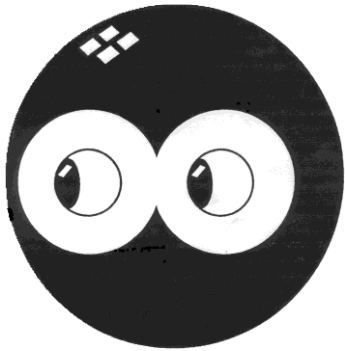




BEHIND THE EIGHT BALL



The Quarterly Newsletter for the 8 RAR Association Incorporated
PO Box 4989 Forest Lake, Qld 4078

ISSUE No 137
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ANZOC DAY

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

All articles and letters published in this newsletter are from the members. The views and opinions expressed are not necessary those of the Association. The 8 RAR Association, its committee and members accept no responsibility for information and articles appearing in this newsletter. Members are encouraged to submit articles, photographs and items of interest. The editors reserve the right to decide on the publication of any article or item for any issue of "Behind the Eight Ball"

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LAST POST

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.

“Well done thou good and faithful friend.”

Merv Ovenden C Coy Vietnam

John Gasson SP Coy Vietnam

Thomas (Tom) Vincent Burton C Coy Vietnam

Gregory Monk D Coy Vietnam

‘WE CAN NEVER FORGET’



President Report

We are very fortunate to have such highly talented members on our committee. Their ability has guided the association over the past 12 months. Sydney 2025 is getting a little closer and our organisers Kevin Sullivan and Ron O'Conner are busy organising the event.

NSW had a very successful Long Hai Commemorative Service at Epping RSL. The service was well attended.

I met up with Tony Sillcock in Canberra to attend the Long Hai Commemorative Service.

Tony conducted the service in Woden cemetery at the gravesite of Private Philip Mackay Richter. It was a very moving service.

Those attending the service went onto another service at LDK Memorial Garden Greenway ACT.

The Greenway Service was well attended with David Read, Duncan Warren and Tony Sillcock and others involved in the service.

Marlene Jeffrey attended both services.

Secretaey / Assistant Secretary



Assistant Secretary's Report

On behalf of Secretary Des Evans I'd like to welcome you to the autumn edition of this 8Ball and herewith present our report for autumn. Much is going on in the background with the 2025 reunion arrangements well in advance, this will be reported on in later reports in this publication. My contribution is this, if there's any of you that wish to attend and would like to share accommodation you are welcome to contact me to arrange this. My email address and phone numbers are elsewhere in this publication. I am just acting as the conduit to facilitate this and help keep costs down for everyone. Bankstown Sports Club where the reunion is to be held, has a Mercure hotels accommodation in the middle of the club with free parking so, no need to drive anywhere.

By far the biggest issue I must report on is the issue of confidentiality when sending emails to each other. I recently made a mistake in sending a bulk email, where I placed members email addresses in the CC and not the BCC as it should have been. Therefore, inadvertently publishing members email addresses to all and sundry.

Therefore, breaching the confidentiality arrangements that we are bound by. For this I apologise. This is why I have placed a legal rider at the foot of all my emails, anyone that may have received my emails inadvertently are not to use these addresses under any circumstances for any reason and are to contact the writer to report such a mistake immediately. You are not to use confidential email addresses for your own personal correspondence and to seek official written permissions in writing from the secretary to do so.

Anzac Day is fast approaching, and I urge you to make the effort to join your mates on this auspicious day. We are all getting along in age, and we don't have too many more marches left. Get with your mates, have a few beers, tell a few fibs, have plenty of laughs and enjoy each other's company once again. I'm going for the Schooner Olympics and I'm going for gold on the day. Individual state arrangements will be published elsewhere in this publication.

Sick parade. I'm sorry to report there are a few of us that haven't been too well lately including our erstwhile president Ray and many others. Our best wishes go out to those people and wish them well in the near future. To those in hospital get well and get home. To those looking after those people we thank you for looking after our mates and their beautiful partners.

A friendly reminder but your Subs are due, I'd like to ask you to kick the can, as this helps the engine room tick over keeping us all in touch with each other, your association whose main aim is camaraderie and the Wellness of those within it. Your association is manned by strictly elected volunteers acting in good faith on your behalf. Yes, we can make mistakes because we're only human, mistakes pointed out to us I raised at general meetings and resolved ASAP, no recrimination backstabbing slandering or white anting. We receive no remuneration or expenses other than those legally applicable for posting and that type of expense. All of these expenses are ratified at general meetings as required.

Our 2024 AGM date will be announced soon. I strongly urge you to participate by either attending state gatherings or by Zoom invitation. Contact me if you wish to attend by Zoom by sending me an email, please or ringing me on 0406660442.

This is of grave importance, and I implore you to attend please.

Have a good Anzac Day and if coming to the NSW shindig say g'day and have a schooner with me. Tom two toes.

Queensland



It has been a busy couple of months here in Queensland since the last 8 Ball, with Long Hai Day commemoration, preparation for ANZAC Day, and building on the relationship with 8/9 RAR.

Long Hai Day

We had a good turnout for Long Hai Day with 43 attending from the Association, and we were joined by the CO and RSM 8/9 RAR, along with a group from Charlie Coy 8/9 who provided the catafalque party and other support.



After the falling attendances due to Covid, it was great to see so many at the service and it was particularly pleasing to see our nonagenarians, Gerry Woodrow and our RMO Bill Josephson both attending, along with Eroll Weatherall who, as we all know, has been struggling with his health.

As a reminder of the solemnity of this day, we received an apology from Elaine Miller, CSM Dusty's wife, with the following message:

The 28th February was always a very special day for Dusty & a day when he would just sit with his thoughts. His heart never healed from that operation & the loss of so many young men. He was so proud of A Coy & always said it was the best posting of his 30 years' service. I would love to be able to attend the service in Brisbane but ill health prevents me from doing so. Please relay my regards to all & my thoughts will be with 8RAR that day. Should any old 8RAR members be up this way, please pass my details onto them.

If you are in Townsville, or passing through, Elaine's number is 0413 132 991.

We had a last-minute change of plans for the day when 8/9 RAR was unable to host us at their Uruzgan Lines, forcing a move to the RAR National Memorial Walk, but everything went off without a hitch.

After the Memorial Service we held the traditional 'Tankard Ceremony', this time involving soldiers from Charlie Coy, along with Association members to help create an awareness within the Battalion of this tradition so that it is continued long after we are all gone, in continuing memory of our fallen.



The Tankard Ceremony

Following this, the CO, LTCOL Ben Watson, invited 8 RAR LCPLs (retired) Evans and Goward to present the chevrons to two newly promoted 8/9 RAR soldiers.



LCPL Evans presents!



LCPL Goward presents!

We then had the opportunity to join with the 8/9 RAR officers and soldiers for refreshments and the C Coy soldiers were very keen to hear the story of the Charlie Coy cobra, another 8 RAR tradition.



Tex holding court with C Coy diggers and regaling the story of his close cobra encounter.



From left: Des Evans, Ann Evans, John Mison, Eroll Weatherall, Bruce Mison.



Geoff Simmonds delivering further C Coy legendary tales.



From left: Shell Craig, Val Picton, Leone McNaught, Gerry Woodrow, Carol Woodrow, Julian Shaw, Gary Craig.

After the service most adjourned to the Gaythorne RSL Club for lunch, further refreshments, and telling of tales.



From left: Col Fedrick, Tex Weston, Steve Hart, Ray Smith, Sue Falvey, Ken Falvey (obscured), Trevor Pond, Sandra Pond, Mary Martin, Geoff Simmonds, Kym McDougall, John Weatherley.

ANZAC Day

This year 8, 9 and 8/9 RAR associations will march together, each behind their own banner. CO 8/9 has decreed that the Battalion will not march in uniform but will march in civvies with the 8/9 RARA. He is very keen that we are all seen as one – the older veterans and today's 8/9 RAR.

This will also ensure that we get the 8/9 RAR Pipes & Drums accompany us with the stirring 'Black Bear' – Hoi!

The RV for us is the corner of George and Charlotte Streets – look out for the 8 RAR banner. You need to be at the RV NLT 1100hrs.

There is roadworks in place for the Cross River Rail works and some rather large road markers (see below) are in place in Adelaide Street – watch out for them, they are a trip hazard – stick to the middle of the road where possible to avoid them.



After the march we will be retiring to the **Stock Exchange Hotel**, Cnr Charlotte and Edward Streets.

They will be putting on a BBQ (reduced price), as well as a limited bar menu.

We will be expected to buy lunch, in accordance with liquor licensing requirements.

It is a 300m (5-minute walk) to the hotel from the end of the march at the corner of Queen and Creek streets.

We want to see maximum attendance at the march as there is already talk of 'grouping' all the associations in future, due to reduced numbers.

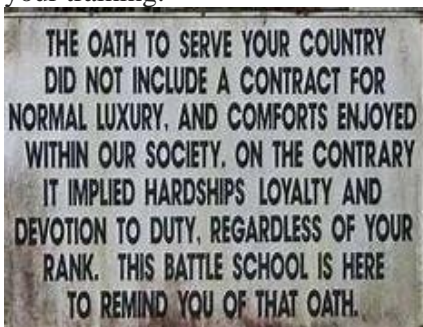
We are not ready for that yet so please make every effort to attend the city march to show the world the 8 RARA is alive and well!

George Mansford

Many of you who stayed on after Vietnam would know of George Mansford, a legend in the Corps – he joined as a digger and finished his service as a brigadier.



He founded the Field Force Battle School Tully and this was the sign, in his words, that greeted you as you began your training:



I'm sure the message rings true to you all!

Like many though, Warrie George has been going through his own health battles and this message was received from Peter Sibree:

Whilst BRIG George (Wary) Mansford was never a member of 8 or 8/9 RAR (one of the very few Battalions he didn't serve in) our members may be interested to know that two weeks ago he was released from Cairns Base Hospital into palliative care at home. One of his daughters is a very qualified nursing sister. George is well known as Mister Army North Queensland, with his raising of 51FNQR (along with MAJGEN Mike Jefferies,) the re-raising of 11BDE, and the raising and running of the Battle School at Tully.

He is less known for commencing 'The Rifleman's Luncheons' and, whilst the Greenies fought the establishment of the Battle School, due to George's management of the property there are now more cassowaries located there than anywhere else in N/QLD.

As a result, he was appointed by the Govt (?) to head the Cassowary Protection Society.

Ruth Mateer

Many of you, particularly the Malaysia veterans, would know Ruth, wife of our Int Sgt Shorty Mateer. Ruth is struggling with dementia but, true to form for an Army wife, she is not giving up without a fight.

Recently she sent this photo of a group of Malaysia originals, taken at the 2016 Christmas party:



Back: Bruce Mison, Allan McNaught, Klaus Scheuermann, Trevor Taylor, Barry Canton, Nev Krause, Mal Black and Eroll Weatherall.

Front: Rhonda Mison, Carol Black, Ruth Mateer, Kath Krause, Clive Mitchell-Taylor and Allan Inall.

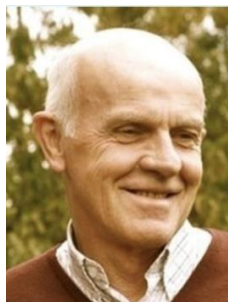
Ruth included this message:

At present I am fighting an infection on the lungs and a bit of memory loss, but that is expected as I was 89 on Dec 9th.

I was just wondering if anyone would care to help me keep my wits about me and would like to email me occasionally, I'd really appreciate it. Regards Ruth
For anyone who knew Ruth and Shorty, jump on the computer and email her, and if you have any Malaysia

photos I'm sure she would appreciate them. Email Ruth:- ruthmateer@bigpond.com

Victoria



Here we are in Melbourne's autumn once again. The crunch of leaves underfoot, an explosion of orange and gold foliage and some long awaited sunny and warmer days. Life is good. It certainly seemed that way when the 8 RAR 'Mob' descended on Greensborough RSL for lunch last Sunday in the city's leafy outer suburbs. Spirits were high, lunch and refreshments very reasonably priced and a general air of hospitality towards Vietnam era veterans was evident at the venue. We will revisit the occasion a little later. For now, let's consider Long Hai Day commemorated this year in Melbourne on Sunday 25th February at midday.

The Long Hai Commemoration Service was conducted once again at the Post World War Two Pool of Reflection at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance under sunny skies. Out Shrine representative and fellow 8 RAR veteran Adrian Lombardo welcomed the group and with Neil Smith pulling the strings, John Onrust delivered a short address which highlighted the service and sacrifice of 8 RAR, with emphasis on the part played by National Servicemen. John, some would be aware, was a notable Springvale figure and accomplished player with the Springvale Districts Football Netball Club up until the late 1980s – indeed he was inducted into the Club's Hall of Fame in 2011. Neil had determined that the work load for this Service would be well and truly delegated and with that in mind, Mike Prendergast next recited a poem by Paul Zaat – ANOTHER 8 RAR man, from up Cronulla way. It was a moving poem and brought back a host of memories for those who had served in Vietnam. Actually, it was Sylvie Smith who stumbled across Paul's poem and we can only hope that you are hail and hearty up there in New South Wales Paul, and sincere thanks for your efforts with *The Tour*. Like many Paul had served in Vietnam not only with 8 RAR but also 5 RAR and the 1st Australian Reinforcement Unit before fulfilling his National Service obligations and returning to a clerical career.

This year Alan Holland agreed to leave his post as Number 1 banner holder at the Long Hai Service to read the 8 RAR Honour Roll. This he did in a moving and dignified manner. To digress, we seldom give thought to the achievements of our Battalion comrades after, or indeed before their military commitment. We should be mindful of this and Alan is a case in point.

Whilst not shy Alan is certainly retiring and very, very accomplished. This is evidenced by his work in senior engineering academic positions at Monash University. Ask him about his role in developing the Radicool Recumbent bicycle; or the time he came up with the optimum method of processing human embryos for IVF. My favourite though is the day he held a piece of moon rock in his hand and determined how to break it down for study into workable slices.

Bruce Lankford, who spent many years in the Australian Customs Service, paid a tribute to those of our men who have passed on over the past two years. The list amounted to a staggering figure of 54 and gave cause for solemn contemplation by all present. Keeping it a family affair Pauline Prendergast next placed a wreath on behalf of all the 8 RAR wives, widows and other loved one. After reciting The Ode, Adrian played a similar wreath laying role for all those who had sacrificed their lives while serving. Naturally all the other expected elements of the Service such as prayers, the *Last Post* and Shrine Guard support took place before all those gathered retired to the Shrine refreshments area for a light lunch, a few announcements and the usual gossip and fellowship.

Among the other 8 RAR folk gathered on 25th February 2024 and not mentioned above were Marilyn Lankford, Wayne and Vera Maschette, Brendan Prendergast – Paul's brother, Warren and Joy Gilliland, Jane Andropof and daughter Jill Williams. And still they kept coming with Jim and Dawn Brown, Kathy and Keith Vines, Arthur Koo, Graeme Agnew, Ken Freeman and Geoff Ravenscroft with his son Stephen, daughter-in-law Cathryn and their children Tom and Sophie (Hopefully your correspondent has it right this time!) Finally, there was Geoff Hopkins, Ralph Miller and Barry Ripper. Noted later during the social gathering was comment from Vera who highlighted the wisdom of using the train to get to future rural luncheon venues in say, Bendigo. Connie Azzopardi too, has had her two bob's worth on the same subject from up in bush, suggesting a luncheon out of Melbourne somewhere served by the railway. Seems like a good idea! Wayne was busy darting about gathering input for his unnamed photographs. After the service Geoff Ravenscroft and Ken Freeman placed a wreath on Larry MacLennan's grave at Keilor Cemetery. It was a great Service at the Shrine then the light luncheon with a pleasing attendance.

With the ink on your correspondent's notes barely dry, we return now to the Greensborough RSL on Sunday 24th March 2024. Another great day. Jostling for the best seats were Paul and Sue Fraser, Ralph Miller, Ken Emmett, Alan Holland, Dennis and Cait Moss, Neil and Sylvie Smith, Peter and Janet Fraser, John Onrust, Mick and Pauline Prendergast, Warren and Joy Gilliland, Wayne and Vera Maschette, Jim and Dawn Brown, Allan and Joyce Small, David and Pam Brooks, Jane Andropof, Gary and Margaret Moulton, Bruce and Marilyn Lankford, Jim and Elka Pleasance, Graeme and Julie

Agnew and Bill and Lyn Westhead and finally Gary and Margaret Moulton. Gary Moulton, by the way is a deviant – well, he is a member of the Deviants which apparently are a mob of Vietnam Vets who gather to do what Viet Vets do, but at the Greensborough RSL. Ask about what they get up to. Better still, Gary, send the writer a few words on this unusually named group. During the luncheon former RSM Jim Brown, fearful of being improperly dressed, asked for the issue of a name badge for Dawn and himself. Word got around and soon we had compiled a list of our folk who need name badges. We will keep you posted on the badge acquisitions progress. Dennis Moss is still flat out with the SES and recently passed a required Driving Licence test – not sure whether it was his first or not.

Apologies for the Greensborough function were received from John Betts, Geoff Ravenscroft, James and Paula Corcoran, Ros Vowles, John and Hilary Cooper, Arthur Koo and Karlene Tomlin, Grant and Tina Coultman-Smith, Geoff and Cath Hopkins and Bruce and Joy Seater.

On the sick list we have Steve Robinson. Thinking of you Mate. Grant Coultman Smith while not sick has to duck off for a minor procedure. Jane Andropof is not letting the grass grow under her feet and continues to work on her mobility. Bruce and Hoppy provided the latest on the RAR Association and Vietnam Veterans Association respectively. Warren Gilliland is a subject in Dave Morgan's forthcoming book on Vietnam veterans. It should be out in a few months so we will provide an update when available. Peter Buckney is living the good life on Phillip Island and has been in touch.

Looking ahead, and not too far either we have the ANZAC Day March in Melbourne. The essential change seems to be a most unwelcome assembly time of 0800 hours with step-off and hour later. Then before you know it, the 23rd June 2024 will be upon us with the next Branch luncheon at Seaford RSL – thanks for sorting that, Ralph. Don't forget the Battalion Birthday Bash at the Frankston RSL on 4th August too. Warning Order for the Christmas Luncheon on 24th November 2024 likely to be at the Waverley RSL (yes, it is in Glen Waverley) – there should be no change but keep an eye out, especially as the start time promises to be 1230 (not 1200 as is usual). Lastly, the call has gone out for some samples of the original 8 RAR bumper stickers – the ones with grey writing etc on a red background. Can anyone help?

In conclusion. Mustard Gas while never a threat to our readers, was a massive and insidious problem in World War One. Sadly, it was rather late in the war before *boffins* in the USA found that the common garden slug could detect the first faint traces of Mustard Gas before any other creature or apparatus and as a result, saved many lives in France and Flanders. OK. One more. The term *Dust-off* is familiar to us all. Its origin though, not so much. *Dust-off* was the call sign for the 57th US

Medical Detachment in Vietnam in 1962. The term soon became synonymous with all helicopter ambulances in the War Zone.



Shrine Function 24th March 2024. L to R. Joy Gilliland, Cathy Vines, Warren Gilliland, Jane Andropof, Barry Ripper, Marilyn Lankford. Far table: Vera Maschette, Dawn Brown and Ken Freeman.

Cheers,
Neil SMITH

ACT/Monaro



Greetings from the Capital.

On Long Hai Day the customary service was held at the grave site of Phil Richter who died on 28 February 1970. I was very pleased to be joined by Marlena Jeffrey, Liz and Duncan Warren, visiting from Perth, and Ray Richardson, our Association President visiting from Sydney. Unfortunately, the representation of ACT members was very small, partly due to some members being away on the day.



Canberra was also pleased to host a reunion group from B Company who held a memorial service and lunch to mark Long Hai Day. An address was given by Duncan Warren and he and Marlena laid a wreath in memory of the fallen. I was very pleased to accept the invitation to join the activity and meet several association members and catch up with my former committee colleague Paul Gallagher. Thanks to David and Athalie Read for a very well-run event.

The next event on the calendar is Anzac Day and as usual 8 RAR members will join either the RAR, or another group they may be connected with. The RARA ACT Branch will publish details of the event nearer the time and these will be passed on to local members.

Best wishes to all,
Tony Sillcock

South Australia



Long Hai Day



We had a good turnout of 8 RAR(SA) members, and their partners, for this day so close to our hearts. The group assembled in front of the 8 RAR memorial on the Pathway of Honour, directly behind Adelaide's Government House.

Those present included Ted Forward, Gavin and Judy Power, Dennis and Deirdre Broadbent, Des Milde and Jan Wykmans, Maureen O'Donoghue, Malcolm (Toby) Tylor, Alan Handley, Sylvan Elhay, John and Anna Kelly, Simon Kleinig.

Adrian Coles was joined by members of his family who were visiting from Queensland. The day was warm, but not hot, and we enjoyed plenty of shade from the overarching canopy of leafy Plane trees which flank the Pathway of Honour.



Ted Forward welcomed all attendees, then led the commemoration, stressing the importance of the occasion and giving a brief account of the events of Operation Hammersley. Several of us took turns in reading out the names of all those 8 RAR soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during our tour of Vietnam.



John Kelly then laid a wreath in front of the 8 RAR memorial. After the reading of the Ode to Remembrance, a minute's silence of reflection was kept. Then, one by one, we all came forward and pinned a poppy to the wreath. It was a memorable and poignant gesture, and reinforced in our minds how important Long Hai Day is to us.

It is always good to catch up with our mates again, and this day is a special one for us. For many, Long Hai Day is the most important commemorative day of the year—perhaps even more so than Anzac Day—because it's exclusively 8 RAR's day and therefore so significant to us.

Afterwards, we adjourned to the Elephant and Castle hotel for lunch and a general catch-up and chin-wag. Fred and Lois Manno joined us for the lunch. With each passing year, these events become increasingly important to all 8 RAR blokes and their partners. We share a special bond that cannot be broken. We never seem to run out of stories to exchange from our 8 RAR days—some good, some not so good—but it's important to all of us that we continue to meet and fraternise. It's what binds us together.



Anzac Day

Thursday, 25 April 2024

Arrangements for Anzac Day remain unchanged from those of last year.

8 RAR(SA) members should form up on the southern side of North Terrace, east of Pulteney Street, and be ready to step off at approximately 9.30am.

After the march, we will be meeting for lunch at the Britannia Hotel (opposite the Britannia Roundabout), 1 Kensington Road, Norwood at 12.30pm. Please confirm your attendance with President Ted Forward for both events.

Simon Kleinig

Western Australia



Another year has come and gone, and Long Hai day has as well, they just go by faster every year I am sure you will all agree. Our day in Kings Park was great fine weather good company with a fine bunch of bandits even though the numbers are shrinking our bodies are not (see photo). A great breakfast at the Zamia café didn't help the cause either.



Left to right Davis Scott (our bugler) David Burton (1 of our musicians) Doug and Antoinette Wendt, Jim (our other muso) and Phoebe Burton, Padre Dillon, Rob Mosconi, Anne and Trevor Holtom, Jack Kupsch and Gordon Gillam.

8 RAR'S Bravest Soldier in Vietnam.

It was on the third day after soap and tobacco rations that Abob son of Nabob no change for half a crown found himself at FSB Le Loi somewhere near root two I think it was, to everybody else it was route two but our true-blue, Red-Blooded Aussie it was definitely root two. As you know it was a yank-built FSB all above ground and completely cleared for about 50 meters out from the wire. The US artillery stayed with their 155's manned mainly by African Americans if I remember rightly. This is the story that was told to me by a very reliable source. As you all know there were no bull dusters in mortar platoon of which our hero was part.

It just so happens that our hero crossed paths with Mr. Wong again although still unknown to each other from the battle Ap Qui Bie where the day after Mr Wong found his prize stud pig (a Boar) had been brassed up in the previous night. I covered that battle in a previous dispatch. What I did not know then was that that battle was widely covered not only in local Vietnamese papers but also the Stars and Stripes and press releases in Australia. Vietnamese news referred to it as the Pig Killers of 8 RAR in Australia it was the Battle of the of the Perforated Pig and Stars and Stripes the Chop Suey incident. US \$6,000,000 to slaughter a pig in a two-hour battle with no casualties to either side mainly because the other side didn't show up.

However, because of that battle Mr. Wong was bankrupted due his pig being brutally eliminated for being mistaken as a heavily disguised VC infiltrator. After his pig was eliminated, Mr. Wong had to scrape his meagre savings together and with the help from friends in the village was able to purchase a Tuk Tuk with a small freezer attached to sell ice cream around the place when curfew was off. This small vehicle was also a two-seater. Being an entrepreneurial man, he used to carry a young 25- to 30-year-old Vietnamese girl along with

him. So, this is where in an afternoon in July our hero smelled perfume in the air when Mr Wong pulled up some 30 to 40 meters short of the FSB. Our heroes' carnal desires overtook him as blood flowed into all parts of his body and he sprinted out alone through the wire as he shouted to Mr Wong "I'll have one" but alas it was not the ice cream he was referring to. To the cheers of all at the FSB who decided they could watch a live performance at no cost and at a relatively safe distance. They understood that his small brain had overruled the large brain as his shirt came off and his pants came down. As onlookers at the FSB shouted, "You dopey bastard you'll get shot out there!" but our wary digger never took off his boots but with lust raging through his body he paid no heed to the cheering crowd that had gathered the on the other side of the wire the yanks even bought deck chairs. Mounted up on the paddy bund it was like he was on his last ride. We all know from Slim Dusty that the rain tumbles down in July, and it did start to drizzle rain on his back. Could it dampen his enthusiasm for what he was about to experience well just slightly as he told me the young Vietnamese girl reached up above him and deftly broke off a banana leaf and held it above him for protection. So, the show could go on but alas the water gathered in the **petiole** (which is the mid rib of a banana leaf) and suddenly it gushed down it like the torrent like what was caused by Barnes Wallis's bouncing bombs that broke open the dams in the Ruhr valley by the Dam busters of WW2. The water gushed down onto our diggers bouncing bombs and he went from inflation to deflation in an instant no torrent of anything came and he was denied a refund by the girl and Mr Wong. So, our disappointed digger packed up his pecker and dejectedly went back inside the wire.

We do know for a fact that for this action he was not dishonourably discharged from the army, but rumour has it that he did get a dishonourable discharge from the young Vietnamese girl as the shares in the pharmaceutical company that makes penicillin took a major upsurge on the New York stock exchange. We are approaching the government for a medal for him. If you don't get one mate, we salute you anyhow (a whitefella with an indigenous nick name.

I do wish I could tell you his real name but it is an official secret.

Three wise men from the west left the flatlands and ascended the hills to the east of Perth to give counsel to a Vietnam veteran hiding out in the hills. From the left myself Linus, Jim Balk, Alan Beer (no beer he didn't have any and Jack Kupsch old Canvas Back Jack. We had a great catch up and lunch. Great to see everybody's humour was not in need of repair. I know many of you knew Captain Beer so I hope you like knowing where he is and he is still soldering on at 82. Thanks for the day boys, fantastic.



Regards
Linus

New South Wales



Long Hai Day

Our Long Hai Day at the Epping club went well though numbers were down on past years. It was great to have Adrian Clunies-Ross in attendance. We unveiled a plaque on behalf of Pte Harry Winston White. This is the last plaque for those that attended Epping Boys High School and died in Vietnam. Pupils from Epping School cadets formed a guard of honor and looked very smart. Several Dignitaries including local state MLA Dominic Perrottet, local Epping Council members, and DVA representatives were in attendance.





Graham Walker, Adrian Clunes-Ross and
Barry (Ben) Hall

After the unveiling at Boronia Park, we went back to the Epping Club for our luncheon. As numbers were down when we made the toast to our fallen comrades some of us had to make two toasts.

Next year Long Hai Day will be commemorated at the National Reunion.

Those in attendance on the day apologies for those missed. Peter Kearns, Kevin Sullivan, Mick and Carol Carter, Barry and Janice Darr, Tom Lyons, Viki McQueen, Terry Daniels, David Pankhurst, Ron O'Connor, Steve and Denice Borg, Barry and Gillian Hall, David Kitt, Paul Zaat, Glen and Lorna Bryant, Rod Clegget, Les Wicks, Graham Walker, Members of Epping club board and Sub-branch. Unfortunately, Ray Richardson and Margaret O'Connor were unable to attend at the last minute.

Anzac Day 2024

Anzac Day will begin with the service at Regimental Square 8-30am. After the service form up at Bligh St. for the March. After the march, we will be going back to the Royal Exhibition Hotel 88 Chalmers St near Central Station.

Welfare report: Ray Richardson.

Regards Mick Carter

Last Post



Merv Ovenden

Merv Ovenden passed away on the 10th January 2024, apparently from complications with influenza and Covid.

Merv served with C Coy in Vietnam, but because he was a carpenter by trade, he did a lot of great work with Civil Affairs, building schools and sports centres, in a number of, Phouc Tuy villages.

Merv's wife requested a simple funeral, but Grey 8 members were welcome to attend.



John (Agro) Gasson

John also known as (Blossom) passed away on the 26th January 2024, after a long battle with cancer. There was a private family funeral.

John served with 4RAR in Malaya, 2RAR 19 May 1967 – 5 June 1968 and 8 RAR 26 November 1969 – 10 November 1970 in Vietnam, 6 and 8/9 in Enoggera.



Tom Burton

4 February 1939 – 22 February 2024

Tom passed away on 22d February this year. He served for nine years and five months in the Australian Regular Army. He first joined the army when called up for National Service on 18th August 1955, serving for five months in the 11th National Service Training Battalion.

Then, in 1961 Tom volunteered for service in the Regular Army. Following recruit training he was allocated to the Infantry Corps and served for three years in infantry battalions, first with 2 RAR, then with 3 RAR. It was here that he was promoted to corporal and his instructional skills were noted, leading to his posting as an instructor at the 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, which was raised to meet the needs of the Army as it expanded for its role in the Vietnam War. In December 1965 Tom returned to 2 RAR and in April 1969 he was posted to 8 RAR.

Tom was a section commander in 9 Platoon, C Company and, as we all know, he was quietly spoken and a real gentleman, and as a leader he proved you didn't have to be a fire-breathing dragon to lead men in battle. His quiet, but firm and reassuring manner ensured he was respected and got the best out of his men.

RIP Tom – your duty done!

Chad



Greg Monk

17 April 1948 – 21 March 2024

Gary Larter advised that Greg Monk had past away on March 21. Greg served with ARU from 21 October 1969 – 9 December 1969, 5 RAR 10 December 1969 – 10 February and 8 RAR D Company 11 February 1970 – 15 October 1970

Greg had been in hospital for sometime and we will provide a more details next 8 Ball as his funeral is after this issue goes to press.

Supporting Arms

Last Post from the latest Qld RSL News lists one of our supporting Arms guys in Vietnam, passed away recently. The only information is:

14646 William Mervyn Stinson Served with 21 Engineer Support Troop (17/2/70-30/1/71) in support of 8RAR. He also served with 21 Eng Sp. Tp. in Vietnam (28/5/66-15/6/67) and again (25/1/68-20/2/68).

Bill was born in Rockhampton on 29 September 1938 and to the best of our knowledge, was a Sgt when he left Vietnam. We don't have an address for him but he was a Member of Toowoomba RSL Sub-Branch
LEST WE FORGET

Sick Parade Bluey Lee

Len Thompson has passed on the following: Len's wife Elaine often runs into Bluey Lee on her morning walks and they often chat. He now gets around in a motorised wheel chair. He mentioned to Elaine about a few things with his health and suggested that Len should pass this information on to the Editor for publication in the 8 Ball for anyone who may know him. He has been diagnosed with a number of ailments amongst which are Parkinsons, Dementia and Lewy Body Disease. Len had to do a study to particularly find out about "Lewy Disease" and he has inserted below some information. Bluey is very candid about his ailments and has been told by his doctors to get his affairs in order as soon as possible. Not good news but we can only expect the worst.

Lewy body disease

Lewy body disease is a term that incorporates both Parkinson's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies, which share similarities in the ways by which they both damage the brain at the cellular level and in the symptoms a person may experience.

Lewy bodies are microscopic structures that can be seen inside some of the brain cells of people diagnosed with both Parkinson's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies. The Lewy body is composed of a protein called alpha-synuclein that, for reasons that are not understood, becomes disrupted and tangled. It is not known whether Lewy bodies represent the primary cause of the disease, but the gradual loss of brain cells results in changes in movement, thinking and behaviour.

Forms of Lewy body disease

Lewy body disease includes three overlapping disorders:

- *Parkinson's disease, which is diagnosed by the presence of significant movement symptoms including slowness, muscle stiffness and tremor.*
- *Parkinson's disease dementia, which is diagnosed when a person develops dementia symptoms after having at least 12 months of established Parkinson's disease. The progression from Parkinson's disease to Parkinson's disease dementia can be slow.*
- *Dementia with Lewy bodies, a prominent feature of which is the presence of dementia symptoms at least 12 months before the*

development of the significant movement symptoms that are prominent in Parkinson's disease. These movement symptoms are known as 'Parkinsonism symptoms' but not everyone who has dementia with Lewy bodies will develop them and not everyone will be diagnosed as having Parkinson's disease.

Thankyou Len for advising of Bluey's illness and Bluey thank you for allowing us to advise your 8 RAR family and prays and thoughts are with you.
Editor.

Ruth Mateer

Ken Falvey passed on the following regarding Ruth.



Trevor and Sandra Pond recently visited Ruth at Bundaberg and advised. She was well but spends a lot of time in her wheel chair. She can walk mainly around her room when she does her cleaning. She does have trouble with coverage on her mobile so email is the best form of contact.

Thank you, Trevor and Sandra, for the update and Ruth lovely to see you doing well and I will ensure you get the 8 Ball and sorry you missed a couple of issues.

Items of interest.



National Reunion February 2025 Bankstown Sports Club Bankstown NSW.

There seems to be a little confusion with our request regarding the Mercure Hotel. We are NOT booking rooms for anyone that will be up to you however if you intend to attend the reunion and use the Mercure as your preferred accommodation, please contact the assistant secretary Tom Lyons or the reunion secretary Ron O'Connor email: secretary@vfvagranville.org and advise them of your intentions this will help the reunion

committee negotiate a discounted price for rooms. Once we have this information, we will give you details on how to go about with your booking.

Australia Day Honours

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division

John Edward Glennon

Sadly, John lost his battle with cancer on the 4 November 2023

John's citation was for service to veterans, and their families, and to the community.

Jeff Mawkes

Jeff was reported in the February Issue and we thank Dennis Moss for sending the picture of Jeff from his funeral service.



Long Hai Day Stanthorpe Qld

Dear all, well the event at Stanthorpe Qld has come and gone as quick as a flash. What a great time we had, and what a beautiful location. Norm and Bernie Steele (Stanthorpe locals) did an amazing job of having everything arranged and in place for us.

Here is a brief rundown of events for you:

The meet and greet on the evening of Monday 26th was terrific and Norm had arranged that we had our own area in the RSL Club. We had 12 members from 6 Platoon and with partners the total in attendance was 23. It's amazing that as soon as you start chatting to someone the 53 odd years just vanish!

On Tuesday 27th we met for lunch at Heritage Estate Winery. The setting was quite formal, with silver service and a wonderful meal served with wines produced on site. The Wines have been steadily

improved over the years and Heritage Estate are now producing some of the best Chardonnay in the country. We were given a brief history of the winery by the owners. There was plenty of time and space for us to mingle and continue conversations from Monday.

On Wednesday 28th we met at Weerona Park - Wall of Remembrance adjacent the RSL Club for our LHD Service. This was the first LHD Service we have had as 6 Platoon. Norm had arranged for the P.A. system, seating, and for a Bugler to attend. A printed programme was provided to everyone.

We were joined by some members of the RSL and a reporter/photographer from the local paper.

Norm commenced proceedings by welcomed us to Stanthorpe and to the LHD Service, and handed over to Grant Coultman-Smith (Psychedelic) to MC the event and provide the main address. Grant was very entertaining and yet delivered a moving speech.

Dave King read the 8 RAR Honour Roll, plus the names of 6 Platoon members who have passed away since our return from SVN.

Peter Rock and the RSL sub-branch President, Martin Corbett, laid wreaths.

The service was very moving and enjoyed by all.

We then adjourned to the RSL for lunch where Norm had arranged for a private room for us.

I had asked Skipper (John Brien) some time ago if he would let us know what it was like being our Platoon Commander during the tour - how did he feel about things, what kept him going etc?

This was always going to be a highlight of our get together, and Skipper did not disappoint - he told us some amazing things and it was very informative.

For example, none of us knew that by pure fate Skipper did not cop the grenade that killed the Platoon Commander from 9 RAR he was replacing - he is very lucky to even be with us. And another interesting fact was how Mike Jeffery's experience in Borneo led to many of his ideas being adopted by the Battalion.

Throughout Skippers speech the message was loud and clear - his intent to get everyone home safely! It was terrific stuff.

Skipper also made special mention of the ladies in our lives and thanked them for all they do and for being there to support us.

In terms of accommodation quite a few of us stayed at the same motel. The place had a nice BBQ area with a large outdoor setting. This proved a great area to continue conversations in the evenings over a burger one night, and a Pizza on the other night.

FYI. The next scheduled reunion is for the Battalion in NSW in February 2025.

I have attached two photos and a link to the article that will appear in the local newspaper.



Reception (*you are all invited*), official opening of the combined 8, 9 & 8/9 RAR museum, and more.

Further detail will be provided later this year but mark your diary now to be there!

8 RAR Museum

Since the linking of 8 & 9 RAR there has been long-running frustration in trying to establish a suitable museum to house 8 and 9 RAR's unit memorabilia; this has ebbed and flowed since the very amalgamation of the two battalions, but nothing positive has ever been achieved. Indeed, some of our memorabilia has '*gone missing*' in the intervening years, however, things are now finally on the move.

At a recent meeting with CO 8/9 RAR, LTCOL Ben Watson expressed his dismay that there isn't a unit museum housing the memorabilia of 8, 9 & 8/9 RAR. He immediately offered the 'Soldiers' Room' and the 'Minh Dam Secret Zone' (the officers' and SNCO's room), at the Ram's Retreat, to be developed as a museum recording the history of the three battalions, and making it readily accessible to the soldiers of 8/9 RAR.

He has set the target to officially open this museum in conjunction with the presentation of 8 RAR's Colours, on 2nd November this year. It is now over to us to make this happen.

This is a job for all of us, it won't happen by itself – **how can you help?**

- **Qld.** We need to gather and identify all of the 8 RAR memorabilia which is scattered in various places around Gallipoli Barracks, centralise it, and develop a plan for its security and display. This is more than a 'one-man-job', so we need some volunteers from SE Qld to get together and make this happen - if this is you, please jump on the phone NOW to Chad Sherrin 0416 192 303 or Kym McDougall 0418 712 243.
- **For everyone else.** What have you got lying around from your time with 8 RAR - Australia, Malaysia, Vietnam – that might be of interest in a unit museum? Interesting photos, maps, copies of the 8 Ball, uniforms, gear (Aust, Malay, Viet-Cong), the list is endless. If you no longer need it, and/or your kids aren't interested in it, it is better off in a museum than being tossed out as rubbish. Grab a photo and a description, and email to Chad chadawn@bigpond.com or Kym kymmcdougall@icloud.com

Let's make this happen!



Warmest regards and all the best for the rest of 2024
Betsy
John Betts

Presentation of Colours – 8 RAR



As you know, the planned presentation of the new 8 RAR King's Colours last year had to be postponed when 8/9 RAR was suddenly deployed in response to the Israel/Gaza conflict.

Planning is now underway at 8/9 RAR for this to now happen in conjunction with this year's battalion's birthday celebrations – **you are all invited** so mark your diaries **Saturday, 2nd November 2024.**

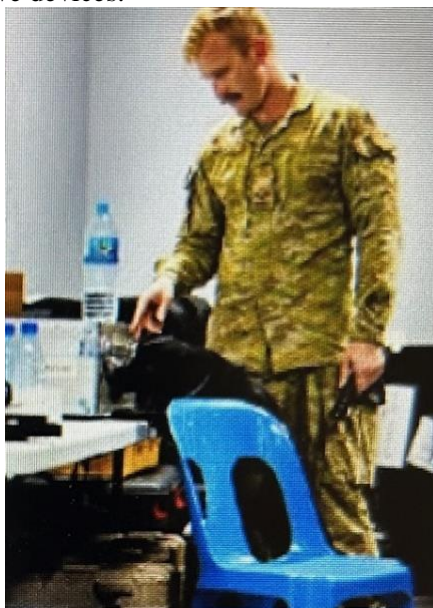
It will be a weekend of activities – Freedom of the City parade, Presentation of the Colours, Lord Mayor's Civic

8/9 RAR Corner

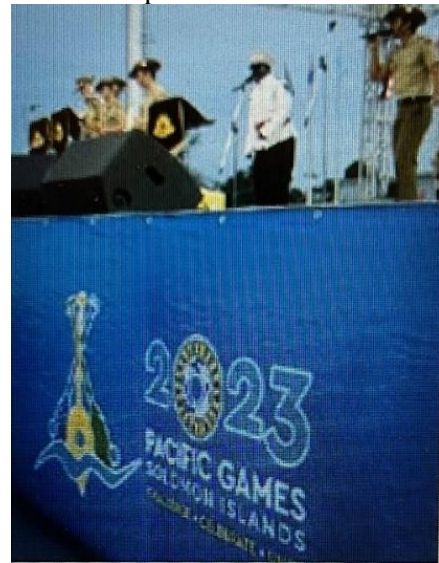


The 8/9th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (8/9 RAR)'s Role in Security and International Engagement During Pacific Games 2023 (PG23) in Honiara.

As 2023 began to wind down for most, Alpha Company (A Coy) 8/9 RAR deployed as part of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)'s Joint Task Force (JTF) to support the Government of the Solomon Islands in the hosting of the Pacific Games 2023 in Honiara. 8/9 RAR played a pivotal role in ensuring the successful conduct of the event, focusing particularly on supporting the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF). A Coy and the broader JTF worked closely with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and RSIPF to ensure that the games and events were executed safely by drawing on their mission-specific training (MST), which predominantly involved non-lethal use of force and low-risk search scenarios with attached enablers from 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER). A Coy adopted a flexible approach to their work conditions, which saw elements of the Coy adopting a reverse cycle program. This was in effect throughout the conduct of games themselves, where A Coy and 2 CER members undertook low-risk searches of all sporting venues prior to the arrival of spectators and athletes. This meticulous process was aimed at identifying and removing contraband items, such as Betel Nut, alcohol, weapons, and potential explosive devices.



In addition to search operations, the remainder of the force element was able to provide a deterring presence at several pieces of critical infrastructure, and



maintained a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) that was capable of rapidly responding to any incident or situation where the RSIPF required assistance. The undertaking of these tasks, in collaboration with the AFP and RSIPF, showcased the ability of members of multiple agencies to work efficiently and effectively together.



In periods of downtime, the contingent was able to partake in community engagement and visit key historical sites of famous military conflicts of World War II in the Pacific. Among the standouts of community engagements was the performance of traditional dances and reenactments of significant historical and educational stories by local Solomon Islanders to members of A Coy and 2 CER. To conclude the successful conduct of the PG23, a function was held at Camp Clark. This event included VIP speeches from Solomon Islands.

Prime Minister, Manasseh Sogavare, and the Australian ambassador, Rod Hilton, to express their gratitude and bid farewell to the ADF and partner forces who assisted throughout the Games. These forces included the AFP, RSIPF, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police Force, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and Royal Fijian Military Force. The event provided a relaxed environment for dignitaries and partner forces to come together, celebrate and reflect on a successful operation. A Coy 8/9 RAR's deployment to support the PG23 exemplified successful collaboration with our Pacific partners and Other Government Agencies. Their joint efforts ensured the seamless conduct of the Games and demonstrated the importance of working collaboratively with our Pacific neighbours.

"A British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for King and Country."

On November 7th, 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme.

None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why.

The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-Ter Noise. Once there, the bodies were draped with the union flag.

Sentries were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and a Colonel Gell selected one body at random. The other three were reburied.

A French Honour Guard was selected and stood by the coffin of the chosen soldier overnight.

On the morning of the 8th November, a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court arrived and the Unknown Warrior was placed inside.

On top was placed a crusaders sword and a shield on which was inscribed:

"A British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for King and Country."

On the 9th of November, the Unknown Warrior was taken by horse-drawn carriage through Guards of Honour and the sound of tolling bells and bugle calls to the quayside.

There, he was saluted by Marechal Foch and loaded onto HMS Vernon bound for Dover. The coffin stood on the deck covered in wreaths, surrounded by the French Honour Guard.

Upon arrival at Dover, the Unknown Warrior was met with a nineteen-gun salute - something that was normally only reserved for Field Marshals.

A special train had been arranged and he was then conveyed to Victoria Station, London.

He remained there overnight, and, on the morning of the 11th of November, he was finally taken to Westminster Abbey.

The idea of the unknown warrior was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served on the front line during the Great War. The union flag he had used as an altar cloth whilst at the front, was the one that had been draped over the coffin.

It was his intention that all of the relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the Unknown Warrior could very well be their lost husband, father, brother or son.

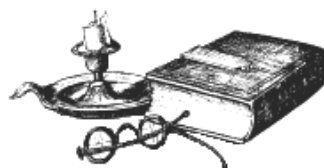
THIS is the reason we wear poppies.

We do not glorify war.

We remember - with humility - the great and the ultimate sacrifices that were made, not just in this war, but in every war and conflict where our service personnel have fought - to ensure the liberty and freedoms that we now take for granted.

Every year, on the 11th of November, we remember the Unknown Warrior.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.














Editors Ramblings



A big congratulations to our Assistant Secretary Tom Lyons on being named the 2023 recipient of The Indirect Support Award, well deserved Tom.

MEMORABILIA CATALOGUE

Enquiries to Kym McDougall Memorabilia Officer
memorabilia8rar@icloud.com

		<p>T Shirts. Great for travelling, the van, in the yard, in the gym. Cool micro mesh. Sizing chart below.</p>								Window Sticker
Size	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	5XL		Drink Coolers.	
Full Chest	105	110	Sold out		120	125	130			140
Length	69	75	76.5	78	79.5	82.5				
			<p>8RAR peak cap. High Quality, with DUTY FIRST on back</p>						Battalion Ties. With regimental logo and V111.	
			<p>Key Ring/Dogtag, Regimental logo on front and areas of service on back</p>						Infantry Combat Badge Large and Small	
			<p>Lapel Badge Pin on lapel badge, V111 (8RAR)</p>						Regimental Logo (Skippy Badge) Large and Small	
			<p>Drink Coasters, set of 4. Clear acrylic coasters in a boxed set with Regimental logo, Citation and Duty First</p>						Vietnamese Presidential Citation. Large only.	

We also have small quantities and limited sizes of polo shirts, dress shirts plus beanies, flags, lapel badges. Enquire by email.

MEMORABILIA ORDER FORM

FIRST NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Item	Description	Price	Quantity Req.	Amount \$
T-Shirt	Casual design for relaxation, gym	\$35 each See sizing chart		\$
8RAR Cap (Grey)	One size fits all	\$30 each		\$
Dog Tag / Keyring	Dog tag design with regimental logo	\$10 each		\$
Coaster Set	Sets of four with regimental logo	\$18 set		\$
Cooler	With 8RAR design	\$10 each		\$
Window Sticker	With 8RAR design	\$5 each		\$
Battalion Tie	With 8RAR design	\$35 each		\$
Infantry Combat Badge	LARGE	\$10 each		\$
Infantry Combat Badge	SMALL	\$10 each		\$
Reg. Logo (Skippy) Badge	LARGE	\$10 each		\$
Reg. Logo (Skippy) Badge	SMALL	\$10 each		\$
Citation	LARGE ONLY	\$10 each		\$
Postage		\$15 FLAT RATE		\$15
			TOTAL	

PAYMENT DETAILS

**PAYMENT WILL BE BY BANK TRANSFER TO 8RAR ASSN INC. NAB. BSB 084283
ACCT 045098582 OR BY CHEQUE OR PLEASE COPY THIS ORDER AND EMAIL TO.**

treasurer8rarassn@hotmail.com

or post to: SECRETARY, PO Box 4989 Forest Lake QLD 4078.

Enquiries? EMAIL Kym McDougall memorabilia8rar@icloud.com

**EIGHTH BATTALION THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED** ABN 12157362866
PO Box 4989 Forest Lake, Qld 4078 AUSTRALIA
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

SURNAME			GIVEN NAMES		
STREET NO. & NAME			POSTAL ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT TO HOME ADDRESS)		
CITY	STATE	P/CODE	CITY	STATE	P/CODE
SPOUSE/PARTNER NAME (OPTIONAL):		TELEPHONE (Home): ()		(Mobile):	
EMAIL:					

SERVICE DETAILS:

RANK OF DISCHARGE:	SERVICE NO.:	COY:	PL:
DATE OF BIRTH:	DATE ENLISTED:	DATE DISCHARGED:	
AUSTRALIA:	MALAYSIA:	VIETNAM:	OTHER:

I hereby apply to join / renew membership of the 8RAR Association inc. and authorise the association to print my name in its correspondence, newsletters or any publication that the association may wish to publish from time to time, providing that the information or use of my name is not associated with or connected to any defamatory publication.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annual subscriptions are \$20 for ONE (1) year or \$100 for FIVE (5) years: \$ _____

Donation (Optional) \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Remember that you can now pay for your subs or memorabilia directly to the association's bank account.

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Don't forget to put your name in the detail section on the Bank Deposit Slip

*If paying by direct deposit to the Association's Bank Account, please scan and e-mail this page to John Weatherley
E-mail: treasurer8rarassn@hotmail.com or post to our Secretary, PO Box 4989 Forest Lake, Qld 4078.*