

"Sitrep, Over!"



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIMENT ASSOCIA-

Patron: MAJGEN Neil Wilson AM RFD

Secretary / Editor David Laing

**October
2024**

VALE Rod Beames



It is with extreme sadness and regret we advise of the passing of our good mate and Royal South Australia Regiment Association President, Rodney Beames after a long battle with cancer. Rod passed away in the RAH in the company of his daughters Narelle, Kim and Julie and their families on the evening of 12th September.

Rod was a passionate member of the Association since joining in 2008 and became President in 2013, continuing to serve in that role until he was forced to step down due to ongoing ill health in late 2023. He remained in that position however, until he passed away.

He joined the Australian Citizens Military Forces as a Signaller in 1968 and transferred to the Infantry in 1970, reaching the rank of Sergeant and instructing on many recruit and promotions courses at Hampstead Barracks, El Alamein and Murray Bridge over the years. He served with 144 Sig Sqdn, 43 RSAR, 27 RSAR, 4 Training Group AUR and 10 RSAR. He was well known for his loud bellowing voice when giving commands and was well respected by his soldiers and peers alike.

Rod was a member of many associations and a Chairman of the board of the West Beach Community Bendigo Bank, helping to set up that branch nearly 20 years ago. He was coordinator of the local chapter of Neighbourhood Watch, Secretary of the SA Shack Owners Association, President of the Kellidie Bay Shack Owners Association, a member of the Adelaide Airport Consultative Committee, Representative on the Defence Reserves Association of SA and a member of the RSAR Regimental Council, amongst other organisations and community groups. He was made an Honorary Member for Life by the RSAR Association in 2021 for his achievements and leadership of the group as its President.

He was instrumental in strengthening the liaison between the Association and the Battalion to new heights, and was passionate in his love for the Regiment, its history, and especially for the Band of the 10th/27th Battalion RSAR, which he held in very high regard.

Rod Beames will be remembered as a good friend and mate to many former and current serving soldiers, and a hard working President and Committee member whose ambition and fortitude ensured the good name of the Royal South Australia Regiment would be perpetuated for many years to come.

The Royal South Australia Regiment Association and the Regiment have lost one of their best supporters. I have lost a great mate! Stand down my friend. Duty done!

David Laing



EDITORIAL

Rod Beames funeral was held on the 1st October at the Enfield Memorial Park and was attended by an estimated 300 people. It was live streamed and was watched by many more who were unable to attend the service. Vale old mate.

Once again we're getting to that time of year when planning for the End of Year Lunch is well underway. Our Chief Bail-layer Col Abel is once again organising a sumptuous feast for the day, and you're all reminded that the lunch is FREE. You



need only pay for your drinks at very generous mess prices. We have been offered the Sergeants Mess at Warradale Barracks by the RSM, WO1 Scott Hannan, and this can be located by following the map. Please reserve your seats with the Secretary for catering purposes NLT 1st December.

Exercise Southern Tiger has come and gone, and it saw 110 soldiers from the Malaysian Army travel to SA to train alongside our warriors at Cultana, RAAF Base Edinburgh and Murray Bridge Army Range. WO2 Mark Blondell CSM of A Company has kindly provided some pics and a story which you can read on Pages 5 to 10.

In an effort to clear some merchandise stocks, we have a Clearance Sale of some items at vastly discounted prices. Check Page 17 for details.

We have asked over the years for articles from our Serving Members, just so we know what's happening in the world of Defence. CPL James Lewis writes this month of his experiences on a trip back to Kokoda in New Guinea to retrace the steps of the 2/27th Battalion. His very interesting article is on Pages 14-18.

This past couple of months have been very trying for all who knew Rod Beames, but in the end he left on his own terms, in what we've come to expect of the man. For those who are left, life goes on, just a little sadder! He is sorely missed.

David Laing



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The Patriotic Gray Brothers

Frederick Simmons Gray and his wife, Bethia (nee Pudney), of Grasmere, North Bruny Island, had five sons who enlisted for World War One. Bethia died soon after the outbreak of war in January 1915 and never knew of her sons' fates.



The Grays listed their religion as "Society of Friends". Quakers believe in pacifism so it is interesting to note the Grays enlisted with the medical corps.

Oberlin Herbert Gray

Oberlin Herbert Gray was a farmer and enlisted at the age of 24 on 31 December 1914.

Private Gray served as a stretcher bearer at Gallipoli in 1915 and was admitted to hospital with influenza in 1915. On 2 February 1916 he was invalided to the Australian General Hospital at Heliopolis, in Egypt, for three months, and was invalided home.

Private Gray was joined by his brother, Frederick 'Oliver' Gray, at the Broadmeadows Camp, in Melbourne. They arrived in France in January 1917.

Private Gray served with the 3rd Field Ambulance in France and was wounded in action in May 1917. He was also wounded in action in August 1918 and suffered a fractured skull. As Private Oliver Gray was also with the 3rd Field Ambulance, he was with Oberlin when he was hit by a shell in the head.

Oberlin did not recover consciousness and died at 4am on 24 August 1918. Oliver arrived at 7:30pm and was too late for the burial which had taken place at 4pm.

Private Oberlin Gray is commemorated in the Daours Communal Cemetery, in France.

The Patriotic Gray Brothers

Private Oberlin Gray kept a journal which has been donated to the Australia War Memorial.

Frederick Oliver Gray

Frederick Oliver Gray (known as Oliver), born in 1895, enlisted on 23 May 1916 and, like his brother Oberlin, served with the 3rd Field Ambulance on the Western Front in France.

Private Gray, was awarded the French Legion D'Honneur: Medaille Militaire, for exceptional courage and devotion attending the wounded men at Lagincourt, on 15 April 1917.

Private Gray returned to Australia in 1919 and returned to farming on Bruny Island and wrote two books about his Bruny Island recollections.

Thomas Edward Gray



Private Thomas Edward Gray, born in Fielding, New Zealand, was a 19-year-old farmer from Bruny Island when he enlisted with the Army Medical Corps at the age of 19 on 23 May 1916, the same day as his brother, Oliver Gray. Private Gray listed his religion as "Society of Friends".

Meningitis was prevalent in the Claremont Camp. Private Thomas Gray volunteered to nurse a case. Private Gray contracted cerebral spinal meningitis and died prior to embarkation at the Hobart General Hospital on 19 June 1916. Private Gray's father was at the hospital when his son died.

SGT Arthur Plester Gray

Arthur Plester Gray

Private Arthur Plester Gray returned from World War One with a wife, Lena, of England, and operated the Gray Brothers farm with his brother, Oliver, at Killora on Bruny Island.

Arthur and Lena had a son Oberlin Benjamin Plester Gray, who was born on 1 May 1921. Oberlin was educated at the Friends School, in Hobart, and later worked as a clerk for the Department of Agriculture.

Oberlin enlisted in World War Two with the RAAF on 22 May 1941. Sergeant Gray was a wireless operator and air gunner.

Arthur and Lena Gray received official advice that their son, Sergeant Oberlin Gray, was missing presumed dead in air operations on 23 April 1942 at the age of 21.

Arthur died on 17 March 1949.

Henry Gray

Private Henry Gray returned from the war and lived at Lymington, near Port Cygnet.



Oberlin Herbert Gray

Exercise “Southern Tiger”

In September this year over 100 soldiers from the Malaysian Army travelled to SA and trained alongside our own soldiers at Cultana, RAAF Base Edinburgh and the Murray Bridge Army Range. At the culmination of the exercise I had the honour to represent the RSAR Association and present the Malaysian CO LTCOL Azllan with a Commemorative Shield as appreciation for their participation in the combined training. A BBQ was held At RAAF Base Edinburgh where the soldiers mixed and swapped stories, prior to their return to Malaysia..

Exercise Southern Tiger from WO2 Mark Blondell

September 2024 saw 9 Brigade host Ex Southern Tiger 2024, which is an annual non-reciprocal, Sub-unit attachment from the Malaysian Army to an Australian Army Unit.

The Exercise began at RAAF Base Edinburgh moving to Murray Bridge and Cultana.

Around 20:00hrs 6 Sept a contingent of 111 members of 14 (RAMD) Royal Malaysian Army Mechanised arrived at Adelaide Airport. Amongst them were Infantry, Calvary, Medics, and Logistics. Members of 10/27 RSAR greeted and escorted them to waiting buses which transported them to RAAF Base Edinburgh where they were allocated accommodation.

The first day began with a late breakfast then a quick tour of the Base. The fog that covered RAAF Base Edinburgh was a bit of shock, but this did not stop any of them from having a smile on their face.

Even when marching the Malaysians were singing the cadence of “Kiri, Betul” (left, right) which in turn put a smile on the Australian members faces.

Next followed the long Bio checks by RAAF customs of weapons and equipment that had been flown over with them to ensure that not a single seed had been accidentally transported into the country.

Once this was finished the visitors were given a cultural experience of a smoking ceremony and welcome to country by a Kurna Elder. Colonel Hay, LTCOL Jackson and the RSM WO1 Hannan then presented each member with a Southern Tiger Shoulder Patch as a small memento of their visit. The first day has been slow with administration. Everyone was ready to get down to some good training.

Sunday morning began with the last admin task which was Reception-Staging-Onward Movement and Integration or RSO & I. Basically getting arriving Troops and equipment ready for Task.

Then at last training began. NCO's from both A, B Coy and 3FId began with basic lessons of the current rifle EF88. The aim being to get all the soldiers to a high standard to allow them to safely operate the weapon system.

Once all the soldiers had passed a weapons qualification test, they then moved into the Weapon Training Simulator System (WTSS). This gave them the opportunity to go through the drills which they had been taught and engage some targets with a scenario-based shoot, giving them extra confidence with a new weapon system.

Progression of training then moved to Live firing at the 25m range, with shooters adopting different firing positions.

Following the 25m Range a PL of Cavalry were detached to train with 1ARMD and the ASLAV

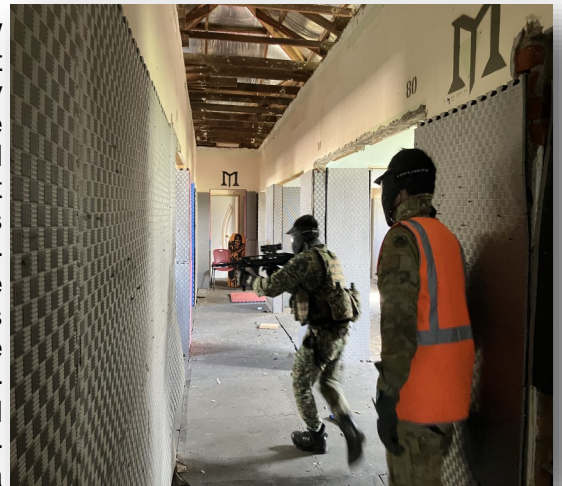
The next stage of training was Blue Bolt (Non-Lethal Ammunition). This was undertaken in the Close Training Area using the buildings to practice some urban skills. Pros and cons of Australian and Malaysian tactics were discussed between the HQ elements.



Exercise "Southern Tiger"



An early start saw the contingent move to Murray Bridge. The weather continued to stay fresh but still the Soldiers smiled. The standard Malaysian rifle (M4 Carbine) was to be used for the rest of the Exercise. Group and zero was conducted followed by a modified Rifle



Practice 3A (RP3A).



This involved target ranging from 100 to 300 meters. Targets were to be engaged using the different positions practiced on the 25m range.

Concurrent to this training. Medical staff linked with members of 3 Health Battalion to conduct first Aid training, again different methods were discussed allowing some cross training.

Over the next week the soldiers progressed onto Fire and Movement. This was in preparation for the next phase of the Exercise to be conducted in Cultana.

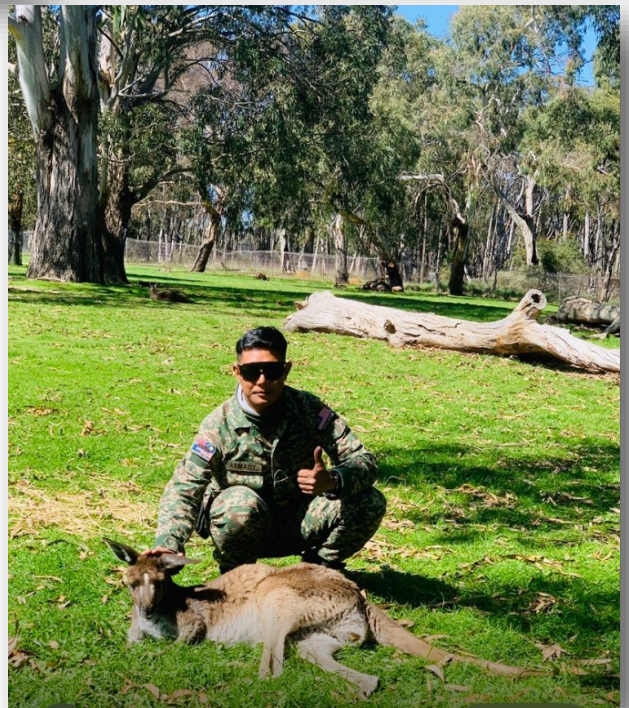
The soldiers conducted the shoots, individually then in pairs and then Fire Teams.

An element of Engineers was taken by members of 3FLD to conduct some Explosive Training on the DEMS range

The move from Murray Bridge to Cultana was broken with a visit to Cleland National Park, enabling the Malaysian Soldiers to get up and close to some Native Australian Animals.

Once 14 RAMD arrived at Camp Baxter Cultana their training was handed over to 1 ARMD and 7RAR.

Vehicle recovery with 9 CSSB was undertaken. Then further foundation Warfighting and combined-arms activities with both blank and live fire components. Troops also worked with the M113s.



Exercise “Southern Tiger”



This was all put together for the culminating activity which also involved the latest qualified members of the DSFW (Direct Support Fire Weapons) course which qualified 10/27 RSAR members in Sustained Fire Mag 58. M2 Browning 50 Cal and Javelin Anti Tank weapon

Thanks to WO2 Mark Blondell for the story and pics of the exercise and to June Laing for the BBQ pics.

Exercise “Southern Tiger”



Left: RAAF Base Edinburgh building clearance with 10/27 Bn instructors. Above: Training alongside M113AS4 Armoured Personnel Carriers from 7 RAR

End of Exercise Presentation and BBQ



Exercise “Southern Tiger”

Each participating Malaysian soldier was presented with a framed certificate of achievement signed by the CO of 10/27 Battalion LTCOL Aaron Jackson, plus a CO's Medallion for their training journey. The Malaysian CO LTCOL Azllan in turn presented the RSARA Secretary with 3 different shoulder patches courtesy of the Malaysian Mechanised Regiment. They will be treasured by me.



Exercise “Southern Tiger”



The Malaysian soldiers said they enjoyed their time working alongside our own soldiers, and especially enjoyed the Australian style BBQ. They safely returned to Malaysia at the end of the month to continue their roles as a regular Army Mechanized Regiment.



The Commanding Officer of 14th Royal Malaysian Regiment Mechanized, LTCOL Azllan stands alongside his Officers and Senior NCOs at the end of Exercise Southern Tiger. We certainly enjoyed having them here and working alongside them. We wish them all the best in the future.

Digger Wombats Humour



"One for the road,"
means peeing before
you leave the house.

Shoutout to everyone who can still
remember their childhood phone
number but can't remember the
password they created yesterday.

© I Might Be Funny

You are my people.

AND SO ENDS
ANOTHER WEEK
WITHOUT ME
BECOMING
UNEXPECTEDLY
RICH.

Not in jail, not in
a mental hospital,
not in a grave - I
say I'm having a
very good day.

Once I've had my coffee,
I can use my big words.

**Before coffee, I mostly
use the ones with four
letters.**

**The first million people to
send me \$1 will get a copy
of my guide on how to
become a Millionaire
using Facebook**



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Becoming an adult is the dumbest thing I've ever done.

Lambs to the left of me. Mutton to the right. Here I am. Stuck in the middle with ewe. 🐑🐑😅



Don't let them take the temperature on your forehead as you enter the supermarket, its a government plot to erase your memory. I went for a bottle of milk and a loaf of bread and came home with a case of beer and 12 bottles of wine!



"THE RECIPE SAID TO SIMMER UNCOVERED!"



**I CHECKED INTO
THE HOKEY
POKEY CLINIC
AND TURNED
MYSELF
AROUND!**



"On time" is when I
get there.

**Did some
financial planning
and it looks like I can
retire at 62 and live
comfortably for
eleven
minutes.**



"Before he opened this,
he had a farm."

Impostor!



**I just saw on the news
that they're
suggesting that
people check on the
elderly. I'm usually up
by 6 or 6:30.
Bring donuts.**



"How much longer you gonna be in here?
The bread ran out last week and now
the coffee and butter are gone."

Padres' Ponderings

From Padre Stephen Albrecht - Chaplain 10/27 Battalion RSAR

Grief and loss are universal experiences, but in the military, they take on a unique significance. The close bonds forged within the ranks, the shared experiences, and the common mission create a deep sense of community. When a fellow soldier is lost, it's not just a soldier who's gone; it's a brother or sister, a comrade who stood beside you through both ordinary and extraordinary challenges.

Military service often involves confronting loss directly, whether it's the death of a fellow soldier in combat, the passing of a veteran, or the separation from loved ones during long deployments. These losses weigh heavily, magnified by a strong sense of duty and the often-unspoken expectation to "carry on" despite the pain.

In the army, the mission doesn't pause for personal grief. This reality can sometimes push grief to the background, leaving it unaddressed or assumed to be managed internally. Soldiers may feel the need to suppress their emotions to maintain the strength and resolve expected of them. However, unprocessed grief can linger, impacting mental health, relationships, and overall well-being.

The military community provides a unique support system, but it's crucial to recognize that grieving is not a sign of weakness. Sharing memories, honouring those who have fallen, and seeking support from chaplains, mental health professionals, or fellow soldiers are vital steps in the healing process.

Honouring the memory of lost comrades is a cornerstone of military tradition. Ceremonies, memorials, and moments of silence offer communal acknowledgment of loss and create a space for collective mourning. Yet, healing from loss is also a personal journey, requiring time, patience, and often the courage to confront pain directly.

In the army, grief and loss are interwoven with the essence of service. Recognizing this and providing soldiers with the space and support to grieve ensures that, even as the mission continues, the human spirit is nurtured, and the bonds of camaraderie remain strong, and we achieve to keep the human inside the soldier.

Chaplain Stephen Albrecht



BOOK REVIEW

... part *Chickenhawk* and part *Exit Wounds* ... a powerful and timely contribution to a nation's understanding ...

Matt Anderson PSM
Director, Australian War Memorial



STOP SCREAMING I'M SCARED TOO

An Australian Soldier's Story

East Timor • Pakistan • PNG • Afghanistan

Rod Henderson

'This book is part *Chickenhawk* and part *Exit Wounds* ... a powerful and timely contribution to a nation's understanding of what we ask of our service men and women and the debt we owe ... Matt Anderson PSM, Director, Australian War Memorial

Stop screaming, I'm scared too!' is not what you'd expect to see on the back of a loadmaster's helmet in a Chinook helicopter flying over southern Afghanistan, but for Rod Henderson it sums up his 22 years of service as a soldier in the Australian Army.

During the busiest period in the Army's history, Rod was deployed to East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Australia, he was involved in counter terrorism operations and disaster recovery. From an infantry paratrooper, to Chinook loadmaster and Black Hawk door gunner, Rod reveals an enthralling and unique perspective of service.

Whether it is 'right place wrong time' or just unlucky, he found himself in a series of life threatening and traumatic events. Each one took a toll. Accepting the physical injuries and mental health challenges from his service, Rod found healing in the hallowed halls of the Australian War Memorial.

This is not the story of a general or a Special Forces hero. It is the extraordinary memoir of a regular Australian soldier. Like so many others who have served their country with honour and distinction, the little-known stories of ordinary soldiers deserve to

be told.

In Stop Screaming, I'm Scared Too, Rod reveals the depth of his soldiering experiences with humour, humility, self-reflection and honesty.

EDITORS NOTE:

I saw this book on the shelf and the title grabbed my attention straight away. I browsed through it for about 10 minutes before the young pimple-faced shop attendant very kindly said "Are you gunna buy it, or what?" Taking her brilliant advice and not wanting to argue with her mother I paid for it and left the store, not waiting to get home before getting back into the pages of intrigue.

The author Rod Henderson spent over 20 years in the Australian Army and speaks the same language we do, so he's very easy to understand and to laugh along with.

If you want my advice and enjoy a good war story (or 10) and don't mind a bit of military humour, then this is a certain for your collection. Available for around \$25 from most good book stores and retailers.

David

The Regimental Badge - Where to from here?

The Hat Badge of your Battalion and Regimental Identity logo is about to change. With the accession to the throne by King Charles III, multiple organisations and military units will have their badges and logos updated to the new crown. King Charles chose the rounded Tudor Crown for his royal cypher when he took the throne in 2022 - and it is being changed in places where his late mother's St Edward's Crown was shown. How different our badge will be remains to be seen, but it will be worn with pride just as the old badges were. Pro Patria.



Adelaide Rifles 1890



10th Battalion Australian Infantry Regiment (10AIR) (South Australia)
(Pre 1930's)



10th Battalion The Adelaide Rifles
1932—1940



Approved 23 Jul 1963
(Current Unit Badge)

A BRIEF HISTORY: 10/27 RSAR UNIT HAT BADGE

The current unit badge was derived from using Adelaide Rifles (AR) Hat Badge 1890 as per, 10th Battalion Australian Infantry Regiment (10AIR) (South Australia) (Pre 1930's) and 10th Battalion The Adelaide Rifles (1932-1940)

There has been much controversy over the star, some have suggested that it is the "Star of David" or commonly known as the "Jewish Star". However this not the case "the Federation Star" is actually derived from the 10th Battalion Australian Infantry Regiment (10AIR) (South Australia) and 10th Battalion The Adelaide Rifles and represents the six states in Australia at the start of Federation in 1901. The crown used (Current Unit Badge) is a St Edwards Crown (Queens).

Unit Motto 'Pro Patria' is Latin for 'For Country'.

Kokoda: My Journey CPL James Lewis 10/27 Bn RSAR

"If you're not going up, you're going down. If you're going down, you'll wish you were going up." Sage words of wisdom from Trent Justin before I headed off. Climbing up the Stanley Owen Ranges hurts, but coming back down hurts more.

Exercise "Kanga Return 24." When I first heard a call for nominations, I had no real knowledge of the Kokoda Campaign. I knew it was a fighting withdrawal, I knew there were chocs (militia) involved and I knew that it was a decisive Australian victory. I was recommended to read "*A Bastard of a Place*" by Peter Brune. That was definitely a wise choice. Having a bit of background knowledge really helped on the ground, I knew what I wanted to see and do. I discovered that my grandpa's unit was at Kokoda, although he didn't get posted to the 2/16th until after the Liberation of New Guinea, I know from his war time letters that he had great admiration and respect for the veteran members of his unit.

Proudly stitched on to the colours of the 27th Battalion sit two battle honours that were the focus of the exercise: "Kokoda Trail" and "Efogi-Minari" the first being for the overall campaign, and the second for the Battle of Brigade Hill and Mission Ridge. The Kokoda campaign would conclude with the 2/27th also being awarded "Buna-Gona" and "Gona".

This was the third annual Kokoda trek hosted by 39 Operational Support Battalion. The first, in 2022 commemorated the 80th anniversary of the first and second battles of Kokoda, as well as to lay the ashes of CAPT Alan Watson 'Kanga' Moore to rest, thus Kanga Return.

Prior to departing Australia, the whole call sign force concentrated at RAAF Amberley, we were to fly Defence Air from Amberley to Port Moresby. Being Defence Air, if I assume the worst I can't be disappointed. So I expected a C130 and got a surprise of a KC30! And an even bigger surprise of a first class sky bed! But, this is a defence plane. Taxiing on the tarmac the plane lurched to a stop. The pilot comes on over the PA "got a few warning lights coming up, could be a show stopper". After 45 minutes of turning it off and on again, the pilot comes back on, "Warning lights seem to be off now, let's see how far we get". Obviously, we made it to Port Moresby, and on a positive note, the RAAF Stewards had an endless supply of coffee.

After landing at Kokoda, the group were given a tour of the plateau. On the forward edge of this plateau is where the 39th Battalion's CO received a fatal gunshot wound to the head in the opening hours of the campaign. There is a little museum there too, giving a comprehensive overview of the multiple battles and the trek itself. It was the 29th of July, and our guide David Howell held a commemorative service at the war memorials on the plateau to mark the 82nd anniversary of the first battle of Kokoda.



Kokoda Plateau Memorials

Our group set out, tracing the steps of the withdrawing Maroubra Force reaching Deniki for lunch. This is where the 39th Battalion withdrew to and reorganised for an attack and reoccupation of Kokoda on what became the second battle of Kokoda. Our day didn't end there and we continued climbing up to the modern day location of Insurava. Almost all villages along the Kokoda trail were razed to the ground during the Japanese offensive, and were rebuilt in areas nearby.

On our second day walking, we made it to the Insurava Battlefield. Insurava is the first deliberate defensive position of the numerically depleted 39th Battalion, the race was on, the Japanese were advancing from the north, and two battalions of the 21st Brigade were hurrying to get to Insurava from the south. Ultimately the 2/14th and 2/16th made it first. The fighting would see PTE Bruce Kingsbury of the 2/14th posthumously awarded the VC. PTE Kingsbury's section is still the most highly decorated section in Australian history. Even with two fresh battalions, the Japanese still forced the Australians to withdraw further. We Stopped and conducted a remembrance service for the 99 Australians Killed.



Insurava battlefield and memorial

The Australians reorganised at Alola, our next stop. At Alola we dropped down to the original WW2 track to Cons Rock. This rock was used as a field surgical table by Doc Verner. Alola is also the start of the 21st Brigades fighting withdrawal that sees the 2/14th and 2/16th conduct a rear passage of lines for 18km over three days. Walking this area, you can still make out Australian pits off to the side of the trek. The Australians shed their entrenching tools before leaving Owens Corner in order to reduce their load, this meant that all the pits dug by Australians from Kokoda to Imita Ridge were dug using bayonets, their helmets and anything else they could improvise.

Our day finished with us crossing Eora Creek and then again at our night location, Templeton's Crossing. Both of these crossings were used as successful Ambush sites for the Australians during the withdrawal. During the Australian Advance back across the trek, the area between these two crossings saw the only real defence by the Japanese. 1500 men were dug in to this area to delay the Australians, the hill side that they were sighted on was a 60-degree incline, the Australians were forced to fight a battle in 'two's and three's'. Their determination was rewarded when after multiple days of fighting, the Japanese were seen to drop their weapons and run.

Our next day saw us go up and over Mt Bellamy, the highest point of the trek. After a short descent down to an area called the Moss Forest, we became well familiar with the mating call of the male brown sicklebill bird of paradise. It's mating call sounds very similar to a burst from a sub machine gun. It is quite a haunting sound, especially because the moss forest is also one of the quietest parts of the trek. Stories have it that the Japanese were just as alarmed by it, diving into cover constantly, unable to distinguish the bird from nearby gun fire.

Day four we head to Myola. Myola has a dried up lake bed that was used as an air drop location and stores dump to shorten the line of communication. On the Australian withdrawal, many of the ammunition stores were buried in order to deny their use by the Japanese. Rice was scattered over the forest floor and tins of bully beef were punctured and left in the sun to fester. By this stage in the Japanese advance, their plan of utilising Australian supplies hadn't come to fruition and their army was starting to run low on food, and their own lines of communication are becoming over extended. The Australians are believed to have inflicted more casualties on the Japanese through contaminated food than through combat in the Kokoda campaign.

After having a very hands-on view of rusty 82-year-old dumped ammunition, still with fuses attached, the day brings our first real descent in to the town of Naduri. Our trek continued the following day to Efogi, the half way point of the Kokoda track.

Day six was the day I looked forward to, Mission ridge and Brigade Hill. It wasn't a long walk from Efogi South to Brigade Hill, but the path is the most dangerous here, sections of the track require you to hold on to chains anchored into a cliff face, while your foothold slopes away to a 50-metre drop. Our Guide spent an extra 30 minutes showing me around the battle ground, walking the Japanese flanking approach and across to the depth pits of the 2/27th and recounted lots of stories both from his own interviews of veterans and from a couple of books he carried.

Kokoda: My Journey CPL James Lewis 10/27 Bn RSAR



Eora Creek Bridge



39th Battalion parade at Menari 1942



Biscuit Bomber at Myola 1942



Myola Today

The Bayonet Charge across the saddle of Brigade Hill

"As the remnant force of the 2/14th, 2/16th and 39th Battalions reached Brigade Hill, they walked through the 2/27th Battalion position at the bottom of Mission Ridge. The battalion was given a bit of a hard time for missing out on all of the fighting as they'd been held in reserve at Port Moresby in reaction to the conflict in Milne Bay (where the 2/10th left a sizable impression on the battlefield). The 2/27th occupied the enemy most likely approach, and before dawn on the 8th of September, their whole front was in contact. The fighting was so intense that A Coy depleted its allocation of 1200 grenades and 100 rounds per man as well as the entire company reserve and a majority of the battalion reserve. Throughout the two days of fighting, the 2/27th perimeter was never breached. The bill was high, 39 OR's KIA, two MIA (still are listed as MIA), along with three Officers and 43 OR's wounded. B Coy lost all its Bren Guns, and D Coy suffered the loss of a mortar crew from a dud bomb.

While this was going on, the Japanese had found the limit of the left flank and assaulted up to Brigade Hill, and unknowingly cut off Brigade HQ from its battalions. A daring bayonet charge was carried out by soldiers of the 2/14th and 2/16th but that failed. As per Brigadier Potts orders, the brigade scattered to reorg in Manari. The 2/27th now became the rear guard. The bayonet charge and a counter offensive by B Coy 2/27th had caused a lull, allowing an effective withdrawal down the main track and a secondary track. 2/27th being last to withdraw also picked up the wounded stragglers of the other battalions. On their way to Menari, the CO LTCOL Geoff Cooper (of Coopers Brewery family) estimated that the RV would be closed and that the battalion would be cut off. He sent his A Coy and two platoons of C Coy ahead to Menari to assess the situation. It was as expected and the 2/27th was cut off from their lines of communication with 14 stretcher cases, 300 men and 79 carriers. After two days the carriers left due to no food. The 2/27th would become known as the lost battalion. They would have to blaze a new trail for 14 days through some

Kokoda: My Journey CPL James Lewis 10/27 Bn RSAR



View from Naduri, near is Kagi Village, form up point for the Japanese attack on Brigade Hill. Far is Mt Victoria PNG's highest peak

of the harshest jungle in Papua, feeding over 300 men on foraged food and goodwill from native villages. When the 2/33rd Battalion re-occupied Mission Ridge a month later, they discovered the killed men of the 2/27th still in their pits, haversacks on their backs, fingers still on the triggers of loaded rifles. The Japanese buried their own dead of around 200."

The group paused and had a remembrance service to remember the 87 men killed at Brigade Hill and Mission Ridge.

Minari was our next stop. This is the location of the Minari Parade where LTCOL Honner put the 39th Battalion on Parade to congratulate them on their courageous effort and that Australia will forever be in their debt. Of course, we formed up in the same spot for the same photo. What is a military exercise without a bit of drill? On we went to our next night location of Agulugo.



Retelling the story of the Bayonet Charge across the saddle of Brigade Hill



**39th Battalion CO addressing
KR24 Group at Menari**

Day seven saw us climb over the Maguli Range and end up at Ofi Creek. The Ofi Creek campsite was an ambush site for the Australians. Tins of bully beef were left in the creek bed, and the ambush sprung when enough enemy were in the engagement area. The scars of this still remain in the boulders near the creek edge.

Day eight of the trek saw us reach the furthest Japanese advance, Irobaiwa Ridge. This ridge was seen as not easily defendable by Brigadier Potts, however the Japanese occupied it and dug an impressive trench system that is still very visible today. Down the ridge is a dump of Japanese ammunition and supplies that they buried before withdrawing. Apparently there's still a dumped mountain gun on the back slope of Irobaiwa ridge but no one is yet to find it.

Onwards to Imita Ridge where our porters set up a welcome for us and had their own remembrance for the thousands of Papuans who volunteered to help and those forced into working for the Japanese. Our day concluded with a walk down the 'Golden Staircase'. Most of the 2000 odd stairs are gone now, but the gold custard-like mud remains. At the bottom of the stairs we set up camp at Goodwater.

Kokoda: My Journey CPL James Lewis 10/27 Bn RSAR

The last day of our trek was a nice short one, a waist deep river crossing across Goldie River and a very steep, very hot climb to Owens Corner. Words can't describe the feeling of walking under that archway.



Our last day in PNG only had one thing on the schedule, Bomana War Cemetery. Coinciding with the 8th of August, the anniversary of the Second Battle of Kokoda. The Bomana War Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth War Grave in the world. There are 3,824 commonwealth graves, with 699 of them unidentified. This was one of the most moving parts of the trip. Only 625 Australians died on the Kokoda Trail, both combat deaths and sickness. In contrast nearly 2000 died in the battles for Gona and Buna. The 2/27th started at Brigade Hill with 28 officers and 560 enlisted, it left Gona with three officers and 67 men. The 2/10th after a glorious victory in Milne Bay would go in to fight at Buna, losing 230 men over an 11-day period.

KR24 at Owens Corner



Bomana War Cemetery

Walking the rows of graves gives you a picture of the carnage of the northern beaches. Deaths along the Kokoda Trail are few and far between outside of the major battles, but you get to December 1942 and there are rows and rows of men who all died on the same day. I saw a row of graves of men from the 2/10th who all died Christmas Day 1942. They died repeating an attack that had failed the past three days, ordered by a General not even in the country, in a scene that would resemble WW1 trench warfare. Once Unit CO's were allowed time for proper reconnaissance at the northern beaches, casualties fell and objectives were captured and held.

Being given this opportunity has been the highlight of my career. I'm grateful to A Coy HQ and BHQ for pushing my nomination and to 9X for sponsoring me. It has been a great honour to walk the same precarious slopes that the 2/27th struggled through, to be up to my shins in the same custard-like mud and have my morale washed away by the same tropical downpours. Nothing can prepare you for the trek, the only thing that gets you over those hills is your own determination. Even after walking the battlefield north of Templeton's Crossing I still can't fathom maintaining command and control in it, let alone expecting soldiers to actually fight through there. It's impossible to maintain situational awareness. The landscape is beautiful, but if you look at anything other than the track or the pair of feet in front of you, you'll end up face first in ankle deep mud. The afternoon rains last just long enough to make sure that none of your kit will dry overnight, and also make your trek the next day just a little more slippery. Let's not mention Golden Orb spiders that love putting up webs at face height.

It really is a bastard of a place.

CPL James Lewis

A Coy
10th/27th Battalion RSAR

2024 END OF YEAR LUNCH

WARRADALE BARRACKS

Warradale Barracks Sergeants Mess

SUNDAY 15th DECEMBER

1100 to 1500 hrs



All food is provided **FREE OF CHARGE** by the Association.
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Letters to the Editor. About Rod.

Since Rod's passing I have been inundated with emails, text messages and phone calls from those who knew Rod, and some who didn't but admired him anyway. I have tried to find room to include as many tributes as possible, but if I have missed any, please forgive me, and take a number. The queue is long.

David Laing Secretary/Editor

Dear David,

This is very sad news and I don't know what to say mate he will be missed big time.

Grant James

G'Day Secretary David and RSARA Members,

I am terribly saddened by this news.

I did not know President Rod well but was much impressed by his commitment to the Bn and the Association.

When we met at a dining-in night a couple of years ago, I was much impressed by the man.

VALE Rod, RIP

With my best regards,

Bruce Lakin

Hey mate

My condolences to Rods family, friends, colleagues and the association.

Craig Thomson

David - sad news indeed. Even though we never met Rod, your Association's newsletters made him a well-known figure over here, and he was clearly a good soldier in the unit and in his community.

On behalf of his regimental alliance brothers, we also mourn your loss.

Vale indeed - **Paul Koorey**

(Honorary Colonel 2/4 Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment)

Very well said David. To use an old fashioned term, he was a fine fellow. We are all fortunate that he gave us a few more years.

Kind regards,

Lyndon Gaborit

Hi Dave,

Vale Rod - an absolute gentleman.

Michael Abraham

Farewell old mate will always remember our days in c.m.f. C company fond memories .thank you for your hard and long service with our association well done soldier rest easy will always be remembered by many

Ian Carpenter



Letters to the Editor. About Rod.

Morning David and thank you.

What very sad news and you must feel devastated at the passing of Rod - such a valued friend with whom you have shared so much.

Rod was much loved and respected and he stood tall in the community, giving his all to everything he was involved in and approached his illness the same way I think.

This day has been coming but it doesn't make it any easier for his family and those he held dear. His struggle is now over and he has peace.

Warm regards

Lorraine Sanderson

David

This is sad news indeed .

Your words are a wonderful tribute to Rod and his energy continues on in the many organisations he helped to shape.

Look after yourself and remember the good times we all had with him.

Kind regards

Peter (CP) Moore
Chair Regimental Council

Sorry to hear of Rod's passing David, but thanks for a heartfelt summary mate, very well done, cheers from the Gunners,

Geoff Laurie

Hi David

Another great guy leaves us. Always ready to help. RIP

Joe Vella

Hi David,

I was very sorry to hear the news of Rod's passing. I only knew Rod from a distance but whenever we met up at RSARA functions he would walk up and shake hands and share a few words. We have lost a good man.

Regards,

Chris Acton

A real good bloke and many ways, he will be sadly missed.

I grieve for your loss David.

Tex Ranger

Unhappy news and will be sadly missed. Rod was my mentor when I first joined this newsletter association, my condolences to his family and friends

Erik Buttars



Letters to the Editor. About Rod.

Dear David,

I am deeply saddened to hear the news of Rod's passing - please pass on my condolences to Narelle and the rest of the family

I was very fortunate to have been able to work closely with Rod over my time as Commanding Officer, and immensely grateful for his support and friendship to me and the Battalion.

Late last year it was an honour to be involved with the presentation of the inaugural "Rod Beames Perpetual Shield" (although the credit for creation of this shield lies with you David).

As you know, Rod was moved to tears when we announced and presented the shield, and I am very grateful he was able to see it unveiled.

Rod will be sorely missed, but through the memories of all those who knew him and the ongoing presentation of the Perpetual Shield he will never be forgotten by the Battalion he loved.

We have lost a wonderful mate, a man of great character, and one of the greatest supporters of the RSAR Association and the Battalion.

Vale.

Sam Benveniste

Dave,

Sorry to hear about the passing of Rod.

RIP Digger.

Regards,

Lex Brown

Vale SGT Beames, an exceptional human. I have done 3 postings as a Recruit Instructor in the RAAF and was mentored by some exceptional instructors. The assistance and guidance received from Rod at Hampstead puts him up there with the greats in my eyes. I particularly loved his Amway floor polish starch recipe. RIP Digger.

Andrew Barra

Thank you Rod for your many years of selfless service to the nation, your community and especially to the 10th/27th Battalion. You were always there to lend a helping hand whenever anyone called for one and now finally Cheryl has you all to herself. RIP Rod.

Trent Burnard

RIP to a great man. His passion and drive has made the association and Battalion relationships is as it is today. My condolences to his family, friends and the Battalion

Benjamin Read

Vale Rod. You will be missed

Malcolm Haynes

Please pass on my condolences to friends and family with the passing of Rod, as I'm currently on exercise Southern Tiger.

Grace and peace,

Chaplain Stephen Albrecht



Letters to the Editor. About Rod.

Hi David

What a brilliant piece you have written on Rod Beames. You have captured the very essence of the man and your friendship. A life well lived.

I only met Rod a couple of times on our visits to Adelaide and the great Association dinners we attended, but after reading your very poignant Vale, I felt that I had known him for years.

Cheers

Phil Brookes QLD

Hi Dave,

Very sad news about Rod, I remember him well from my Telecom/Telstra days.

Regards

Glenn Domanski WA

Good afternoon David,

I have just received your sad news, and I would like to offer my condolences to Rod's nearest and dearest.

Regards

Colin Phillips

David,

Thank you for sharing.

A good man and great servant to the Regiment and Association.

He will be fondly remembered.

Best wishes,

Robin Marlin

Dave.

I am extremely sorry to hear the news of Rod's demise. My thoughts and prayers are with you. R.I.P. Rod.

Jim Parsonage

Dear David

Thank you.

Your notification must have been a difficult task. Many will miss the quite remarkable Sergeant Beames.

Kind regards

Hank Ramm



Letters to the Editor. About Rod.

Good morning David,

I am sorry to hear of Rod's passing last week. I remember him well from my REG and RES time at 10/27 RSAR, AUR and HQ 9 Bde over the past decade.

Thank you for taking on the difficult job to inform the wider-Association. Thank you also for reminding us all of Rod's dedicated service to the Army and the South Australian community over many decades (several generations).

Yours sincerely,

James Kmet

Hi David,

Extremely saddened by this news.

Heartfelt condolences to you and all his other mates and Family.

I spent much of my time in many of the same places as Rod, particularly whilst at 43RSAR RTB and during my time at HQ9TF Torrens Training Depot as well as Hampstead Barracks, El Alamein and Murray Bridge.

We shared common views of those times in the various Sgts Mess locations of these establishments.

It is a pity and much to my loss that I left Adelaide so many years ago and have not been able to keep close contact with those such as Rod who were an integral part of my years in the CMF/Reserve.

The battle is over – may he rest in peace.

Kindest Regards,

Stephen G J Rado

Thankyou for letting me know David. A sad day. Please extend my sincere condolences to the family I have passed the information on to the Regimental Council and AMOSA.

Regards,

Neil Wilson

Patron RSAR Association Inc

David, a heartfelt email and very well written tribute to great bloke. Thank you.

For your situational awareness, the Battalion is working with his family regarding support for his funeral.

Regards

Aaron Jackson

CO 10th/27th Battalion RSAR

The RSAR Association and the Regiment have lost a great supporter. I have lost a great mate. Farewell old friend, you are truly missed.

David Laing

Secretary RSAR Association Inc





Life Members		Members	A - M	Members	N - Z
Acton	Chris	Abel	Colin	New	Anthony
Beckett	David	Abraham	Michael	Normandale	Zachary
Benveniste	Sam	Albrecht	Stephen	Oakley	Andrew
Blackmore	Bill	Allison	Robert	O'Daly	Ryan
Boscence	Bob	Angus	Sebastian	Orrock	Alan
Brookes	Phil	Attenborough	Geoff	Parslow	Howard
Burnard	Trent	Baker	Craig	Parsonage	James
Burns	Wayne	Bampton	Michael	Pascoe	Michael
Carnachan	Ian	Barry-Orcales	Dianeever	Payne	Bob
Carpenter	Ian	Beames	Paul	Pearce	Philip
Cotton	Bob	Bedford	Travis	Pexton	Timothy
Dart	John	Bennett	Christian	Phillips	Colin Rex
Davey	Trevor	Blondell	Mark	Portakiewicz	Anthony
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Gaborit	Lyndon	Brophy	Ryan	Powell	Gary
Goodwin	Graham	Brown	Bruce	Preece	Brian
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Hawking	Don	Burton	Ray	Rado	Steven
Haynes	Malcolm	Buttars	Erik	Ramm	Hank
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Hogan	Mark	Cartwright	Harrison	Rijken	Paul
Hook	Alan	Chamberlain	David	Robertson	James
Hope	David	Cooke	Nat	Sailes	Adrian
Horseman	Ian	Cram	Kevin	Sanders	Ashley
Hudson	Mick	Dale	Andy	Sandhu	Zorawar
Jackson	Aaron	Demosani	Tony	Sando	Timothy
James	Grant	Dennis	Emily	Schuh	Simon
Jeffrey	Scott	Dew	Trevor	Scott	Rhys
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Johnson	Barry	Donald	Thomas	Shephard	Daniel
Klopf	Alex	Duncan	Coen	Skapin	Corey
Laing	David	Dunn	Bob	Slater	Ian
Lakin	Bruce	Dunn	Peter	Smith	Ryan
Marlin	Robin	Eva	Keith	Sniedze	Julie
Meredith	Mike	Ewens	Mimi	Tasker	David
Miller	Nick	Faquiri	Reshad	Tattersall	Geoff
Moore	Peter	Faunt	Joshua	Thomas	David
Moore	Terry	Flynn	Adrian	Thomas	Travis
Moore	Thomas	Fortune	Nigel	Thomson	Jim
Paul	John	Foy	Erin	Threlfall	Kev
Pollard	Barry	Gatley	Graham	Tran	Andy
Richter	Sean	Genovese	John	Treguis	Izaak
Salamon	Piotr	Ghanem	Paul	Trezise	George
Stewart	Robin	Gibson	Lindsay	Tsoulakis	Christos
Stewien	Peter	Gill	Graham	Tucker	Belinda
Vella	Joe	Gordon	Frank	Tucker	Paul
Waters	Ian	Groffen	Renee	Turner	Garry
Watters	Matthew	Hanson	Reece	Vozelj	Blaz
Westover	Rhys	Harrington	Malcolm	Weepers	Nicole
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		Mulroney	Dennis		

