
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~raacavic>

VETERANS HONOURED AT PUCKA



The RAAC Memorial & Army Tank Museum's Vietnam Memorial was the scene for a commemorative service on the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August.
Full story this issue.....

Commemorating 60 Years

The fortieth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in South Vietnam was marked by a special service at the School of Armour on Friday 18 August. A gathering of around 200, including local Vietnam veterans and their partners, staff and students of the School of Armour and invited guests were in attendance.

They remembered the Australian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the Vietnam War and specifically those who died at **Long Tan on 18 August 1966**. Following the service, a bar-b-que lunch was enjoyed in the museum grounds.



John 'Tubby' Brooker laid a wreath on behalf of 1st Armoured Regiment Association



Victorian Branch members IC Smith, Major Peter Branagan and John Brooker were joined by Broadford RSL Secretary Des Callaghan (second from left) at the memorial service.

**CAMBRAI DAY
COMMEMORATION DINNER**

Saturday 18 November 2006

Hopkins Barracks Officers Mess

Puckapunyal

Guest of Honour

Colonel Michael H. Annett (Retd)

Chief Executive Officer

RSL Victoria

Cost: \$50:00 per head for members

\$55:00 per head for non members/guests

This function is our premier event for the year and as usual we are providing a quality guest speaker for your enjoyment.

All enquiries to:

Daryl Pinner (H) 9359 4520

Peter Branagan (H) 5793 8171

Make the most of your trip to Puckapunyal with a visit to the world class Army Tank Museum

Dress: Lounge Suit or Reefer Jacket

Miniatures

Tickets posted out early September

Accommodation is limited

SOCIAL CALENDER.....

Mark your diary now for the **Children's Christmas Party** at the **Diamond Valley Miniature Railway**, Lower Eltham Park (Melways reference map 21 H 10). You'd better watch out, you'd better not cry because it's Christmas Eve and Santa Claus is coming to town. This time it will be on our own train and he will be pulling into **Meadmore Junction** at about **1PM (1300 hrs) on Sunday, the 24th December**.

Our first dedicated train will pull into the picnic area around **1100 hrs** and our afternoon special at **1400 hrs**. Both these trains run for **half an hour** and have proven very popular with all ranks in the past. **Rod and Sharon Westgarth** put a lot of effort into this activity, so come out to Eltham and give the kids (from eight to eighty) a great day out.

Remember, **we provide soft drinks and bagged sweets, you provide a suitably wrapped present** for Santa to present to your children. We also provide complimentary rail tickets so that you can take a ride on their regularly scheduled trains at any time.

It is a condition of the Diamond Valley Miniature Railway that **all those intending to ride the rails, must wear suitable, enclosed footwear**.

**So come along and join the fun on Sunday,
the 24th December 2006 from 1000 hrs.**

RAACA SCHOLARSHIPS

One of the benefits your association provides are the scholarships available to eligible children commencing and completing their secondary education.

The Victorian Branch Scholarship is currently **\$150:00 per year** for the first two years of High School. Applications to the Secretary with proof of attendance by 28 February in the first year of qualification.

The Brigadier F.B. Hinton, MC Scholarship is administered by the Federal Executive and currently provides **\$250:00** for each of the final two years of secondary education. Application including proof of intention to complete years 11 and 12 to our Secretary by 30 September in the applicant's year 10.

There are no scholastic results required, however, **only financial members of the branch may apply**.

VALE

16782 Warrant Officer Class 2 Jack (Jock) McConnell 02 August 1940 - 06 July 2006

Well known former member of the Corps Jock McConnell of Bribie Island, Queensland passed away on 6 July and was laid to rest at Brisbane's Mt Thomas Crematorium a week later.

Jock enlisted in the **Citizen Military Force in September 1959** and transferred to the **Australian Regular Army on 16 April 1962**. Prior to his discharge on 16 April 1982, Jock served with the Armoured Centre, 1st Armoured Regiment, C and B Squadrons, 1st Armoured Regiment in South Vietnam, A Squadron 4th Cavalry Regiment, A Squadron 2nd/14th Queensland Mounted Infantry and the Land Warfare Centre.

Donald Keith Muirhead 31 March 1936 - 19 April 2006

Those old soldiers that served with 1st Armoured Regiment in the 1950's will remember with fondness a quiet, unassuming man who served mainly in the RHQ orderly room and also in Headquarters Squadron. **Don spent his entire six years 1953 - 59 in the regiment**, initially as a Saracen driver and later as a clerk rising to the lofty heights of Lance Corporal. His 'mentors' through this time were Capt Sid Bilton, RSM J.J. Gilchrist, Orderly Room Sergeant 'Claude' Barnes and Cpl Bill Brennan.

Following discharge, Don spent some time in the Western District in the automotive trade, prior to emigrating to New Zealand for some 30 years.

On returning to Australia in 1998, Don settled in Romsey and some three months prior to his passing, moved to the Lions Hostel at Sunbury.

Lest We Forget

AUSTRALIAN ARMY

Australian Security Detachment IX - Baghdad

Mr Terry Stidwell
Federal President
RAACA
c/- Lot 51 Pollard Cres
CARDUP WA 6122

CAV FE
SECDET IX
OP Catalyst
AFPO 20
SYDNEY NSW 2890

Dear Terry,

14 April 2006

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to all at the RAACA who have had a hand in sending us our individual gift packs. Being a deployed cavalry unit, the morale is high and with the kindly donated gifts, it just got that little bit better.

As you may expect, the Jelly Beans didn't last long (I think they all went in the first night). The Vegemite is lasting well, even though it's making a daily appearance on our toast during morning routine. **The stubby holders were also a nice touch** and have been located behind our new bar. The holders are used by all cav personnel not on duty attending our Friday night drinks/bar-b-que.

Unfortunately soft drinks and near beer are our lot as the canteen is dry, however we get by. Once again many thanks for what you have done, it's greatly appreciated by all in the horse lines. If you are ever up this way, please drop in for a near beer or two

I have enclosed a photo of the majority of the Secdet, I'm the guy in the middle with the black beanie on his head.

Yours Gratefully,

Tpr David Kilby
For and behalf of B Sqn, 2/14 LHR (QMI) - SECDET IX



AROUND THE ASSOCIATION.....

In a moment of extreme benevolence, President Daryl Pinner has declared that the following shop items from the QM store be offered at a **20% discount** from the prices listed on the 'Show Off Your Association' advertisement at the end of this newsletter:

Current **RAACA car decals** for inside and external

RAACA Pocket Badges for Reefer Jacket - navy or black background

Regimental ties RAACA

Regimental plaques RAACA

Polo Shirts - Size	M	L	XL	XXL	XXXL
Black	3		3	2	8
Green		1			1
Maroon	2	2		1	4
Rugby Tops	3	2		1	6

The **RAACA Federal Congress** is to be conducted at **Hopkins Barracks, Puckapunyal** on **Saturday, 28 October 2006**. It is expected that the incumbent **executive from WA headed by Mr Terry Stidwell** will pass the baton to NSW after three successful years at the helm. Current NSW State **President Colonel John Haynes, OAM (Retd)** is likely to take over as Federal President with the majority of his new Federal Executive coming from his State committee. **The congress will culminate in a dinner on Saturday evening.**

If you have any matters you would like to see raised at the congress, **please pass them to Secretary John Paterson at PO Box 345 Brunswick, Vic, 3056.**

VALE

37800 WO1 Gustav Konrad Ballentine

27 November 1927 - 25 August 2006

The tiny Victorian north eastern hamlet of Barnawartha was subjected to an outpouring of the 'Black Hat' spirit on Thursday 31 August with the funeral service of well known and respected former member Gus Ballentine. Paying their final respects to a soldier's soldier was a cross section of friends and colleagues from across many decades. The mourners included John Crossman, Brian 'Spider' Webb, Ron Bell, Kevin Burnett, Terry Hampstead, Gary Creighton, Chris Fenton, OAM, Leon Kelly, Keith Anderson, John Brooker, John Blackwell, I.C. Smith, Colin 'Pixie' Webster, Gary Newman, Eddie Hayes, Ivan and Ann Maher, Andy and Maria Zsolt, Robyn Branagan, Mr and Mrs Mick Baxter, Wayne Grinter, Maj John Baines, RFD, WO1 Greg Hooper, CSM, WO1 Ian Cummings (RSM 1 Armd Regt), WO2 Tony Crook and Lt Col Craig Burn who delivered the eulogy.

The funeral was conducted by Wodonga based Lutheran Pastor Joe Kummerow.

The career of Gus Ballentine in the Australian Army was exemplary. However his military service commenced many years earlier in his native Germany. At the tender age of 15, Gus joined the German Navy as a cadet. The Army's need for manpower being greater in 1944-45 saw Gus transfer to the Wehrmacht and service as a tank driver. Fortunately captured by the British in 1945, demobilisation saw Gus and Dot living in the French sector of Berlin and work as a policeman. **Their only child Michael was born in April, 1948.**

In 1952 the young family emigrated to Australia and lived initially in the migrant camp at Bonegilla, Victoria. A move to Norlane saw Gus employed in the blacksmith shop of the International Harvester Company in Geelong and later as a taxi driver. **This early impression would probably account for his passionate support of the Geelong Football Club.**

In August 1962 Gus joined the Australian Army and following recruit training was posted to the Armoured Centre. After successfully completing Corps training, Gus was posted to Headquarters Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment as a driver in Transport Troop.

1964 saw Gus promoted to Corporal and posted to the 2nd Recruit Training Battalion as a recruit instructor until 1966. He then returned to the 1st Armoured Regiment as the Regimental Police Sergeant.

From 1967 to 1969 Gus again saw active service as a Troop Sergeant in 3rd Cavalry Regiment in South Vietnam. There were a number of highs and lows in this deployment including his widely documented work at Fire Support Base Coral and the unfortunate shooting up of **Sergeant Nev Calliss's 100 gallon fuel tank.**

Upon return to Australia, he was posted as an instructor to Radio Wing at the Armoured Centre. As a result of his unique and heavily accented Radio Telephone Procedure, he was promoted to WO2 and Wing Sergeant Major of the wing in his own words **'to get him out of the classroom.'**

In mid 1972 he became the Wing Sergeant Major of Training Squadron where he became the 'first impression' for many hundreds of new recruits!

In 1975 C Squadron at 1st Armoured Regiment was reformed and Gus was selected to be its first Squadron Sergeant Major. Along with the Officer Commanding, Major Phil Rollinson, the reformed squadron was very quickly brought back on line.

In July 1975, the RSM's position became vacant and Gus moved his office to RHQ with newly appointed Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Ken Phillips.** June 1976 saw the beginning of an enduring relationship with new **Commanding Officer Lt Col Peter Jarratt.**

This partnership prospered as did the regiment over an extremely busy period which saw the introduction of the Leopard tank and the first major deployment of a tank squadron to Woomera, South Australia. Gus' pictorial record of this deployment **remains a highlight in the regimental scrapbook.**

In December 1977 the Ballentines were on the move again, this time to the Land Warfare Detachment at Singleton, NSW where Gus had the role of Detachment Sergeant Major. His final posting was a very fulfilling one as the Sergeant Major of the 3rd Military District at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. His performance of that duty was recognised by a **Commander's Commendation from Brigadier Kendell.**

Following retirement on 29 August 1982, Gus and Dot lived at Lakes Entrance and Wodonga before finally settling in Shepparton. Their only son Michael died in 1987 and he is **survived by his wife Libby and daughter Michelle.**

Gus Ballentine epitomised the soldier that many of us would like to be. He was honest, forthright, set the highest standards of dress, bearing and personal behaviour but at the **same time was thoroughly caring of his soldiers.**

He will be fondly remembered.



37800 Sgt G. K. W. Ballentine, Vietnam 1968, in his carrier "Fun Hun"