



“Sitrep, Over!”



Official Newsletter of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

JULY 2014



Points of interest

- **Just Soldiers**
PTE Lawrence Barber
MM Final Part
- **Annual General Meeting.** All members are invited to attend the SA Sea Rescue Squadron HQ on Sunday 3rd August at 1100 hrs.
- **Peter Goers OAM.**
Love him or loath him, you can hear him personally at the October 19th RSARA luncheon. Details Page 4.
- **Change of Luncheon date & venue** See article on Page 4.
- **Do you know your entitlements??**
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An Experience of War

Part 5

Within a few short weeks 6 Battalion lost its first man to enemy action and he was from C Company. This was a great shock to us all as to date, it all seemed like something of a game. Gordon Knight's death in a counter ambush changed everything. The Viet Cong, or VC, were clearly ready and able to take us on.

It was about this time that I saw my first dead enemy soldier. We were patrolling near the site of the ambush where Gordon Knight was killed several nights before when the smell of rotting human remains was evident in the air. We searched for and found the dead VC under the cover of a banana tree where he had crawled to die of his wounds. The body was putrefied and swollen and there were maggots, ants and other insects crawling through his open mouth, teeth and eye sockets. His eyes had long been devoured. This was another sobering experience but one for which the company had the satisfaction of recording its first kill.

Our operational schedule of company and platoon sized patrols as well as battalion level operations recorded numerous contacts and short sharp fire-fights. The hot and humid climate was enervating and exhausting. As well as fighting a war we were constructing a base camp, digging weapon pits, sinking latrines, erecting barbed wire and other defences and building company boozers. It was not until three months into this punishing routine that we were granted one day's leave in Vung Tau.



Geoff Jones (front) with SLR and trauma kit together with Graham Spring and Brian McFarlane on operations in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam.

We were overworked and tired. Men began to show signs of illness – niggly complaints that soon matured into debilitating conditions. ‘Pyrexia of Unknown Origin’, an unexplained fever with painful joints was common, as were fungal infections and respiratory conditions. Each morning after stand-to I would hold a sick parade and I would dispense the few medicines I was able to carry in the field. Often I could offer nothing but a bit of sympathy and encouragement.

On an early operation I learned something that I had not fully realised before.

C Company was patrolling into its area of operations by stealth. Large numbers of VC, often referred to by phonetic alphabet letters as Victor Charlie but more simply as ‘Charlie’, were suspected in the vicinity and it was important that our approach not be detected. Any helicopter activity would alert Charlie to our presence and he would react in force.

9 Platoon reported a casualty who was suffering abdominal pain and was unable to go on. I made my way back down the dispersed column to find Cpl Neill Lindsay doubled up in pain. I suspected appendicitis or hernia and I knew that he was fair dinkum. He was one of the toughest and best soldiers in the company and it was unlike him to drop. I reported my diagnosis to the company commander and recommended that Neill be evacuated. The boss hesitated for a few moments before calling for a Dust Off, acutely aware that our covert insertion into the AO would be compromised. While I was greatly impressed that he had backed my judgement I knew his decision was also based on Neil Lindsay's reputation as a never-say-die fighting soldier. In the event, Neill was found to have a strangulated hernia.

Continued next month

Operation "Bribie" February 17 1967 - South Vietnam

Part 1

RSARA member Jim Robertson sent me this intriguing story on Operation "Bribie" during the Vietnam War. It is not only informative but factual, and is provided for your perusal. In Jims own words it is *"A Reflection By One Who Was Not There."* (Which, as everyone knows, makes him an instant expert)

Operation Bribie was, by the standard definition, a military defeat. In the words of Army Component Commander Maj Gen Vincent, known to the writer, albeit from a different point in the stratosphere, as his onetime boss; "...in an eyeball to eyeball fight, we lost the initiative". That it may seem a bit gratuitous to say so from the safety of Saigon does not alter the fact that Vincent was undoubtedly right. In fact it is arguable that 1st Australian Task Force never at any stage held the initiative.

The battle was conducted at the initiative of the enemy, on his terms, on ground of his choosing and, most telling of all, he retained that ground at the end of the engagement although it is true that he never by direct force drove the Australians from it. In more than a decade of combat, no enemy in the field ever did.

If ever there was a case for a fully co-ordinated, carefully prepared attack with all means correctly employed, however, "Bribie" was one. The area of operations was known as a route of advance and withdrawal used by the VC, yet artillery which had been at Dat Do on and off for months had not been registered to interdict any of these routes. No reconnaissance had been done with the view to locating preferred sites for establishing blocking forces and none were used during the operation although landing zones (LZs) had been selected and prepared in advance. Which, of course, made their location known to the enemy.

Task Force assumed that the enemy would follow a pattern, an assumption any first year officer cadet would be failed for making in a war game. 1 ATF assumed because the VC made it a general practice to retire to a safe haven after an engagement, it would do so on this (and every) occasion. So the prime, indeed only, thought which seems to have been in mind was to engage the enemy before he melted away. So, too, thought Lt Colonel (Gen) Custer before The Little Bighorn. We ignore the lessons of history at our peril.

The battle in its aftermath resulted in Australia having to completely revise its methods of operation and its means to carry them out. It resulted in a realisation that we had to have adequate support of all arms if we were going to economically defeat, in open engagement, an enemy who could pick and

choose his place of battle and the numbers he was going to employ in it. In early 1967 we could not do so as we had to husband our numbers to do two conflicting things at once – at the same time as we conducted offensive operations we also had to maintain a strong defensive presence at our fixed base(s). At the time of Operation Bribie we had only two battalions in theatre and no heavy armour and the overriding lesson learned was that we could not do both these conflicting imperatives with the forces at hand. "Bribie" woke us up to what should have been obvious at the outset and it is to the credit of the government of the day that the means to add a third battalion were made available without delay. The government also facilitated the addition of "A" Sqn 1st Armoured Regiment with its main battle tanks. It also led to our worst strategic error of the war in that Brig. Graham, in order to restrict the movement of the VC in the Eastern and South Eastern regions of the province, ordered the infamous barrier mine field which was nothing more than an ordinance warehouse for the enemy. That barrier cost the 1st Field Regiment RAE more casualties than all other causes put together and many amongst our infantry as well. (See note 1)

At the time Australia began full scale operations, Vietnam was no longer a purely jungle war – the VC were capable by then of mounting regimental sized operations. Australian doctrine was still Borneo and its army was not, by its training and means, equipped for set piece warfare. We were not comprehensively practiced in infantry/all arms tactics. At Bribie the APCs dropped infantry in open country at least one and fifty hundred metres from the edge of the jungle which in itself was correct lest the packed vehicles be in "can't miss" range of rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). But what was wrong was that the infantry then advanced out in front of the armour which should have been giving them physical protection against small arms fire, but equally important, the APCs could not now give covering fire either, other than into the trees above the soldiers' heads. Ever since Germany invented close co-operation between armour and dismounted infantry have the latter advanced (or should advance) behind rapid firing armour until the moment the infantry assault went in.

Note 1.

Total Australian Casualties from our own M16 mines filched from the "barrier" field are believed to be 55 KIA and 250 WIA along with some 500 allied personnel. We had a total of 21,048 mines in this field of bad dreams.

Continued next month

Just Soldiers**Sergeant Lawrence Barber, MM****Final Part**

As the enemy split into small groups, the 36th Battalion attacked with a barrage of rifle and machine-gun fire. While they fired with deadly accuracy, further down the line, the Germans of 107 Regiment successfully fought their way into Hangard village, causing the French posts to begin dropping back and exposing the Australians' right flank. The French asked Barber to provide covering fire for their withdrawal from the village. Barber refused.

The orders were not to retire except on the command of the Division', he told them. 'You dig in where you are and help us to beat back these Huns. We will give you all the support we can.' Barber ordered his gunner to pour fire into the village, producing a rowdy reaction of much cheering and encouragement from the Australians. In response, the French rallied and advanced, retaking their positions behind the thick undergrowth.

A company of the Royal West Kents moved forward to reinforce both the French and the Australians. The outcome had been in doubt, but with the arrival of the British troops the situation quickly stabilised. Barber's position had been subjected to a continuous onslaught from the German guns for 12 hours until a savage bombardment by the French artillery was directed on the tiny village. The German infantry withdrew in disarray.

As the line was re-established, B Company, 36th Battalion moved forward. When Captain Gadd reached the beleaguered Lewis gun position, he found Barber slumped against the gun with his face in his hands, totally exhausted. He was the sole survivor.

The captain placed his hand on the sergeant's shoulder and accorded him a typical Australian soldier's tribute—'Well done, mate'. As a result of his actions at Hangard Wood, Sergeant Lawrence Barber was awarded the Military Medal in recognition of his devotion to duty and conspicuous bravery.

The war against the German offensive had exacted a heavy toll on the 9th Brigade. The number of reinforcements from Australia was dwindling and the decision was made to disband one of the brigade's battalions to strengthen the other two. The 36th was selected and by 30 April 1918, its members had been relocated to other battalions. Sergeant Barber continued to serve until August 1918 when he was severely gassed. The deadly vapour ruptured one of Barber's lungs and necessitated the warrior sergeant's repatriation to Australia.

Barber never recovered from the chronic and debilitating effects of the gas and he required frequent periods of hospitalisation until his death on 9 September 1934.

By courtesy Darryl Kelly and ADCC Publications. Kelly, Darryl 2004, Just Soldiers, ADCC Publications, Brisbane, pg 1 to 4

2014 AGM SUNDAY 3rd AUGUST 1100 hrs

The Annual General Meeting of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association will be held on Sunday 3rd August at **1100 hrs**.

The venue is the SA Sea Rescue Squadron HQ on Barcoo Rd at West Beach.

The following Committee positions are to be declared vacant.

Secretary (David Laing)

Treasurer (Alan Orrock)

Immediate Past President - (End of Tenure) (Alan Hook)

3 Committee members:-

Norm Tregenza

Norm Rathmann

Frank Morony

**YOUR VOTE
COUNTS!**



Any Full or Serving Member wishing to nominate for any of the above positions is asked to make their nomination known to the Secretary at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

A 2 course Roast Luncheon and dessert will follow the AGM at 1200 hrs. The cost of this will be \$15 per head, **payable on entry**.

ALL MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES ARE URGED TO ATTEND. APOLOGIES TO THE SECRETARY BY EMAIL OR PHONE.

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EXTRAORDINARY BRAVERY

Victoria Cross winners "are linked by a golden thread of extraordinary courage ... Beyond this gallant company of brave men there is a multitude who have served their country well in war. Some of them have performed unrecorded deeds of supreme merit for which they have no reward." – *Queen Elizabeth II*

Australians have always had heroes and they have often been military men. For a century these were imported: the heroes of Waterloo, Trafalgar and the Charge of the Light Brigade. During this time a handful of local heroes also emerged, such as the explorers and, for some, the bushrangers. It seems that all nations need their own heroes, and villains too.

During the years of 1914–18 a range of home-grown Australian heroes and leaders emerged during what Charles Bean, the official war historian, called "the test of a great war". These courageous men – and women – were vital to a young and emerging nation seeking its own identity. The school-children's story of Grace Darling, a young English heroine who rescued sailors in a storm, was supplanted by that of the Gallipoli hero, John Simp-

son, rescuing the wounded with his small donkey. When Australians first went into battle in 1915 the home newspapers wrote with enthusiasm about the bravery of the ANZACs. But the public still sought special individuals. Alongside Simpson, early Gallipoli heroes a proud nation

embraced included Major General Sir William Bridges and Corporal Albert Jacka, who was later promoted to Captain. Bridges commanded the 1st Australian Division at the landing on 25 April 1915. He was killed a few weeks later by a Turkish sniper's bullet. In a unique salute, the general's body was brought back to Australia for burial, the only Australian body brought home during the war. Albert Jacka was the first in the AIF to receive the Victoria Cross.



Captain Albert Jacka, VC MC and Bar, in 1917.

Continues next month

Inspirational Guest Speaker for Association Luncheon

The RSAR Association has been successful in securing the services of Special Guest Speaker for the **October 19th luncheon** of well respected and sometimes controversial journalist and radio presenter **Peter Goers OAM**.



Peter Goers OAM is an actor, director, reviewer and current host of the radio program *The Evening Show* on 891 ABC Adelaide which broadcasts throughout South Australia and to the city of Broken Hill. His career has spanned over 40 years in the entertainment industry across a range of different mediums and formats including television, print, radio and theatre, and he is frequently engaged as a guest speaker. In the Australia Day Honours, 2013, Goers was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community as a radio broadcaster.

Most members would also know Peter from his regular column in the Sunday Mail, which is at times confronting, but at all times entertaining.

Peter, who describes himself as a "reformed social irritant" has given his own time to an impressive list of local boards, charities and community organisations that have benefited from his generosity.

His career includes theatre, television, press and radio. With merely a few regular guest spots and fill-in shifts under his belt, he joined 891 ABC Adelaide as the presenter of the Evenings program in 2004 and at the time said it would be his most difficult role yet – being himself.

The original date **AND** location for the luncheon have changed to **Sunday 19th October 2014** to fit in with Peters' very busy community support schedule. The function will be held at the **Hackney Hotel, 95 Hackney Rd, Hackney at midday**. Full bar facilities will be available in the room we have booked on the Ground Floor. This is a unique chance to hear a unique personality, so book early. Seating is limited, therefore those wishing to attend are asked to contact Norm Rathmann on 0448 460 884 or email Norm on normgeelong@yahoo.com to reserve their seat. **ALL WELCOME**.

Member **Lyndon Gaborit** has returned to the UK to pursue his professional career, but before he left upgraded his membership to LIFE MEMBER. Lyndon, who served as a platoon commander with 10 and 27 RSAR in the 60's and 70's says he really enjoyed catching up with old friends and making new ones in his time in Adelaide, and will maintain contact through email whilst overseas. Good luck Lyndon, from all at the RSAR Association.

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HOW TO CONTACT US

The Secretary David Laing
RSAR Association
Riverglen Marina RSD 3152A
White Sands SA 5253
Phone 0407 791 822
davidlaing49@bigpond.com



Find us on **FACEBOOK**

www.rsara.asn.au

Changes to the RSAR Association Constitution

Members of the RSARA Committee of Management have been working on amending the current Constitution to better reflect the way we do business, and to bring us up to date with current standards. The original Constitution has been in place since the reformation of the RSAR Association in 2008.

Some of the changes concern our Serving ADF Members, who have joined our Association since the inception of the original Constitution. Other amendments include minor grammatical changes to the wording, and the addition/deletion of words or clauses that are no longer relevant.

Members attending the August 3rd AGM will be asked to vote and ratify the changes to the Constitution, and if passed it will be implemented forthwith.

Anyone wishing to view the "existing Constitution" and the "proposed Constitution" can do so by visiting the RSARA website at www.rsara.asn.au and go to the **Notice Board**.

Members wishing a hard copy to be posted to them should contact the Secretary.

During the 2014 ANZAC Day march in Adelaide I noticed many of our members wear their medals individually, or have had them swing mounted (swinging free). If you would like your medals (or replicas) COURT MOUNTED, as in the attached photo, you need only contact RSARA member Bob Perkins, who provides an excellent service at discounted prices. I have had my medals, those of my in laws, and my fathers all mounted by Bob and I can recommend his work most highly. Bob can even arrange pick up and delivery to your home or work address. Call him on the numbers listed below.

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AUSTRALIA



MEMBERS LIST

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 Acton, Chris
 Adams, Aaron **SM**
 Apostolides, Chris
 Attenborough, Geoff
 Ayles, Jeff
 Baldwin, Bob
 Barrass, Mark
 Bates, Allan
 Beames, Rod **CoM**
 Beckett, David **LM SM**
 Bennet, Graham
 Bilsborow, Jason **SM**
 Blake, Sam **SM**
 Blondell, Mark **SM**
 Bloomfield, Max
 Bourne, Ian **SM**
 Boath, Ian
 Boothroyd, Lincoln **SM**
 Boscence, Bob
 Bras, Riley **SM**
 Broadbent, Robert **SM**
 Brookes, Phil
 Brown, Bruce
 Brown, Harry
 Burton, Ray
 Carnachan, Ian
 Chittleborough, Jeff
 Clyne, Lachlan **SM**
 Cooke, Nat **CoM**
 Contibas, Nikolaus **SM**
 Cotton, Bob
 Cram, Kevin
 Dart, John
 Davey, John
 Davey, Trevor
 Davey, Jack
 Del Vecchio, Victor
 Demasi, Nathan **SM**
 Demosani, Tony
 Dubsky, Eddie
 Dunn, Peter
 Dunn, Bob
 Dunn, Jeff
 Durdin, Russell
 Durrant, Chris
 Edson, Roger
 Elliott, Graham
 Elliss, Scott **SM**
 Eva, Keith
 Ewens, Mimi **SM**
 Field, Don
 Flanagan, Ted
 Fridday, Ross
 Gaborit, Lyndon **LM**

Genovese, John
 Gibson, Lindsay
 Giles, John
 Gill, Alan
 Gilmore, Graham **CoM**
 Gordon, Frank
 Hardy, Robert **SM**
 Harrington, Malcolm
 Harrison, John
 Hawking, Don
 Hawkins, Des
 Haynes, Scott
 Hogan, Mark **LM**
 Hook, Alan **LM CoM**
 Hope, David
 Hudson, Mick
 Hudson, Rick
 Humphrys, Jesse **SM CoM**
 James, Grant **SM CoM**
 Jeffrey, Scott **SM**
 Johnson, Barry **LM**
 Jolly, David
 Jones, Brett
 Keenan, Alan
 Kilford, Brian
 Klopff, Alex **LM CoM**
 Klopff, Paul
 Laing, David **LM CoM**
 Lampard, Ross
 Lee, Bob
 Lee, Pat
 #Lloyd, Elmer
 Lockett, John
 Longstaff, Paul
 Loveder, Peter
 Main, Brian
 Marcus, Ray
 Martin, Bob
 Matchett, Bill
 Mau, Mark
 McCulloch, Don
 McLachlan, Joshua **SM**
 McMahon, Tyler **SM**
 McMullin, Jim
 Meissner, Terry **SM**
 Milde, Peter **SM**
 Mitchell, Barry
 Mitchell, David
 Morony, Frank **CoM**
 Moore, Jeffrey
 Moore, Terry **LM**
 Moschis, James **SM**
 Munro, Ron
 Oliver, Peter
 Orrock, Alan **CoM**
 Ockenden, Marc
 Oswald, John
 Pach, Chol **SM**
 Paul, John
 Perkins, Bob
 Pollard, Barry
 Phillips, Don

Phillips, Trevor
 Payne, Bob
 Parslow, Howard
 Preece, Brian
 Ranger, Denis
 Rathmann, John
 Rathmann, Norm **CoM**
 Ramm, Hank
 Robertson, Jim
 Rorie, Graham **SM**
 Rossetti, Lee
 Sage, Andrew
 Salamon, Peter
 Sanders, Ashley **SM**
 Sanderson, Max
 Sands, Mike
 Sexton, Mark **SM**
 Sprigg, Rob
 Staker, Cameron **SM**
 Standing, Michael
 Stone, Eddie
 Strain, Doug
 Steer, Phil
 Stewart, Rob
 Stuart, Matthew **SM**
 Tiller, Garth
 Thomson, Jim
 Tolotta, Tarrant **SM**
 Tregenza, Norm **CoM**
 Trezise, George
 Ullrich, Andreas **SM**
 Vella, Joe
 Wake, Stephen
 Waters, Ian **LM**
 Weightman, Aidan **SM**
 Westover, Rhys
 Wheeler, Chris
 Williams, Darrian **SM**
 Wilson, Graham **LM**
 Wilson, Neil
 Wood, George
 Woore, Phillip
 Yorke-Simpkin Reg **LM**
 Zurowski, Paul **SM**

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Ayles, Denise
 Beames, Cheryl
 Beames, Taryn
 Carnachan, Dom
 Dart, Caroline
 Demosani, Gail
 Elliott, Julie
 Eva, Gail
 Field, Shirley
 Gill, Maureen
 Gilmour, Helen
 Hawking, Lorraine
 Hook, Phillipa
 Hudson, Margaret
 Jolly, Sandra

Klopff, Josie
 Laing, June
 Lampard, Kay
 Main, Raelene
 Marcus, Yvonne
 McCullagh, Anne
 Mitchell, Roma
 Phillips, Heather
 Sanderson, Lorraine
 Tregenza, Lyn

LM denotes **LIFE MEMBER**
SM denotes **SERVING ADF MEMBER**

Denotes **NEW MEMBER**

186 members as at 30/06/14

FEES

Full Member

\$20 per year.

Associate Member

\$10 per year.

Serving ADF Member

\$0 for the first year, and \$10 per year whilst still serving.

Fees are payable on or after the AGM in August each year, OR at the time of joining, THEN on the AGM each year.

Fees can be paid by posting a cheque or Money Order to:-

The Secretary, David Laing
RSAR Association Inc
Riverglenn Marina, RSD 3152A
Murray Bridge SA 5253

Make the cheque or Money Order out to the "Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc" or the "RSAR Association Inc"

Payment may be made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to:-

BSB 015 211
Account 482 441 406

In the name of **Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc.**

Please remember to include an identifier such as your surname, so the payment can be matched to you.



Private Gomad reckons.....

My 8-year-old grand daughter came to stay with me and the missus for a few days. I was working in the yard when little missy approached and said "**Grampa, what is a couple sex?**"



I was kinda taken aback and was very surprised that she would ask such a question, but decided that if she's old enough to know to ask the question then she's old enough to get a straight answer.

Steeling myself to leave nothing out, I proceeded to tell her all about human reproduction and the joys and responsibilities that go along with it. I explained about love and emotion, and the joys of finding a true partner in life, and sharing physical love with that partner. When I finished explaining, the little girl was looking at me with her mouth hanging open, eyes wide in amazement. Seeing the look on her face, I asked her, "Why did you ask this question, honey?"

The little girl replied, "Well, Grandma says to tell you that dinner will be ready in just a couple secs."

Do you know your entitlements??

The Treasurer in the Budget 2014 speech in Parliament told us that the age of entitlement was over.

For many members and former members of the Defence Force the comment is something not to be taken too lightly.

Many of our comrades suffer from injury and/or illness caused or contributed to by their service in the ADF.

While for many that service may have occurred many years ago it does not remove from the ex-service person, the right to have their entitlement assessed by the DVA.

There are however a few "rules" you should keep in mind when you are asking to be assessed for a disability arising out of your service.

The first step is to determine whether your injury or illness is service related. If you were injured and received treatment during service that should be recorded on your File. If you believe that your service has contributed to an injury after you were discharged you would need to be able to prove that injury occurred and was related to your service.

Secondly you need to make a formal claim to the DVA on the appropriate form. If your service was a National Serviceman or you had service in the regular army or on FTD you may claim under the *Veteran's Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA)* If you served before 2004 you will claim under the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1984. (SRCA)* and if you were in the service after 2004 the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)* will apply to you. The proper form can be accessed online at www.dva.gov.au

If you are going to make a claim have someone trained in pension matters help you. This will avoid making inappropriate and unhelpful comments no matter how well intended. Complete all the relevant questions and have your evidence ready to forward with the claim. This includes the names of witnesses to your incident even if you don't know whether they are still around or not.

This is the very beginning of the process that may take months to complete. DVA has a policy of getting claims resolved as soon as possible. They can only do that if the applicant gives them the required information. Most ex-service organisations (ESOs) have pension's officers who can help past and present members with claims.

If you would like to find out if your service related injury or illness might be a worthwhile matter to claim, tell your Association Secretary who will be able to pass your information onto an appropriately qualified pensions/advocate for assessment.

JUNE GUEST SPEAKER WELL RECEIVED

Members at the June Luncheon were treated to a very informative talk given by CO 10/27 Battalion, LTCOL Graham Goodwin about his recent deployment to Timor Leste as a member of the United Nations security team during the 2012 election campaign. About 30 members attended the Royal Hotel on the day, and although we experienced some hiccups with the food service, eventually everyone (except the RSM) was fed and Graham presented his memories of what was a demanding, but very satisfying 12 month operational deployment.



LTCOL Graham Goodwin gives his presentation



RSM 10/27 Bn, WO1 Adrian Hodges talks with



LTCOL Graham Goodwin and Jim Thomson



Frank Morony, Alan Hook, Nat Cooke and Trevor Phillips (partly hidden)



Jim Thomson, Nat Cooke, Frank Morony and Trevor Phillips



Don Field, Lorraine Sanderson and Shirley Field