental No:</u>		<u>Rank:</u>		<b>Memorabilia</b>		
<u>Home Ph:</u>		<u>Mobile:</u>		<u>Business Ph:</u>		O/S Price Qty Cost		
<u>Address:</u>		<u>Suburb/Town:</u>				Vietnam Vanguard M \$ 55		
<u>State:</u>	<u>P/Code:</u>	<u>Email:</u>				<b>Vietnam Task (See Below)</b>		
<u>Brief history of service with 5 RAR and or 5/7 RAR or link with 5 RAR Assoc:</u>						The Year of the Tigers (Edition 3) L \$ 65		
						Honour Roll M \$ 35		
						Bucket Hat S \$ 35		
						Cap (No Stock)		
						Tie - Silk S \$ 40		
						Lapel Badges 20 x13mm S \$ 6		
						<b>Car Stickers</b>		
						T5-90ASSNRND Tiger Head Round S \$ 5		
						T5-1075GRGO Tiger Head C/Patch S \$ 5		
						5R-1875ICBRBN ICB/SVN Ribbons S \$ 5		
						<b>Membership Dues (3 Year Period)</b> \$ 50		
						<b>Grand Total: \$</b>		

The following charges will apply to overseas (O/S) orders.  
Items marked S - \$1, M - \$5, L \$10 per item.

**The Association has limited stock of 'Vietnam Vanguard' and 'Vietnam Task' or they are available on the ANU Press website at: <http://doi.org/10.22459/VV.2019> and <http://doi.org/10.22459/VT.2022> respectively. Code to obtain discount - 5RAR20**

Complete all sections of this form and remit it, with Cheque or Money Order made payable to 5 RAR Association, to the address above, or, email this form and Internet Deposit Receipt/CBA Deposit Slip to [gp@therbco.com.au](mailto:gp@therbco.com.au) please include your Surname and Initials as the reference. Bank details: Account name: 5 RAR Association. Bank: CBA. **BSB: 062-136 Account: 1048-1883 (Please note new account details.)**

**Your Committee Members and State Representatives.**

**Patrons: BRIG Colin Khan DSO AM (Ret'd) Ph: 02 6257 7249 - MAJGEN Justin Ellwood (Ret'd) DSC AM CSC Ph: 0439 831 805**

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**Submissions for Tiger Tales to 82 Lake Hills, 117 Palm Meadows Dve, CARRARA, QLD, 4211 or [garyt.5rar@gmail.com](mailto:garyt.5rar@gmail.com)**

<u>ACT Representative</u> Chris Appleton Mob: 0423 360 422 <a href="mailto:cappleton@deloitte.com.au">cappleton@deloitte.com.au</a>	<u>NSW Representative</u> Barry Ruttle Mob: 0417 488 598 <a href="mailto:bazzaciz@bigpond.net.au">bazzaciz@bigpond.net.au</a>	<u>QLD Representative</u> Jason Johnson Mob: 0422 227 380 <a href="mailto:j.johnson@outlook.com.au">j.johnson@outlook.com.au</a>	<u>SA/NT Representative</u> Greg Dwiar Mob: 0412 644 749 <a href="mailto:spike5rar@gmail.com">spike5rar@gmail.com</a>
<u>TAS Representative</u> <b>VACANT</b>	<u>VIC Representative</u> Doug Bishop Mob: 0437 653 577 <a href="mailto:doug.bishop@internode.on.net">doug.bishop@internode.on.net</a>	<u>WA Representative</u> Alan McNulty DCM Mob: 0417 914 309 <a href="mailto:warep@5rar.asn.au">warep@5rar.asn.au</a>	