



September
2023

"Sitrep, Over!"

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC

Patron Major General Neil Wilson AM RFD

Editor David Laing 0407 791 822

2023 Annual General Meeting

The 2023 Annual General Meeting on Sunday 6th August at the Avoca Hotel was a great success, with more than 50 members and their wives and partners joining for some good camaraderie, whilst keeping the Association going into the future.

The one change to the committee was the retirement of President Rodney Beames due to ongoing poor health. A vacancy now exists for that position, and anyone who feels they could do the Association justice is asked to contact the Secretary.

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Band Liaison	David Portakiewicz
Regimental Padre	Paul Ghanem

Our hosts at the Avoca Hotel once again excelled themselves by providing a great venue and meeting room, brilliant service and really good food.

We always need more interaction into the Committee, so if you're interested in joining please contact any of the committee members in the first instance.

My Diet Progress

Day 12 without
chocolate.
Lost hearing in
my left eye.

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EDITORIAL

Thanks to our brilliant National Mail Carrier Australia Post, we have had to raise the cost of postage for our merchandise as of now, and we apologise sincerely. We were going to issue Cartier Watches and Overseas Holidays to each member, but apparently they've all been used up by previous Aussie Post board members! When ordering merchandise, please read the conditions clearly, and if you live in the Adelaide Metro area we may be able to deliver your goods for free, depending on where you live!

Thanks to those members who attended the AGM at the Avoca Hotel this year. The day was soured by sad news from our President Rod Beames that he was standing down due to returning serious health problems. Some of the pics are on Pages 6, 7 & 8, and others are on our Facebook page. The Minutes will be posted on our website in the very near future.

Something that always makes my blood boil is when uninformed, mostly immature folk get onto (anti) social media and start telling the world how much they hate the Armed Forces of their own country, just because they see proud soldiers marching in formation, escorting their colours and guidons to a new home. Comments like ".....Adelaide looks like North Korea today..." and ".....we don't need the Army flexing its muscles here...." dominated some News services, and some commentators took pleasure in broadcasting them. "Am I the only person who finds this terrifying?" wrote *Saturday Paper* journalist Claire Connelly. "Lovely bit of casually-encountered weekend trauma for anyone who's ever been brutalised by authority. Nice," said author Maxine Beneba Clarke. They refer to the relocation of the Colours and Guidons of 1 Armoured Regiment, which were recently transferred from Darwin to St Peters Cathedral in North Adelaide. The Colours and Guidons were being bought to the home of 1 AR, which have made Adelaide their home since 2022. A short parade from the City Bridge up King William St to the Cathedral, escorted by two Abrams tanks and two ASLAV Light Armoured Vehicles. Four vehicles and 200 soldiers marched about 400 metres up King William Street and held up traffic for about 10 minutes. There were some onlookers who clapped and smiled as the parade moved past, and that was heartening to see, but those who take pleasure in mocking our soldiers need to understand that the forebears of those soldiers fought so that you all have the right of free speech, as well as freedom itself. These same people are the first to bleat like lost sheep and call on the man with the gun to protect them when the enemy is at the gate! WAKE UP TO YOURSELVES! This isn't Kansas anymore Toto! (Story on Page 8 & 9. Thanks to David Mercer OAM from SAMRA for some of the details and photos) Our Padre has a more understanding view. See Page 17.

David Laing

0407 791 822



Contact Us

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christianbennett95@gmail.com

CMF Observers - Vietnam

by Major Don Hawking OAM RFD (Retd)

FINAL



Operations with B Company 7 RAR

My return to Nui Dat next morning was to be very brief as I had been allocated to B Coy who were about to leave that afternoon to conduct a Company operation which was to take us through the Long Tan area where D Coy 6 RAR had fought a ferocious action against huge odds in 1966. MAJ Greg Warland was the OC and he attached me to 6 Platoon which was commanded by LT George Wenhlowskyj. George was a National Service officer who had extended in order to serve in Vietnam and he was to be awarded the Military Cross later in the tour in recognition of his leadership, professionalism and courage. He struck me as a very switched on young man who led literally from the front, as he moved right up with his forward scout. The Platoon was short of men due to the usual reasons of casualties, leave, sickness or courses and so I was once again slotted in as a rifleman.

Relying on my Canungra experience, I was able to pack the essentials for the four to five days that we would be out in the field. I had obtained some extra water bottles so organised my personal gear plus rations, bandolier of 20 loaded M16 magazines, two M26 grenades, minimal sleeping gear, extra water, plus 100 round belt for the M60 and I was ready to roll. George's boys also organised me with some C3 plastic explosive, a small portion of which was ideal to heat a very quick brew. It was a very stable explosive until you added a detonator at which point it would lift your house off its foundations.



We were picked up by M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers of B Squadron 3 Cavalry Regiment who were to carry us to our drop off point which was in the vicinity of Nui Nhon along Route 23 on the road to Xuyen Moc. George explained that the Platoon were to move in an arc to the North West and to cross the Suoi Lo O Nho river before moving West to the rubber near Long Tan. At first the going was through abandoned paddy fields and I felt somewhat vulnerable being out in the open, however I soon had my fill of close country which was stiflingly hot and contained its regulation number of leaches, green tree ants and other assorted bities.

The country was very thick in parts with some solid stands of bamboo in which in some places, the VC had dug spider holes which very small and impossible to see until the VC opened fire from them. I noted that the scouts were using hand secateurs to clear a way through and this seemed to me to be a very practical idea as the noise level made when clearing with machetes was considerable. I learned later that

CMF Observers - Vietnam

the secateurs had been purchased through Regimental Funds as the requests by the Battalion to obtain stocks through the Army system had been refused by Canberra.

Once again I was impressed by the professionalism of the soldiers and they seemed to operate pretty much by the Infantry Manual which had, after all, been written out of the solid experience of units such as this Battalion. The Platoon knew this area well, having operated in the vicinity on several occasions; there was also plenty of indications that the VC were also familiar with the area. Our first overnight harbour was a welcome break for me as my shoulder was still a problem and I had also found the humidity very trying having been in the middle of an Adelaide winter only one week earlier.

On the second night I was treated to an awesome display of nature's power when a violent electrical storm hit us with incredible thunder, lightning and a tropical downpour. I lay under my hootchie and hoped that it wouldn't collapse, not that I could have got any wetter!

The patrol was relatively uneventful except for an unexplained burst of automatic gunfire up front when we were in heavy bamboo which sent everyone to ground, and we ultimately made our way into the Long Tan area where we had arranged to be picked up again by APCs. It was quite eerie moving towards the RV through the rubber as the trees were planted in regular rows and whichever way I looked, the view was of long straight fire lanes. Long Tan was the site of a famous battle between Australian soldiers and the enemy in 1966. 17 Australians and 245 enemy were killed in that battle and I was glad that we did not stay overnight in that place, as it seemed to me to be full of ghosts.



After returning to Nui Dat I was advised that our group was scheduled to leave in a short time to go down to Vung Tau and inspect the Logistic Support Group which supplied the Task Force. I went round to say goodbye to LT George and his boys and found them in a state of high excitement. They told me to grab my gear and come with them as the Int people had a strong tip that there was a VC paymaster in the area known as the Bone, which was close to where we had just been and he was reputed to be carrying some 2 Million piastres to pay the VC. I declined with thanks and told them to 'spend my share' as I was going to ALSG to continue my education. Once again, the arrangements were very well organised and we were given a very sound insight to the facilities and function of ALSG.

Conclusion.

The Regular units to which we were attached were highly professional and very welcoming. It is fair to say that we were all very privileged to represent our units and to wear the Unit lanyards overseas on Active Service for the first time since WW2, and we were very proud to have served with the Australian Forces in Vietnam.

The Observer programme was very worthwhile in that it gave a number of CMF Officers exposure to and

CMF Observers - Vietnam

experience of, operational service, however the term of two to three weeks was not long enough, as by the time one acclimatised to the weather and began to get to know the ropes, it was time to go home.

The descriptive of "Vietnam Veteran" does not generally sit comfortably with most of our group since our time in Country was limited, however we have been universally welcomed by Veteran individuals and groups, and this has contrasted markedly with the bitter bureaucratic objection and rejection of any proposals for recognition of our service. The struggle for recognition of our service was a long and at times, very acrimonious one.



Along the way, I was fortunate to meet up with Michael Prowse of the HMAS Sydney Association and together we eventually succeeded in obtaining recognition of our service by the award of the VL&S medal and later the Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 with a bar Vietnam. In all, some 5000 additional servicemen and women who were previously deemed ineligible under the old rules, formed the military group of the estimated 20,000 individuals who became eligible for the VL&S medal.

About the Author

Major Don Hawking was called up for National Service with 20 NS Battalion, Watsonia in 1957 and completed his CMF obligation with 59th Infantry Battalion. He re-enlisted in the CMF, 5th Battalion Royal Victoria Regiment in 1963 and commenced officer training in 1965. In 1966 his civilian work saw him transferred to Tasmania and also commissioned into the 1st Battalion Royal Tasmania Regiment. In 1970 he was selected for CMF Observer Familiarisation South Vietnam and attached to 7 RAR. Between 1969 and 1986 he served with 10 Royal South Australia Regiment and the Command Staff Training Unit. He was appointed Regimental Colonel 10/27 RSAR from 1999 to 2003 and is a valued Life Member of the RSAR Association.

By Major Donald Hawking OAM RFD (Retd)

[Editors Note: Don's article is the first of a few from RSAR Association members who also served in South Vietnam, and carries on next month with some memories from our late member Major Don Field.](#)

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



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The members carried out a Loyal Toast to recently departed Fallen Comrades LTCOL Geoff Chittleborough, the last CO of 43 Bn RSAR, LTCOL Max Sanderson, the last CO of 27 Bn RSAR, and Captain Lee Rossetti from 10 RSAR Broken Hill who died suddenly this year.

The members were proud to be joined by our Patron Major General Neil Wilson, the Commanding Officer of 10th/27th Battalion RSAR Lieutenant Colonel Sam Benveniste in his final year as CO, and Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Scott Hannan and his wife Kristin.

The meeting heard reports from all office bearers, including a heartening summary from Padre Chaplain Paul Ghanem and his efforts to recruit serving soldiers into the Association.

The Avoca Hotel once again excelled themselves with their venue, service and fine food and beverages.

1 Armoured Regt relocates their Colours and Guidons



Members from the 1st Armoured Regiment - Australian Army marched from the City Bridge to St Peter's Cathedral in Adelaide to complete the relocation of the regiment's Guidon and first Standard from Lone Pine Chapel at Robertson Barracks in the Northern Territory.

In 2022, the 1st Armoured Regiment transferred from the 1st Brigade - Australian Army in Darwin to the 9th Brigade in Adelaide. The relocation of the Guidon and first Standard enables the regiment's current and former serving members to be physically closer to these sacred devices and reflect on their history.

The service was officiated by a number of Padres of various faiths, including our own Padre Captain Paul Ghanem, and former Battalion Padre Derek Crozer. (See Photo at Left)

The service was preceded by a short march of the Regiment Colours and Guidons, escorted by soldiers from the Regiment and two Abrams Main Battle Tanks and two ASLAV Light Armoured Vehicles.



The event is largely ceremonial, but follows ancient military traditions where the Colours are the "heart" of a Regiment and are to be protected at all costs. Colours were previously carried into battle and formed the central point from which all soldiers rallied during the battle. It is believed the last time Colours were carried into Battle was with the Kings Regiment of Foot at Laing's Nek in the South African Zulu Wars. Since then Colours have been placed into "Gods' care at Cathedrals and the like, except when carried on Ceremonial Parades.

10th/27th Battalion RSAR exercises its right to the Freedom of the City of Adelaide on 12th August 2023. All welcome to support our soldiers.



1 Armoured Regt relocates their Colours and Guidons



From Top Left
Clockwise: ASLAVs
from 1 AR lead the
marching soldiers.

St Peter's Cathedral.

Abrams Main Battle
Tanks at the front of
the Parade.

Members of SAMRA
including David
Mercer OAM who
provided the photos
on this page.

The Colours and
Guidons enter the
Cathedral

Colour Sergeant Bournes' Humour



The officer said, "You drinking?"
I said, "You buying?" We just
laughed and laughed....I need
bail money now.

**Laughing at
your mistakes can
lengthen your life.
Laughing at your
wife's mistakes
can shorten it.**

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**If common
sense was lard,
most people
wouldn't be able
to grease a pan.**

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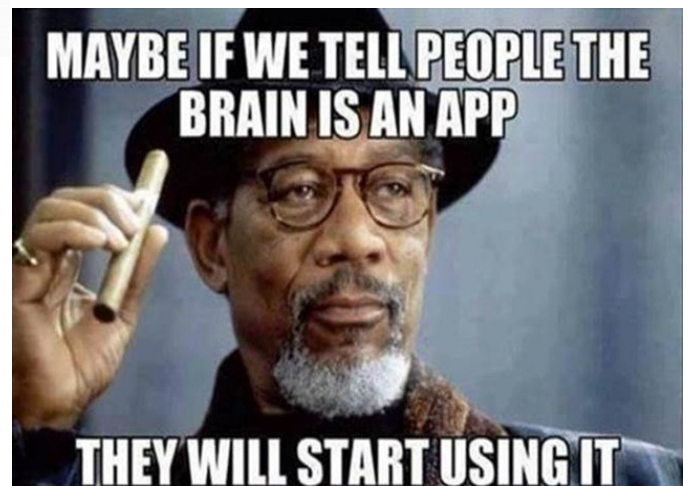
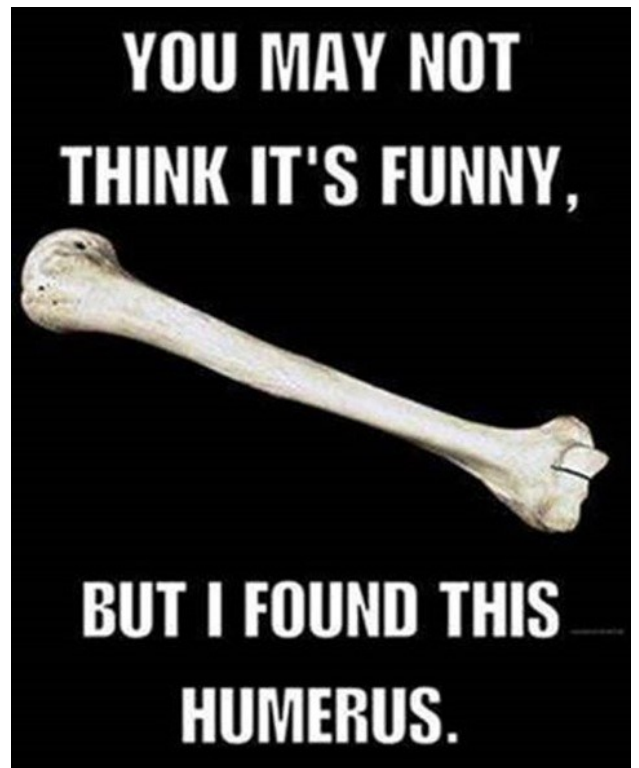
**SOMETIMES YOU MEET
SOMEONE AND YOU
KNOW FROM THE
FIRST MOMENT THAT
YOU WANT TO SPEND
YOUR WHOLE LIFE
WITHOUT THEM.**

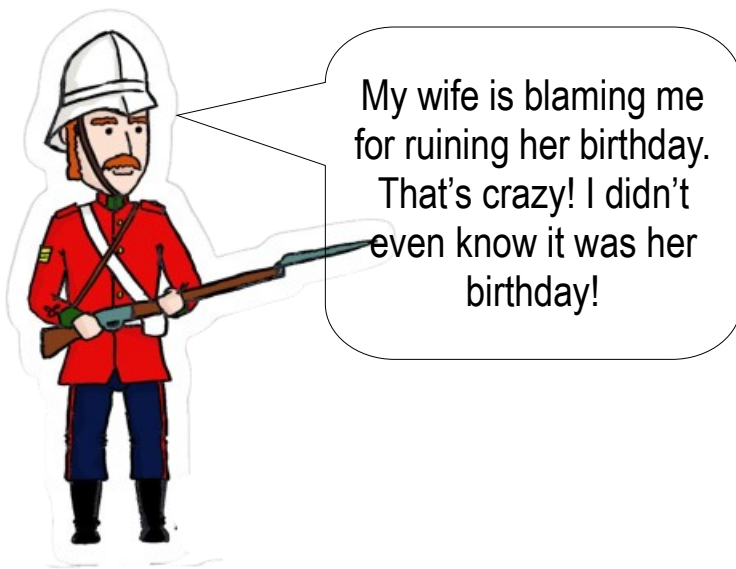
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**I RECENTLY BOUGHT
A TOILET BRUSH...**

**LONG STORY SHORT,
I'M GOING BACK TO
TOILET PAPER.**

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Finally settling down to my vegan, gluten free, soy free, antibiotics free, raw, non GMO, organic, fat free, low carb meal!



Your relatives coming to visit if you win the Powerball...



My wife didn't order anything from Amazon yesterday so the UPS guy knocked on our door to see if we're okay.

As I have grown older, I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but pissing everyone off is a piece of cake.

**DON'T MISS
THIS!**

10th/27th BATTALION BAND

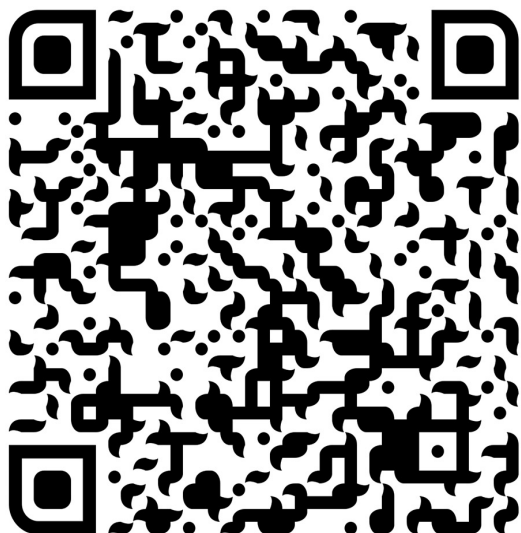
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PADRES PONDERINGS

By Chaplain Paul Ghanem OFM

The site of a regiment marching, accompanied by M1A1 Abrams tanks and Australian Light Armoured Vehicles, from City Bridge on King William Road to St Peter's Anglican Cathedral is, for most South Australians, a once in a life time event. This is precisely what took place on Saturday morning 8 July.

Last year, the 1st Armoured Regiment transferred from the 1st Brigade to the 9th Brigade in Adelaide. In the process the 3rd/9th Light Horse was positioned to sit within 1ARMD. It was for this reason that a service to mark the relocation of the 1st Armoured Regiment's Guidon (colours) and Standard from Lone Pine Chapel, Robertson Barracks, Northern Territory to their new home took place.

The old colours are never destroyed. They remain on display in a chosen place of suitable honour. What they stand for is not forgotten, kept in plain sight.

For more than 121 years, St Peters Cathedral has been a safe resting place for a number of Guidons, Standards, Colours and Banners – all distinctive forms of Honourable Insignia that are the symbol of the spirit of a regiment, for on them are borne the battle honours and badges granted to the unit in commemoration of gallant deeds performed by members of the unit from the time their unit was raised. Likewise, St Francis Xavier Catholic Cathedral is also the resting place of such sacred objects.

Did you know that the insignia are not disposed of or destroyed or even repaired when their appearance has deteriorated beyond recognition? They are meant to be left to turn to dust as do the bodies of the fallen soldiers who served them.

"The relocation of the Guidon and the first Standard enables the regiment's current and former serving members to be physically closer to these sacred devices and reflect on their history," the 9th Brigade wrote on Facebook.

The presence of marching troops and tanks (and a handful of chaplains) caused a few raised eyebrows and a small handful of negative comments. Rather than being upset I see their comments as an opportunity to educate, to teach and to inform. For it is only knowledge that can dissipate ignorance.

Why be knowledgeable? The only answer can be; Lest We Forget.

The Padre

... any day, any time

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