



# HOLDFAST

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION INC

## OPERATION ENOGGERA BEAUCOUP TUNNELS

Aimed at searching Long Phuoc village, the operation uncovered scores of bunkers and over 30 tunnels, including several multi-level systems. Our cover shows Sapper Barry Hartford, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron as he searches one of the longer tunnels

# Nostalgia Pages



Pages of great pics from the past to amaze and amuse. Contributions welcome. Send your favourite Vietnam photos to: Jim Marett 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142.

Or by email to:

[tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au](mailto:tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au)



## Binh Ba bagman

Sandbags were useful items in Vietnam. Filled, they lined our bunkers and tent walls to protect against incoming rounds. They were used to drop mail and rations to us from helicopters when there was no landing zone. Few saw them as a fashion item, but this ARVN soldier has created a neat hat for himself. The hat would be waterproof, but the dark woven plastic material would absorb enough heat to cook your brain.



## 1 Troop lads on the hunt

It's 1967 in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam and members of 1 Troop 1st Field Squadron move into position before searching a village. Centre of photo is Captain Graham Moon, Troop Commander of 1 Troop. The men found concealed tunnels and bunkers from which they extracted weapons, documents and caches of food. Photo by Neil Innes.

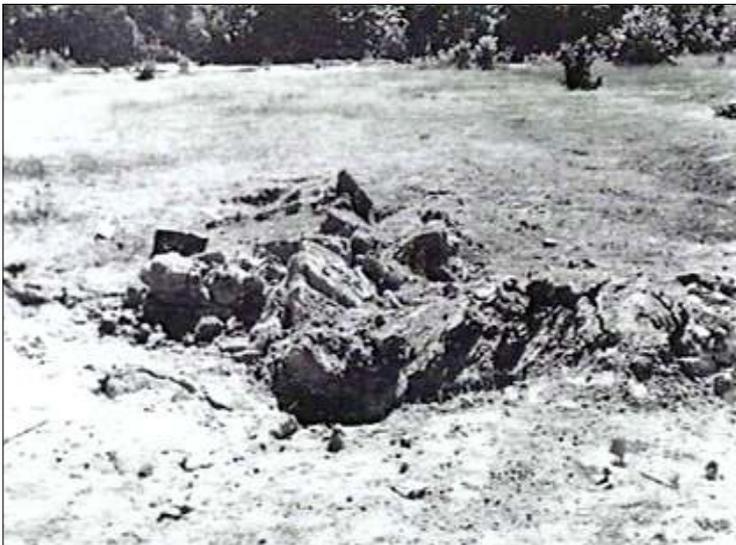
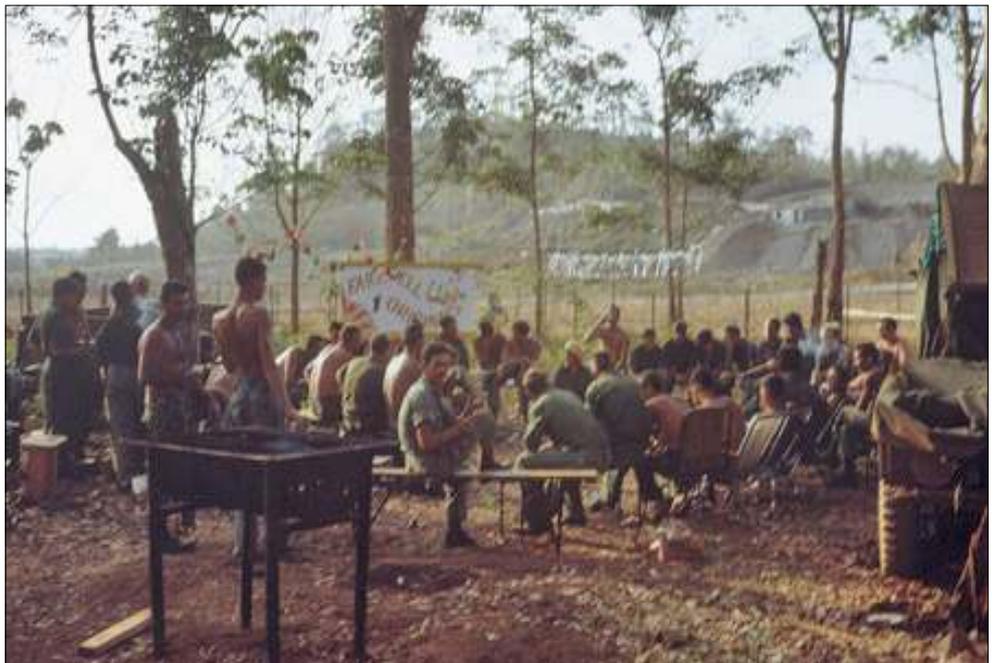


## “Anybody in there?”

Blowing up the enemy's tunnels was always a bit “hit and miss” when deciding on how much explosives to use. The width and height of the tunnels and how deep underground they were all had to be taken into account. Here in 1967 Sergeant Alan West of 1 Field Squadron takes a cautious look at what remains of a Viet Cong tunnel after he and several other Tunnel Rats blew it with tons of TNT. “When in doubt, add more bang,” seemed to be the best philosophy.

## Heading Home

Members of 1 Troop, 1st Field Squadron arrived in Vietnam as a whole unit, rather than the continual replacement scheme which operated later. Within the Troop were many from the first intake of National Servicemen. As the end of their two year National Service stint approached they had to depart Vietnam en masse. Here their mates in 1 Troop give them a farewell barbecue. The sign in the background says "Farewell Originals". Some of the men signed on to extend their tour and time in the Army.



## "Fire in the hole"

This disturbed earth is evidence of the destroyed Viet Cong tunnels below. The first Viet Cong tunnels experienced by Australian troops were found by 3 Field troop led by Captain Sandy MacGregor. Located in the Ho Bo Woods area, these tunnels today are known as the Cu Chi Tunnels and are a major tourist attraction in Vietnam. The lads of 3 Field Troop explored about 700 metres underground plus many offshoots before having to move on due to US operational demands. Before leaving however, they tested various methods of demolishing the tunnels. Not surprisingly, explosives, and plenty of them proved to be the best method of destruction.

## "We'll come back and get it after the wet season"

A 53 Ton Centurion Tank falls victim to the wet season and the notoriously boggy ground in the Long Greens at the base of the Long Hai hills. Superb support in bunker assaults, the Centurions proved their worth in Vietnam and won many friends amongst Infantry and Engineers who were privileged to witness them in assaults against heavily fortified enemy bunker systems. But in the wet season It was important to steer around the puddles.



## Who said the war never reached Vung Tau!



As far as we were concerned, Vung Tau was famous for great bars, cheap booze, bad women and big hangovers. Strolling the streets in your civvies on the hunt for some or all of the above, the last thing you'd ever think of was the war actually reaching this place. Hold your breath folks - it did happen! On 21 March 1969 at

about 9am in the morning (timed, we guess, for when all the lads would be back on base from their "all nighters"), six Viet Cong 122mm rockets hit the Vung Tau military airfield. Above we see a burning fuel tank in the bulk storage area some thirty minutes after the enemy attack. 300,000 gallons of fuel were lost in the

blaze. Helicopters and a hangar can be seen in the foreground. A Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft, just above the skyline, is on a landing approach. The rockets were fired from Long Son Island, ten km to the north west. We believe this incident has been cited as the primary cause of PTSD in 18,954 pension claims.

### "Polish my Cadillac while I grab a beer"



Occasionally Sapper Mini-Teams were attached to these ARVN operated APCs. If we'd known these vehicles were Cadillacs we might have paid more attention. The "Cadillac Gage Commando" was a 4x4 amphibious armoured personnel carrier. The armour consisted of high hardness alloy steel called Cadaloy, which protected against projectiles up to 7.62 x 51 mm. The vehicle was available in turret and open-top models. This .50 caliber machine gun version was also fitted with twin .30 caliber guns. Its armour pushed its weight over 7 tons, making rear axle failure caused by the extreme weight a problem.

### What's in a name?

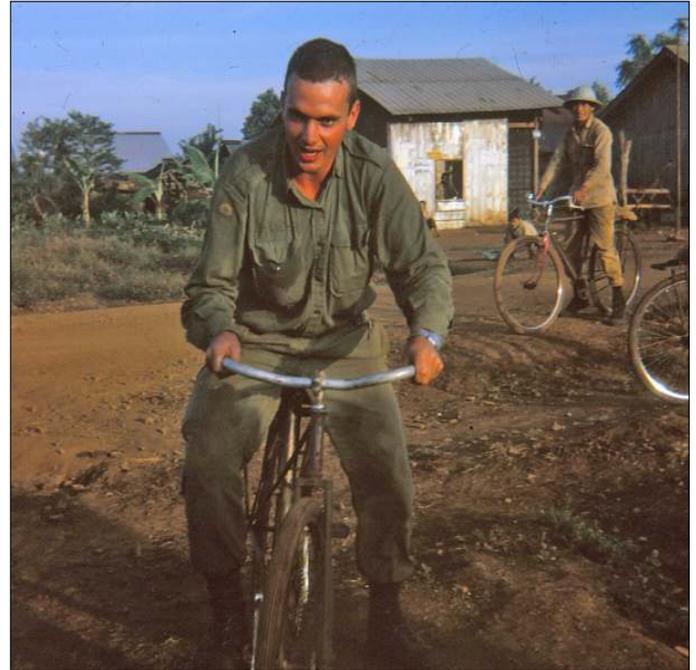


Did the Army really post people according to their names? Above, handing out food to the locals at Binh Ba is 1ATF Catering Officer Lt. Ross Tucker. The CO of 5RAR on their first tour was Lt. Col. J. Warr. And Captain Michael Battle served with 5RAR on their second tour.



### Close call but everything's peachy

This amazing incident will be remembered by some of the 2 Troop Tunnel Rats who supported 7RAR on their first tour. In February 1968 during Operation Coburg, Private David Antney of 7RAR discovered a bullet (seen in the spoon above) lodged inside a can of sliced peaches he'd pulled from his pack during a patrol break. It must have lodged there when David's Platoon had ambushed a track the night prior, and they had received enemy fire when the ambush was triggered. The peaches were still edible, but all the nectar had leaked into David's pack. The peaches were probably the most favoured item from the C-Ration range.



### "Which way's Saigon?"

In the village of Ap Suoi Ngai, Bob Ottery, a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop 69/70 looks a bit shaky on bike-riding skills, but he also looks determined. Was he heading for greener pastures - Saigon, or Vung Tau perhaps? And where's his weapon and basic web gear, let alone his pack? Wherever he went, we know he came back because later in his tour Bob entered a minefield just on nightfall to retrieve a 7RAR casualty following a fatal mine incident. It was just one of the many acts of bravery amongst the Tunnel Rats which went unrecognised.



### Safe as houses with 3 Troop

In February 1968, Captain Viv Morgan, Troop Commander of 3 Troop 1 Field Squadron speaks with a Vietnamese interpreter in Trang Bom village where more than 100 houses were destroyed after an attack by the Viet Cong during Operation Coburg. A Combat Engineer Team from 3 Troop helped clear the houses of unexploded bombs and booby traps.



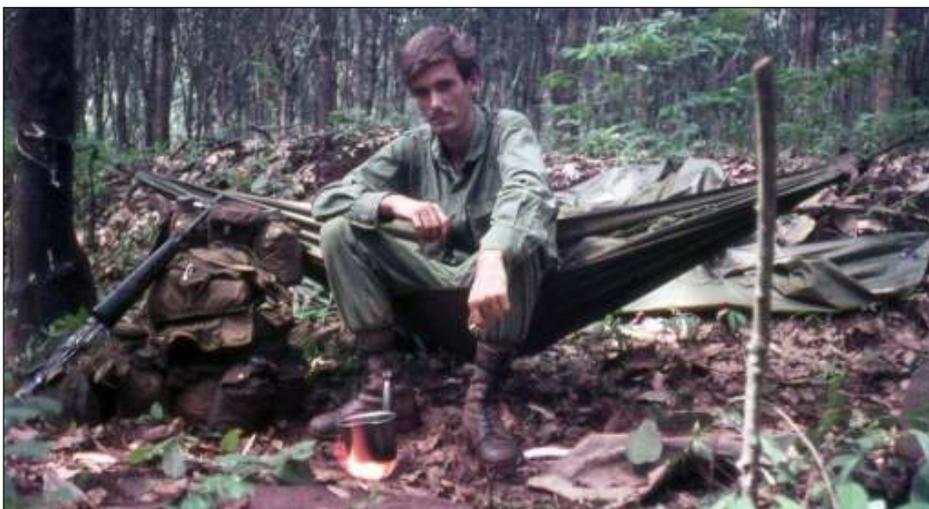
### Sapper punch-up

In November 1970 a six man boxing team sponsored by the Sportsman's Appeal spent four days at Nui Dat giving exhibition and competitive bouts with soldiers of the Task Force. Here professional boxer, Fred Holt (right) avoids a left jab from 1 Field Squadron's Sapper Barry Gibson. Well done Bazza.



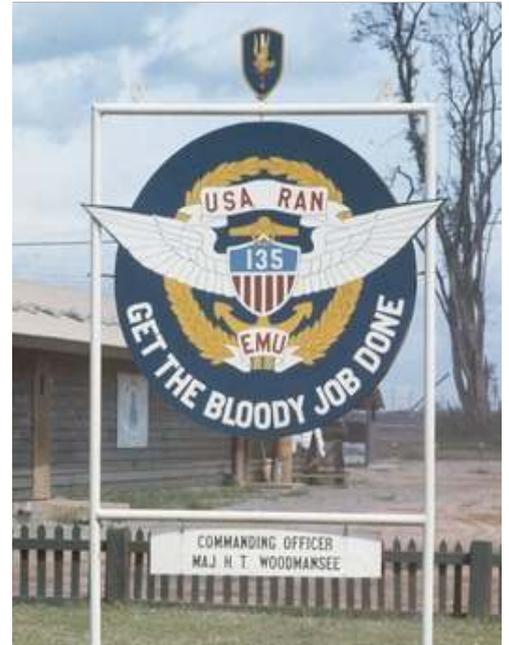
## Ouch! - Heading into the unknown

In October 1969 between Thai Thien and Song Thi Vai this APC, call sign "One Two" of B Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment took an unexpected dive into a deep B-52 bomb crater. If there was a Sapper Mini-Team sitting on top they'd still be flying through the air - and still be cursing the "#&\*% turret heads".



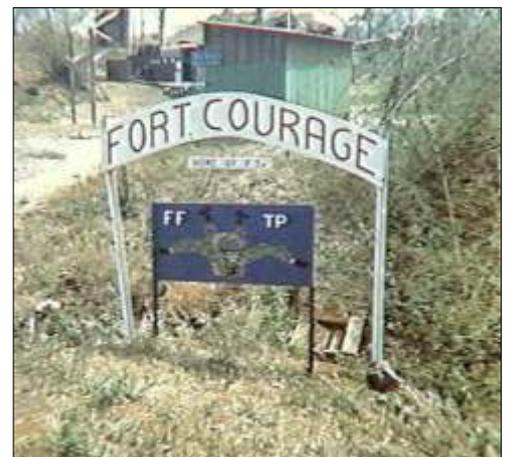
## A cup of tea and a lie down

Sapper Paul Taylor, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Troop 1 Field Squadron in 1971 is out bush with the Grunts and has all the comforts of home. He has a hammock which helps keep him dry and minimises bug invasions. At his feet a chunk of C4 plastic explosive burns intensely as it heats an instant brew for him in about 15 seconds. Paradise.



## Sign of Aussie influence

Sign outside a building at Bearcat Base. Royal Australian Navy helicopters flew with the US 135th Assault Helicopter Company, forming an 'experimental military unit', with the nickname EMU. Based originally at Vung Tau, in November 1968 the unit moved to Bearcat Base, north east of Saigon. Throughout their service in Vietnam members of the unit provided tactical airlift and gunship support for Australian and allied ground forces.



## Truth in advertising

Not all advertising is gospel, but you could bet your life on this one. This sign was on SAS Hill at the entrance to one of the SAS Troop's lines. We affectionately referred to the SAS lads as "Super Grunts", and they certainly were.



### Staying on the safe side

The "Friendly Bar" in Vung Tau certainly lived up to its name, and was one of the most popular bars amongst Aussies on leave and looking for a little "cultural exchange". Sapper Grahame Cook a Tunnel Rat with 1 Troop in 66/67 swears he never, ever set foot in the place. Here we see Grahame outside the bar, and clearly determined not to enter the premises. Photos, never lie.



### The Sappers dig deep

On 5 January 1969 Capt. George Widdison, 1st Field Squadron's Roman Catholic Army Chaplain visits a school in Saigon to hand over \$350 donated by the Sappers. Beside Capt. Widdison is Jenny Leak from South Australia with Vietnamese girl, Thanh Mau, sitting on her lap. Jenny was a volunteer worker with the Australian Council of Churches Vietnam Christian School Programme.



### FAC plane goes down

Just eight days into his tour, while in a Mini-Team attached to tanks, Sapper Jim Marett (2 Troop 69/70) was watching a FAC plane direct naval gunfire onto the Long Hai hills. Suddenly the plane stopped dead in the air, breaking into pieces which slowly floated to the ground, leaving a perfect smoke-ring where the plane had been. Initial theories suggested it had been hit by an enemy RPG, but it was later generally agreed that it had been hit by the very US naval gunfire it was directing. It was June 19th 1969 and both on board were killed - the Pilot, Capt. James Hoag USAF and the observer, 1Lt George Dover USMC. Australian tanks and APCs rushed to the scene and recovered the bodies and part of the wreckage (above).



### "Please don't call"

While attached to the Infantry, catching a quick nap during a break on patrol was an art form. Unless you learnt the art, you'd quickly find yourself fatigued. It was even tougher for the radio operator because he still had to listen to his radios - on low volume for obvious tactical reasons. Here, with the handsets right beside him, a Grunt radio operator (possibly 6RAR) tries to catch a nap.



### Proud Sapper

In 1970 a minefield filled with various types of mines at Xa Bang had to be cleared and 1 Troop were the lucky ones who got the task. Here 1 Troop Tunnel Rat Peter Krause takes a proud stance after making safe and lifting an M-16 antipersonnel mine and an M-14 antipersonnel mine. Well done Sapper!



### Winning the hearts and minds

The kid on the left has probably never recovered from seeing this issue of "Swank" magazine. The kid on the right has drawn a short straw, receiving a rather boring James Bond novel. Taking a rest from road (mine) clearing duties, Cpl Greg Gough (centre), a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron took it upon himself to help educate the young population north of Binh Ba. His lessons were received enthusiastically, due mainly to his teaching aids.



### Tunnel souvenir

Sapper Trevor Shelley (1 Troop 66/67) found this handmade knife in a Tunnel he'd searched at Duc My. The handle is made from a brass shell casing, with the markings: "20mm M21A1 1952 NESCO". The modern ballpoint pen shown for size comparison indicates Trevor managed to bring the knife home to Australia. Sappers searching tunnels often had their souvenirs whisked away from them on the basis they were required for "intelligence purposes". We suspect they ended up on the walls of officers messes all around Nui Dat.



### Booby Trap hits 5RAR

For the Tunnel Rats, finding booby traps was not as common as finding mines, but booby traps could certainly be just as lethal. On October 8th 1966 during Operation Canberra, 5RAR was hit by a booby trap south west of Nui Dat, wounding 11 members of 8 Platoon. Among the wounded was Private David Riik (middle), and Private Doug Bishop (left). They are with their Company Sergeant Major WO2 Ross Wormald, being treated prior to evacuation by helicopter (dustoff). Private Riik was later evacuated to Australia.



### “Can you get 2UE on that”

On 24th October 1966 a Tunnel Rat cautiously peers into a pagoda formed from a cave in the Nui Dinh hills (can anyone name the Sapper for us?).. A Viet Cong woman named To Thi Nau was found hiding in the roof of the cave. She had a US Army radio transceiver which Australian intelligence had been tracking for months. Her capture led to the 'water torture' affair, in which an Australian journalist accused the interrogators of torturing her by forcing water down her throat.



### Out with the lads

Troop Officer with 2 Troop 69/70, Lt. John Hopman at a Fire Support Base in Phuoc Tuy Province. Troop HQ was set up at a FSB for each Operation to give full support to the Infantry Battalion we were working with. Looking decidedly fresh faced, John had come straight out of Duntroon to control forty insane Sappers in Vietnam, most of them his own age or older. He did it well, and is an active member of our association, enjoying our incredible Sapper comradeship.



### Pinning a couple of M-16s

In the 1970 clearing of the minefield at Xa Bang, north of Nui Dat members of 1 Troop 1 Field Squadron lifted hundreds of mines. Here Paul Taylor, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Troop is seen pinning an M-16 mine to make it safe to remove. He is being eagerly watched by his No. 2, "Nino" also of 1 Troop. Nino is holding another M-16 which Paul had pinned earlier. Looks like it was a busy day for these two Sappers.

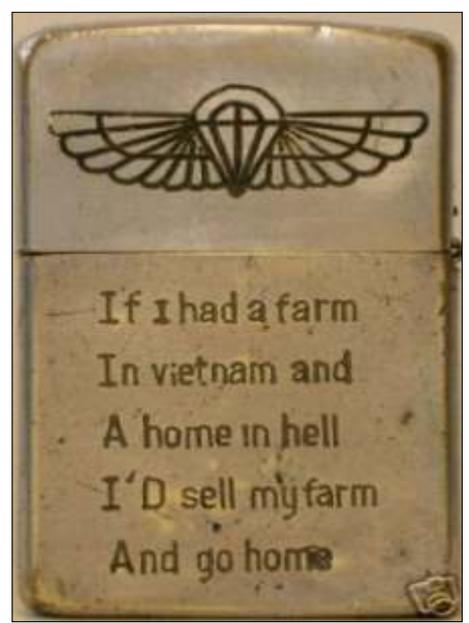
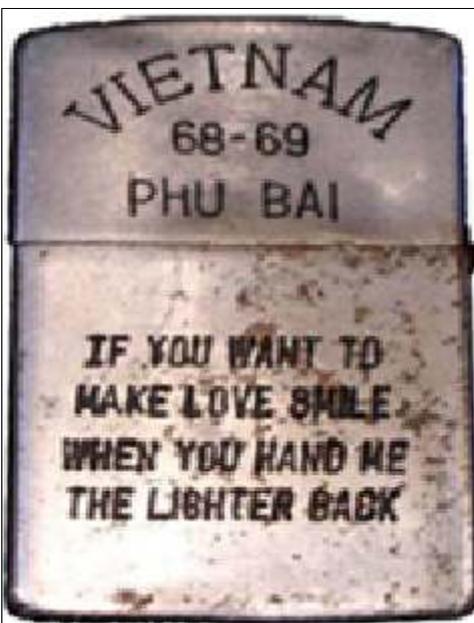
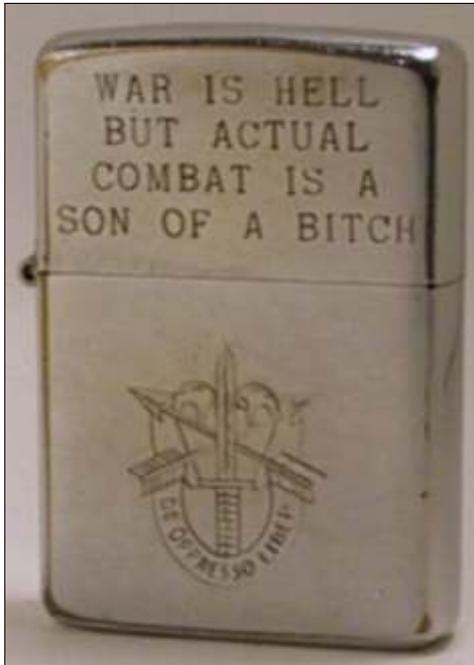


### Bangkok bliss on R&R

Three chilled “long necks”, two warm beauties, and two amorous Tunnel Rats - it's the perfect formula for fun and frivolity in “Bangers”. Sappers “Elroy” Elbourne (left) and “Grumpy” Foster of 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron, managed to score R&R together in Bangkok (wasn't anybody controlling such madness?). Needless to say, the lads had a great time, which is a good thing because “Grumpy” came back to Earth (literally) shortly after his R&R when he was blown off an APC when it hit an anti-tank mine on 23rd March 1970. His No.2 Sapper Kev Connor was blown up with him. Hospitalised for weeks with their wounds, they both refused to be sent home, insisting they rejoin their mates at 2 Troop. It's that unbreakable Sapper spirit.

## Even more Zippo Culture

We really started something when we asked for photos of Vietnam era Zippo lighters. There must be thousands of them out there in shoe boxes and bottom drawers all over Australia. This issue we feature just seven further great examples from the many we received. Again, in these politically correct times, we've had to hold back on publishing several really good, but very raunchy versions of this unique art form. Many of the lads made the point that their old Zippo lighters are still working - and as long as they can buy the flints and the fluid, they'll keep on flicking.





## SAS disappearing act

Members of an SAS patrol load their gear on board an APC before being taken out bush to a drop off point. The Tunnel Rats didn't have the privilege of working directly with the SAS, but our paths did cross whenever SAS lads were dropped off like this by APCs. The Sappers in the Mini-Teams on the APCs were always intrigued by the incredible gear these guys had - and of course by their professionalism. Great stuff. Naturally the SAS didn't disembark stationary APCs like us mere mortals. They did it on the move. At the appointed time and destination, while still traveling at a fair rate, the APC's rear ramp would be lowered, and one by one the SAS boys would "combat roll" off the ramp and within seconds disappear into the scrub. And this was only after two or three dummy drops where the APC would stop and then move on, giving any enemy in the area a false impression of where troops might have been dropped off. Cool.

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## Tony and his “Tankie” mates

*An inspiring story. with a sad ending, about a Sapper who saved some grateful “Tankies” by doing his job well (really well), only to be killed a few months later, dying from wounds received in an enemy RPG attack while attached to APCs with B Squadron 3 Cav*



When 4 Troop, B Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment set out on Operation Chieftain to patrol and ambush in the Duc Thanh district on 3 September 1969, they couldn't have imagined how important their mini-team would be in the weeks ahead, particularly the crew of tank 24 Alpha.

Troop Leader of 4 Troop was 2nd Lt. Chris Sweeney, and the crew of 24 Alpha comprised Crew Commander: Lance Corporal Bob Ferrari, Driver: Trooper Merrick “Moe” Burgess, Gunner: Chris “Java” Jones and Operator: Bob “Winga” Williams.

The Engineer Mini-Team traveling with 4 Troop were two Tunnel Rats from 1 Troop 1 Field Squadron, including Sapper Tony Lisle as the No.2 in the team.

The operation was focussed on the Duc Thanh District, where intelligence sources had indicated that D440 Local Force Battalion intended to make a concerted effort to interdict Route 2 during the coming month. For this reason, ambushes were to be conducted in a number of specific areas adjacent to the road.

In his forthcoming book on the history of the 1st Armoured Regiment in Vietnam, Bruce Cameron MC describes what happened on 8th September, just three days into the operation: “Sapper Tony Lisle typified the mini-team members with whom the tanks were privileged to work - someone who was enthusiastic, responsible and, above all, proud of his work. During Operation Chieftain he was riding on the track guard of the lead tank when suddenly he screamed out and hit the driver on the head (the signal to stop immediately!) The operator, Trooper 'Winga'

Williams, distinctly remembers the urgency in Lisle's voice. His warning had the desired effect. The driver, Trooper 'Moe' Burgess must have pulled both sticks and had both feet on the brake, because he nearly stood the tank on its nose.

Lisle had noticed two things. One turned out to be a bit of wire which connected a pressure switch to about 23kg [501b] of Chicom explosive. The mine was set in old tank tracks which had been reshaped to disguise the fact that a hole had been dug and the explosive buried. A very small piece of the wire had been uncovered by recent rain. The other thing which provoked Lisle's reaction, was the fact that grass on the side of the road had been arranged in an 'X'. This turned out to be a VC mine marker, one which indicated the location of the pressure switch. The alertness and quick reaction



*TOP: Sapper Lisle (nearest the camera) uncovers the mine after tank 24 Alpha reversed back from it. ABOVE: 2nd Lt. Chris Sweeney (with cap) considers what could have been while Sapper Lisle (left) checks out the device.*



of the mini-team member brought the tank to a halt within centimetres of the switch - Burgess had to reverse to enable the explosive to be dug up." The troop of tanks had travelled this road in the opposite direction the day prior and because it was the wet season, the tanks had left distinct track marks on the surface of the dirt road.

Tony Lisle explained to the crew later, how the enemy had dug up the road, planted the mine and switch and then reformed by hand the tank track marks in the mud so that everything appeared normal. This is why in the photographs with this story it appears that a tank had already driven over the mine.

Bruce Cameron picks up the story again at this point: "Many people would have relaxed somewhat, having made such a discovery, not so the mini-team. Twenty metres or so further up the road, was another (as yet undiscovered) mine. When the tank stopped (for the first mine), Lisle jumped off into the centre of the road and waved the tank to back up a few metres. When it did so, he then bent down and with a couple of flicks of his bayonet, exposed the pressure plate. The mini-team then disarmed the mine and dug the explosive out of the ground. While we were 'ohhing and ahhing', Lisle wandered off further up the road and found the second mine. This one contained 23kg of explosive and was again laid in old tank tracks."

Chris Sweeney recalls the incident well; "I could have kissed Tony (but I didn't), as he had definitely saved 4 Troop from taking casualties that day! I told Tony that when we were next in Nui Dat at the same time I would buy him all the beer he could drink. Unfortunately, this never happened."

On 22nd October, just six weeks after this incident, Tony Lisle was on operations in a Mini-Team attached to B Squadron 3 Cav. His Mini-Team partner was Sapper William Miskin. They were operating together with D Company 6RAR/NZ, in a joint Australian/ARVN operation to the east of the



*ABOVE LEFT: Crew Commander of 24 Alpha, L/Cpl Bob Ferrari takes a look at the mine that could have taken his tank out. ABOVE RIGHT: Sapper Tony Lisle (with mine detector) checks for anti-personnel mines before disarming the anti-tank mine. BELOW: The mine, clearly positioned in the tank track of the previous day, now partially exposed by Sapper Lisle.*



Light Green. Corporal Fred Venema's APC (13 Alpha) was ambushed, with RPGs hitting the front of the vehicle and the T50 turret.

The driver, Trooper Bert Casey, was killed and Venema and the two mini-team members on the vehicle, Sappers Lisle and Miskin were wounded. Sapper Tony Lisle died from his wounds in 1 Australian Field Hospital, Vung Tau 20 days later on 12th November 1969. In Australia Tony left behind his two-year old daughter Julie, and his wife Helen, pregnant with their second daughter Kathryn – one daughter barely knew her dad, and the other never had the chance to meet him.

Sapper Tony Lisle is buried at Rockhampton Cemetery, Roman Catholic section, grave HB-14.

# OPERATION ENOGGERA

App 2 to 1 Fd Sqn RAE  
Operational Analysis "ENOGGERA"

## CONCEPT OF OPERATION - OP "ENOGGERA"

### 1. General Outline:

- a. 6 RAR was to search LONG PHUOC village with men to destroy all on installations above and below ground and deny the village to the on for later use.
- b. This was to be accomplished by a three company search, generally from North to South, each coy being allocated map sectors and progress being con by bn HQ. Dwellings and tunnels etc were to be demolished sector by sector. (See trace P)
- c. Tp of APCs, 2 btty's of arty, and engr elms supported 6 RAR in the op.

### 2. Nature of Terrain:

- a. The area was generally flat with many houses and plantations of banana, pineapple, corn and local fruit trees.
- b. The village had been the scene of a fierce battle when the 173rd Airborne Bde encountered VC in late May 66.
- c. Between 25 May and "ENOGGERA" many arty bombardments and air-strikes had been aimed at the village, causing some damage to buildings and extensive cratering of open ground.



*L/Cpl Ron Rockliffe a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron emerges from one of the many Long Phuoc tunnels*

**Long Phuoc** was a well established and picturesque village featuring a close-knit community reliant mostly on growing fruits vegetables and rice crops. Unfortunately it was in the wrong place at the wrong time. In 1966 when Australian forces established Nui Dat as their base camp, the Task Force Commander drew a 4km imaginary circle around the base, calling it "Line Alpha" and declaring no locals could reside within the circle. It was all about minimising the chances of Nui Dat being attacked. Long Phuoc fell within the circle, and had to go. The residents were moved out, essentially against their will and resettled mainly in Hoa Long (which is why Aussies were never well received there). Once empty, the village of Long Phuoc then had to be "searched and destroyed". This was "Operation Enoggera". The search revealed that the residents of Long Phuoc were doing a lot more than growing rice and chewing beetle nut. They were very active in supporting the local VC. Scores of tunnels and bunkers were found, along with huge caches of rice, medical supplies and weapons. It was a bonanza for the Tunnel Rats, and great on-the-job training for them in search and demolition techniques. Holdfast has obtained the original report on the operation. It makes fascinating reading, and again reminds us of the incredible tasks we carried out, and how frequently we were called on to perform. At the time of this action the term "Splinter Teams" was not in use for the two (or more) man Tunnel Rat teams attached to Infantry. This report refers to them as "Demo Teams" or "Demolition Teams".

## Operational Analysis

**Unit:** 1 Field Squadron, RAE

**Commander:** Major W. M. Lennon

**Operation:** Enoggera

**Duration:** 21 June 66 to 5 July 66

### Engineer Tasks:

1. Integral sapper support to Coys to assist with neutralisation of booby traps, search of bunkers and tunnels to length of 20 ft, destruction of buildings, tunnels and other installations.
2. Search end destruction by Rescue teams of any tunnels longer than 20 ft.
3. Develop tunnel warfare techniques and test capabilities of acetylene generators, gas turbine, MAPP gas, conventional TNT, Bangalore torpedoes, ANFO viper (local pattern).

## Sequence of events and comments:

### Day D:

0700 Coy demo teams move to op area with A,C,D Coys, on foot. Gas turbine team, acetylene team, rescue team and plant did not move – were on 30 mins notice.

1300 Rescue teams and command group move with BHQ by APC and foot.

Team with A Coy: Located several house tunnels, two up to 40 ft long - recovered digging tools and small quantity kerosene. Demolished tunnels conventionally with TNT. Found 1,000 lb rice cache - destroyed by burning. OC authorised additional search of longer tunnels by demo teams. Destroyed 2 x CBU's, and found several bunkers and pits. Team



*ABOVE LEFT: Craftsman George Jenkins ejects a shell from a US 1917 era M17 Enfield rifle recovered from a tunnel during Operation Enoggera. ABOVE RIGHT: 6RAR Troops move cautiously through the village*

located tunnel at YS45356526, too extensive for Coy demo team search. Called for rescue search team from BHQ. Entrance was 18" diameter hole covered by loose boards in open clearing adjacent to banana field.

Team with C Coy: Located and destroyed several minor house tunnels and bunkers. Loc 3 x 44 gal drums of rice.

Team with D Coy: Located tunnel.

Team with HQ Grp: Moved to A Coy location, searched tunnel, thought to be dead end at each end. Approx 5ft overburden, 4ft high, 3ft wide.

#### **Day D+1:**

Team with A Coy: Located and recovered 500 lbs rice. Destroyed 2 x M79 duds, 1 x M26 grenade, 1 x CBU. Discovered ammunition cache and document (Hidden in hollow tree), showing proposed distribution of ammunition. Found medical supplies, VC flag, equipment and documents (In Kerosene tin buried in ground), indicating main tunnel is in sector G or J. Searched and demolished 30ft tunnel and other tunnels.

Team with C Coy: House tunnels etc. Located large tunnel 5ft high 3ft wide, 17ft below surface. Explored for 50ft only, as air strike had caused large cave in. Found 5 blocks of C4 in a house tunnel.

Team with D Coy: Demolished 5 wells, pits etc. and one 60ft tunnel. Recovered 6" arty shell – defused, obviously prepared by VC for later use.

Team with HQ GP: Investigated point B and found apparent dead end was in fact a cave-in. Searched to point F retrieved 10 rifles, documents. Called forward the acetylene, gasturbine, and

oxygen rescue teams followed by Oliver backhoe and TD 15 dozer. Tunnel had 5 - 10ft overburden, 4'6" to 5'6" high and 2'6" to 13ft wide. One vertical shaft with trapdoor.

Used gasturbine to locate entrances A to B then attempted demolition B to A by acetylene gas. 30% successful. Attempted demolition of diesel mist with TNT initiator - point B to point C. Failed to detonate.

#### **Day D+2:**

Team with A Coy: 2 x CBUs, house tunnels destroyed.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed 1 x 55mm blind, 2x large bunkers, house tunnels etc. 30 pieces of ammunition of varying calibre, documents in kerosene tin in house tunnel.

Team with D Coy: Located and searched tunnel 205 ft long and 60 ft long tunnel with 11 bunkers. 2' 6" to 4' high, 2'6" wide, 4 - 6ft overburden. Similar to of system discovered by 173rd Bde previously. Searched main system F to J. Tunnel caved in at H by bomb craters. Vicinity of well developed defensive position with weapon pits, crawl trenches and bunkers. Thought to be location of main battle with 173rd Bde. Discovered some equipment on one of several rooms, ponchos, water bottles etc. Gasturbine confirmed location of known tunnel entrances. Acetylene used point E to D for demolition. Only partially



successful owing to concentration of gas in branch tunnel and room.

### **Day D+3:**

Team with A Coy: Demolished 2 x H79s, 2 x CBU, located 2 salt caches and 2 rice caches.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed 1 x CBU, house tunnels etc.

Team with D Coy: Demolished systems that were discovered on D+2, including shell discovered D+1. Located and demolished 80ft tunnel containing 2200 bamboo panji spikes. Tunnel 5ft high, 2ft wide, overburden 6ft.

Team with HQ Grp: Visit by officer from 173rd Bde, confirmed that tunnel searched was main tunnel described by 173rd Bde. Indicated start point of US search (point K) and end point of search (Point C) showed areas where acetylene demolition had been previously attempted - successful only from K to J. 173rd Bde sketch of tunnel bore only partial resemblance to actual but was mapped under more difficult conditions. Search to this date had gone beyond US search which ended at point C with comment "tunnel continues unexplored". Searched from K towards J for 118ft, struck extensive cave-ins, ceased searching. Demolished last search section of tunnel with 300 lbs TNT. 100% successful. Gasturbine misted G to H, checked atmosphere and found to be unsafe until after 20 minutes extraction of mist. Used MAPP gas with oxygen booster from E towards D. Cracked surface from 40



*ABOVE LEFT: On 25th June 1966 Cpl. Bill Whitfield, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron emerges from a Viet Cong tunnel in the village of Long Phuoc on Operation Enoggera. ABOVE RIGHT: Infantry (6RAR) and Sappers help stack bags of rice recovered from an enemy cache in Long Phuoc Village*

metres to 130 metres from E and demolition from E to 40 metre point. MAPP gas from F to E without oxygen. Demolished entrance, cracked 65 metres, assumed successful demolition.

### **Day D+4**

Team with A Coy: Destroyed 9 concrete bunkers, 1 x M72 (unused), located 3 x salt caches under school building, medical supplies in stone jar buried in hedgerow, rice cache of 2 tons. Received fire from sniper - no casualties.

Team with C Coy: Located 40ft house tunnel with false wall, Opened and a further 60ft tunnel and large chamber found. Destroyed 1 x CBU.

Team with D Coy: Located 35 lbs gelignite in house – destroyed in situ. Destroyed 3 x CBU, found 4 x 44 gal drums of rice in small tunnel. Received automatic weapon and rifle fire. No Casualties. Located VC gasmask under house.

Team with HQ Grp: Used dozer to try to locate new tunnel from point K. Located section at L and searched back to K. Further search revealed no further tunnel. Conclusion – Main tunnel was an escape route to north east and did not go off in

another direction. Destroyed 60ft tunnel located by D Coy team - TNT. Gasturbine used to test value for clearing and search. Attempted ignition using after burner. Not successful

#### D+5

Team with A Coy: Found medical supplies and records. House tunnels and bunkers. Located 50yd tunnel. Called for rescue search team. 3' 6" high x 3'6" wide entrance concealed by 2 concrete slabs as trapdoor. 6 - 8ft overburden.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed tunnel found D+4. Found 2000 panji sticks under straw. Destroyed 2 X 81mm mortar duds. Destroyed 5 x CBUs. Houses.

Team with D Coy: Destroyed 2 x CBUs, one x 81mm mortar shell.

Team with HQ Grp: Increased Coy demo teams to 1 NCO and 4 demo teams of 2. Returned rescue search teams to base area. Indications were that future activities would reveal an increased number of small targets rather than any main tunnel systems.

#### D+6

Team with A Coy: Tunnels and bunkers.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed 1 x CBU, 1 x 155mm, house tunnels etc. Destroyed house tunnel 15ft long 3'6" wide\* Floor covered with 18" - 2' of rice. Demolished 11 bunkers located on D+2. Found 200 ft tunnel and reported to HQ. Found peanut oil, milk and candles in cache. Found 2000 lbs rice in short tunnel. Destroyed 3 x CBUs. Received sniper fire - no casualties. Located dental equipment in jar buried underground. Located air-vent 6ft deep and left for further search.

Team with HQ Grp: Searched tunnel found by A Coy on D+5. Used gasturbine, 90ft long. Destroyed tunnel. Acetylene team destroyed from H to G - cracking on surface and destroyed rooms

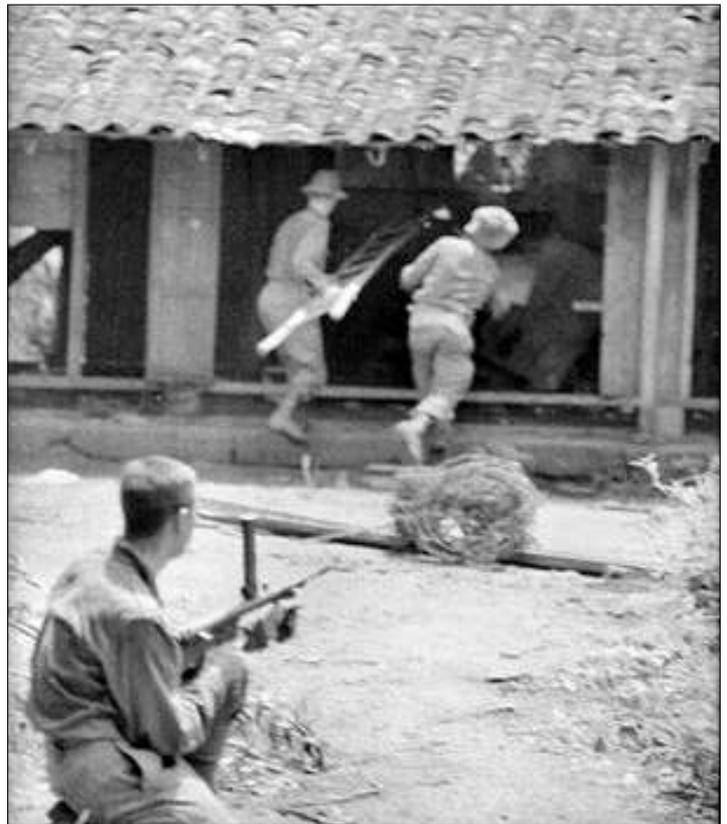
#### D+7

Team with A Coy: Destroyed 2 x CBUs, 40ft tunnel.

Team with C Coy: Located 78ft tunnel, 3x 6" shells (1 without fuse), 2x 105mm.

Team with D Coy: Assisted filling 200 sandbags with rice found D+6. Searched tunnel below air vent found D+6. Found 501bs rice, demolished tunnel. Assisted 10 pl in VC contact one VC WIA, one VC captured, one VC weapon.

Team with HQ Grp: Used turbine to search tunnel found by D Coy on D+6. System consisted of 6 entrances but only 2 interconnected and others with short branches up to 50ft (thought to be in process of construction). Found 40 gals kerosene, 300 candles, 40 cans condensed milk, 7 blocks soap, 6 galls peanut oil, 14 packets herbs, 8 x 60ft lengths rubber 1" wide. 12 bottles 90% alcohol, 27 kg monosodium glutamate. Destroyed in



*Infantry (6RAR) stand guard while the Sappers move in to search one of the village hoses in Long Phuoc (note the old Owen Gun)*

situ. Dozer on building destruction.

Team with C Coy: Unsuccessful attempt with MAPP gas in 50 ft tunnel. Acetylene used on 85ft tunnel with MAPP gas. 80% successful demolition. No other entrance thought to be cause of poor gas distribution. Attempted MAPP gas blast on 40yd tunnel, 2ft square and 3ft overburden. Failed to detonate. Only one entrance - probably affected gas distribution.

#### D+8

Team with A Coy: Minor tunnels and houses. Assisted in detention of 5 VC suspects.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed house tunnels and one 78ft tunnel found D+7. Destroyed 4 x CBUs, 3 x 6" shells (defused), 2 x 10" shells. Located several rice caches, one approx 2 tons.

Team with D Coy: Team transferred D Coy to B Coy while D Coy returned to base. Minor search and destruction. Found 3 caches rice (Total 3 tons), located UXBs, 105mm, 6" shell and 81mm. Not destroyed.

Team with HQ Grp: Dozer with C Coy on destruction tasks. No other tasks.

#### D+9

Team with A Coy: Located medical supplies and tunnel, Called for HQ assistance. Minor tunnel destruction.

Team with B Coy: Destroyed blinds found D+8, located coils barbed wire, 13 bags cement, in



*One of the many rice caches found near the village*

a house, 2000 lbs rice. Infantry searchers located 2 x 1000 lbs rice caches.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed 2 x CBUs and minor tunnels. Found several small rice caches.

Team with HQ Grp: Tried bangalore torpedoes in 3 x 30ft tunnels and one 50ft long. 100% successful.

#### **D+10**

Team with A Coy: Found 4 x 4 gal drums rice, 1000 lbs cache rice, panjis in concrete blocks.

Team with B Coy: Located rice caches in houses - 3 tons. Destroyed 40ft house tunnel, 1 x CBU, 1 bomb fuse, 1 well.

Team with C Coy: Destroyed house tunnels. Destroyed 4 x CBUs.

Team with HQ Grp: Used local pattern ammonium nitrate/fuel-oil viper on 50ft tunnel. Failed to destroy tunnel. Used gasturb on 70ft tunnel - afterburner ignited mist, no damage. Used TNT on 148ft tunnel. 100% destruction.

#### **D+11**

Team with A Coy: Searched and destroyed 80ft tunnel. Located 1000lbs rice cache and 2 x 1500 lbs rice caches in houses.

Team with B Coy: Constructed LZ using explosives to fell trees. Destroyed well. Found two clips of ammunition in small tunnels, one ton rice in house.

Team with C Coy: House tunnel demolitions.

Team with HQ Grp: Dozer to C Coy. TNT destruction 45ft tunnel. 100% successful.

#### **D+12**

Team with A Coy: House tunnels.

Team with B Coy: Found 13 coils barbed wire, destroyed well, 1 x M79, 1 x M26.

Team with C Coy: House tunnels.

Team with HQ Grp: Dozer returned to base.

#### **D+13**

Team with A Coy: Set ambush with Infantry.

Team with B Coy: House tunnel destruction, destroyed tile factory, 2 x CBUs, returned to base.

Team with C Coy: Contact VC, found two packs containing M26 and M79 grenades and documents including scale drawing of Vung Tau

establishments. Night ambush.

Team with HQ Grp: Re-checked main tunnel and demolished damaged sections. RTB.

#### **D+14**

Team with A Coy: Returned to base 0830 hrs

Team with C Coy: Returned to base 1400 hrs

## **Logistic Support**

(1) On this operation, intelligence indicated that tunneling would be more extensive than was in fact encountered. For this reason a large Engineer force was deployed. In addition extra personnel were required for experimentation with new equipment.

(2) Because of the large number of Engineers end quantity of equipment and explosives, a section of APCs was detached permanently to the Engineer element. In addition, explosives constituted part of the daily resupply.

(3) Even in an operation with less extensive tunnelling, it is considered that APCs should be in direct support of Engineers if intelligence reveals the likelihood of finding tunnels too large to be dealt with by Coy demo teams.

(4) In an operation in a larger area or in country with heavier vegetation, it might be necessary to have a medium rotary wing aircraft on call to move reserve Engineer teams end equipment to any part of the operation area.

Although intelligence on tunnels was not entirely accurate, it is noteworthy that many tunnels encountered in the Southern part of the village were obviously not completed and in progress, when the VC were interrupted. It would appear that construction ceased at the beginning of the wet season, but whether by design or by necessity (caused by 173rd Bde Ops) is not known for sure. Valuable information has been revealed which gives some lead to the method used by the VC in constructing tunnels.

Operation "Enoggera" was an outstanding success from the Engineer viewpoint, and has given the basis for development of techniques to be used in future operations of this nature.



*ABOVE: Lance Corporal Bob Morrow of 6RAR helps remove rice from one of the many rice caches found in Long Phuoc. LEFT: Sapper Barry Hartford, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron has a smoke and a well earned rest while he contemplates life after searching one of the longer tunnels in Long Phuoc*

## Assessment of Operation

### Lessons learned

(1) Techniques and methods of using various equipments in tunnel search and destruction are the subject of a separate paper.

(2) On this op, no booby traps were encountered above or below ground, and as early as D+1, infantry procedures in village search had relaxed to the extent that many dangerous methods were used, which would have caused casualties if traps had been encountered.

(3) In some instances Infantry attempted their own tunnel search with some success. This should not be encouraged since sappers have specialised knowledge, equipment, and understanding of the consequences of their actions. For example, one infantryman used an illumination flare to light the interior of a tunnel - this could have caused a later casualty owing to foul air.

(4) Coy demolition team NCOs were in some cases not included in Coy 0 Groups and did not know what was going on. Demo teams must be regarded as advisers to infantry commanders at all levels.

(5) In some cases, having secured tunnel

entrances, infantry moved on to search other houses, leaving sappers underground with no immediate close-in protection. This does not foster confidence.

(6) In some cases, Coy reported "extensive" tunnels before demo teams had completed their assessment. Demo teams should decide whether a tunnel is extensive and whether further Engineer assistance is required.

(7) Some systems were not reported in sufficient detail. Demo teams, assisted by Infantry, should report all details of tunnels (except short house tunnels) to the HQ Group, for assessment as to the general pattern of tunnels.

(8) Engineer HQ should hold stocks of explosives to immediately resupply Coy demo teams, and restock reserves daily.

(9) One instance occurred where sappers were searching a tunnel under a house and the Infantry commenced to burn the house. Sappers lose confidence under those circumstances.

(10) Many blinds and CBUs were encountered as a result of earlier bombardments and airstrikes. CBUs should not be used where friendly troops are to move into the area later.



## Honouring two superb young Sappers



Representatives of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association attended the memorial service on June 15th at 2 CER Enoggera for Sapper Jacob Moerland and Sapper Darren Smith, both killed in action in Afghanistan on 7th June 2010.

As news emerged of the circumstances of the loss of these two brave young Sappers, Vietnam Tunnel Rat members across Australia were struck by the similarities of their tasks and ours, some forty years apart.

Some of us have had the privilege of meeting with today's young Combat Engineers and we're simply knocked out by their professionalism, and commitment. They're smart, they're fit, well equipped and trained - and they still maintain that wonderful cynical Sapper sense of humour.

To be with them is both inspiring and humbling - knowing what they do and the "can do" attitude with which they carry it out. We are very proud of them.

Our hearts ache for the families and Comrades of Sapper Jacob Moerland and Sapper Darren Smith. We are comforted to see the level of honour and dignity with which the government and the Army have brought these two Sappers home and laid them to rest.

The service at 2CER Enoggera and the "wake" that followed at the Sportsmans Club were a perfect send-off for those brave young Sappers.

*ABOVE: Sapper Jacob Moerland (left) and Sapper Darren Smith (right) with Explosives Detection Dog "Herbie", also killed in action in the same incident. BELOW: The wreath laid on behalf of the Tunnel Rats association. BOTTOM: Some of our members gather at the Sportsmans Club Enoggera after the memorial service. Believe it or not, three members of this scraggly bunch have held the proud position of RSM at SME - they are Bob Smith (third from left), Les Shelley (fourth from left) and Bevan Percival (seventh from left).*



## Remembering our Comrade Sapper Harold Hurst



The Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association together with the 1 Field Sqn Group Assoc are continuing our bid to find the next of kin of all 35 of our fallen Tunnel Rat comrades - to present them with the Army Combat Badge awarded to us by Chief of Army several years ago.

This task is being driven relentlessly by Sapper Peter "Roo Dog" Scott who still has 14 families to find.

Our most recent presentation was to the family of Sapper Harold Hurst who served with 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron in 1969/70. Harold was killed in action on 29th April 1970 when a Landrover he was travelling in hit an enemy anti-vehicle mine on the road into a camp north of Nui Dat where he was posted while attached to a MAT Team.

The presentation to Harold's next of kin took place at the Bathurst RSL Sub Branch NSW which did an exceptional job in putting together a superb display board for Harold's Army Combat Badge, including replicas of his medals and badges plus a photo of Harold provided by the family.

*ABOVE: Bill Wilcox (holding the board on the left), President of the Oberon RSL sub-branch who served in 1 Troop, 1 Field Sqn at the time Harold was killed. Next to him are Harold's sisters Helen and Irene (behind the board) and his brother Keith (holding the board on the right). They are surrounded by the extended families and Sub-branch members. Special thanks to Brian Tobin and Bruce Irvine at Bathurst for putting together such a dignified and respectful tribute to our fallen brother Sapper. BELOW: Harold (top row third from left) at a "happening" with his mates at Nui Dat, Christmas Day 1969.*



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Including a memorial service at the site of 1 Field Squadron's old Nui Dat HQ on the anniversary of the Squadron's April 1st 1966 arrival date in Vietnam

26th March - 3rd April 2011

# BACK TO VIETNAM

AND SHARING THE EXPERIENCE WITH CURRENT SERVING COMBAT ENGINEERS

*This is the ultimate trip back to Vietnam. Focussed on Tunnel Rats, we'll visit all the key battle and operational areas. We'll visit the infamous minefield and meet former enemy who actually lifted mines from it. We'll visit the caves and tunnels of the enemy's base in the Long Hai Mountains, guided by former enemy who fought against us and laid mines and booby traps against us. We'll tour the enemy tunnels at Cu Chi and Long Phuoc with the men and women who built them and defended them. On April 1st, the Anniversary of when 1 Field Squadron arrived in country we'll hold a memorial service for our 35 fallen comrades, right on the site of our former Squadron HQ at Nui Dat - followed by a traditional "Troop" BBQ (piss-up). And best of all, we're inviting current serving Sappers, men who are serving or have served with Combat Engineer units, to come with us and share the experience.*

The trip is for eight nights in Vietnam, (two nights in Saigon, then five nights in Vung Tau followed by one more night in Saigon).

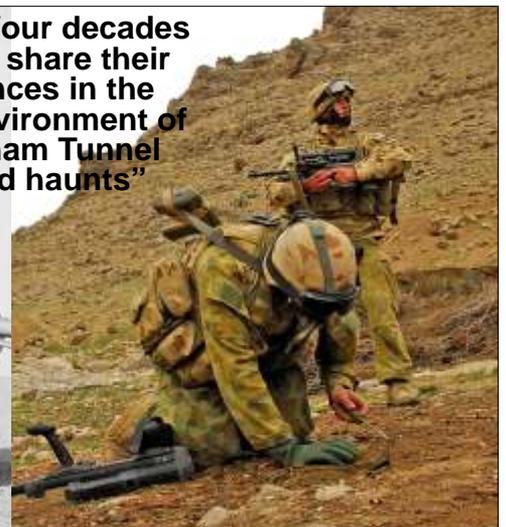
Rather than increasing the costs and travel time by forcing everyone to depart from one city in Australia, each person has to book and pay for their own air ticket to Saigon, enabling them to find the best air-ticket deal from their city.

The plan is for us all to meet in Saigon on Saturday March 26th and from there the tour will commence.

The first event is on the 26th - welcome drinks at 6pm followed by dinner. Book your air travel carefully to ensure you arrive in Saigon in time to get to the hotel, check-in and make it to the 6pm function. If the airline you choose arrives too late, book



**"Sappers four decades apart will share their experiences in the unique environment of the Vietnam Tunnel Rat's old haunts"**



to arrive the day prior and we'll book an extra night in the hotel for you. Shop around for the best airfare you can find. There are plenty of airlines flying into Saigon, so don't grab the first airfare you find. The planned return date leaving Saigon is Sunday 3rd April, but if you want to stay on longer you can do so

on your own arrangements.

As Combat Engineer units today are men only our trip this time is for guys only. Tunnel Rats are welcome to have their sons come along on the trip (they may have a better chance of keeping up with the drinking pace of the serving Sappers!).

After our official tour ends,

some of the guys will take the opportunity to tour other parts of Vietnam, perhaps with their wife joining them at that juncture.

The cost covers all specified tours, English speaking guides, permits and tour transport in Vietnam, and includes eight nights in hotels including all breakfasts (lunch, dinner and drinks will be at our own cost). On top of this you'll need your own spending money, but Vietnam is very inexpensive in terms of food, drinks, entertainment and souvenirs.

The full cost for all of this is \$750 per person if you are sharing a room with a mate (twin share) or \$1050 if you want a room of your own.

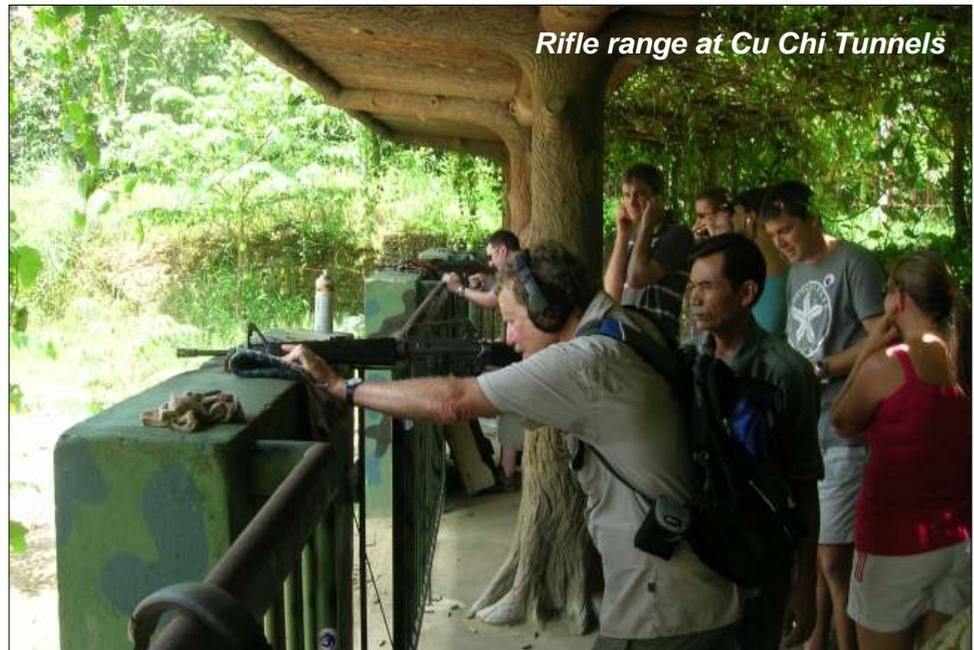
We're looking for your commitment. If you want to join us on the trip, fill in and post the form on the following page. The fully refundable \$100 deposit will go towards your total cost which we'll call for later when we finalise everything.

## Here's our amazing day by day itinerary

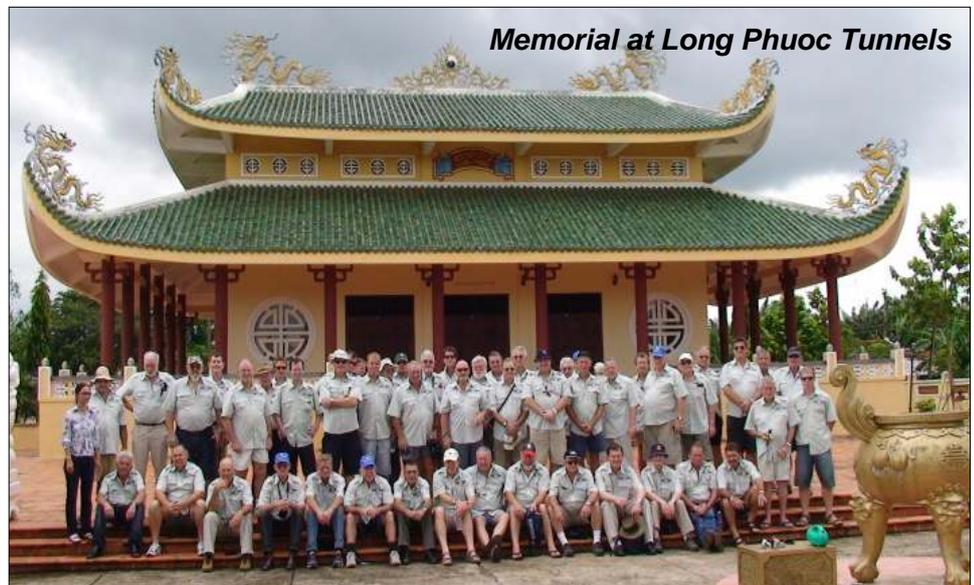
At our welcome dinner you'll receive an overall briefing on the tour. Then each morning of the tour you'll receive a detailed briefing on that day's activity, often with associated documents and maps. We'll take that opportunity to also report on who has gone AWOL, been mugged, robbed or had an experience worth sharing. We'll return to our hotel each day in time to enjoy drinks together before people go their own way for the evening. The comradeship of these drink sessions will be a highlight of the tour.

### Day 1: Australia to Saigon

People will be arriving at different times throughout the



*Rifle range at Cu Chi Tunnels*



*Memorial at Long Phuoc Tunnels*

day (or even the day before). You'll be met at the Saigon airport and transferred to our hotel. After check-in you're free to roam but be back in time for Welcome Drinks at 6pm followed by dinner. Overnight in Saigon

### Day 2: Cu Chi Tunnels Tour

We'll have a guided tour just for our group plus the chance to fire the AK47 and Armalite weapons on their range (cost US\$1 per bullet). Then we head back to Saigon, and we'll be back in time for a late lunch, then the afternoon and evening is free time. Overnight in Saigon

### Day 3: Saigon to Vung Tau

After check-out we'll take a bus to transfer to our hotel in Vung Tau. After lunch, to help get our bearings we'll do a guided orientation tour of Vung Tau by bus, including a trip to the old back beach area where the Badcoe Club was. Overnight in Vung Tau.

### Day 4: Vung Tau, Baria and Long Phuoc

In the morning we head to Baria where we'll visit the Australian funded orphanage. Then it's off to the Long Phuoc area (close to Nui Dat) to visit the tunnels there and meet some of the old VC who

operated in that area during the war. This site includes a memorial to the VC who were killed in the area during the war. Overnight in Vung Tau.

### Day 5: Vung Tau, Long Tan, the Horseshoe and minefield

We'll visit the Long Tan battlefield and memorial where we'll place a wreath in remembrance of all Australians KIA in Vietnam. After this we move to the Horseshoe feature which was the starting point of the 11km long barrier minefield laid by 1 Fld Sqn Sappers. We'll meet with former VC who actually lifted mines from the minefield to be used against us. Overnight in Vung Tau.

### Day 6: Vung Tau, Long Hai Mountains

The Long Hai Mountains was the VC's big base camp and a place of much grief for the Aussie troops. The VC called it the "Minh Dam Secret Zone" and it now features a beautiful and moving memorial to the VC killed in the area during the war. Drinks late afternoon with entertainment from a group of singers and dancers formed from local Viet Cong Veterans. Big seafood dinner with the former VC for those who want to join in. Overnight in Vung Tau.

### Day 7 (April 1st): Vung Tau, Binh Ba and Nui Dat

We'll visit the village of Binh Ba, site of the huge battle in early June 1969. The village now features a museum dedicated to the battle and an extensive memorial to the VC killed in the area during the war. Following this we move to Nui Dat. This day is the actual anniversary of when 1 Field Squadron first arrived in Vietnam in 1966. We'll tour the old base camp including, SAS Hill and Luscombe Field, then we'll hold



*The barrier minefield*



*Enemy cave in the Long Hai Mountains 1968 and in 2007*



a memorial service for our 35 fallen Tunnel Rat comrades, right on the site of our former Squadron HQ at Nui Dat, followed by a traditional "Troop" BBQ (piss-up). Overnight in Vung Tau.

### Vung Tau

You'll have plenty of time each evening and most afternoons to relax, explore Vung Tau, laze by the pool, go shopping, walk



along the beach, go for a nostalgic bar crawl with your mates, or simply stroll the streets and soak up the great atmosphere.

### Day 8: Vung Tau to Saigon

It's back to Saigon for a bit of shopping and sightseeing before our big farewell dinner. Next day transfer to the airport to depart for Australia, or stay on and tour more of Vietnam.

## “It’s on for young and old”

We’re excited on multiple levels about the aspect of sharing this trip with current serving Sappers. The similarities of our tasks in Vietnam and their tasks in Afghanistan today are striking.

On one level we hope the young Sappers will get an understanding of how we operated in terms of combat engineer tasks, particularly when attached to Infantry and Armoured units. They’ll gain an insight into the casualties we suffered, and why, plus how we coped with it. They’ll see first hand the similarities between our tasks in Vietnam and theirs in Afghanistan, and how much better trained and equipped they are than we were.

There will be the unique experience of melding together the incredible comradeship the old and the young Sappers enjoy as a result of our service.

We have great respect for and empathy with serving

Sappers in Combat Engineer roles today. It will be a privilege for us to share time with these guys in our former war zone and hear their experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere over a few beers.

Serving Sappers of all ranks are welcome - as long as you currently serve or have served in a Combat Engineer unit. If you’re a serving Sapper and you wish to join us on the tour, simply fill in the form.

Vietnam Tunnel Rats, likewise simply fill in the form.

If you have any questions at all about the tour, contact Jim Marett, President of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association.

Email:

[tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au](mailto:tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au)

Mobile: 0403 041 962

## Our Hotels

In Saigon we stay at the historic Hotel Continental, right in the very heart of the city, close to shopping, dining, bars and many historic sites. The Hotel



Continental is widely mentioned in history books. During colonial days it was the favoured haunt of the rich rubber plantation owners. During the war it was a place for spies, gossip and intrigue.



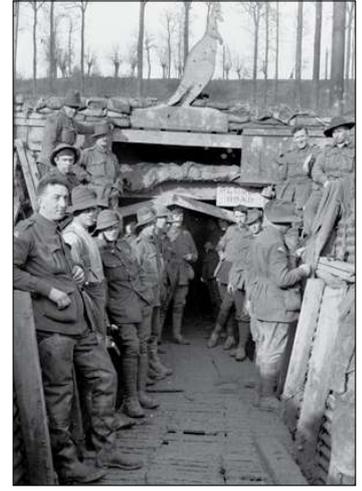
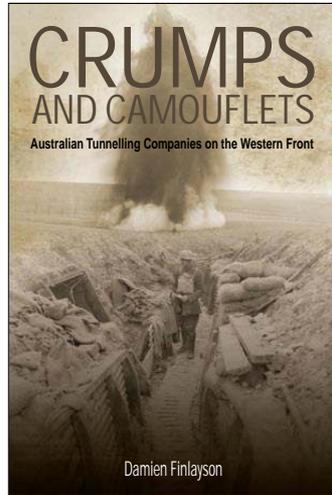
In Vung Tau we stay at the Rex Hotel, again it’s near the action, plus it has a pool and several good bars. Rooms are spacious and clean.

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If Vietnam Tunnel Rat, list Troop served with : And approx dates:	
The deposit required is \$100. If for any reason you have to cancel, the deposit is fully refundable. You can pay by credit card (your statement will read “Ultimate Design Graphics”, or by cheque or postal order. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association.	
Tick which card you wish to use: <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Master Card <input type="checkbox"/> American Express	
CARD NUMBER:	
NAME ON CARD:	EXPIRY DATE:
SIGNATURE:	
Post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak VIC 3142	
Or email to: <a href="mailto:tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au">tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au</a>	

## Buy the book - meet The Boss

A new book is to be launched by Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie AO, DSC, CSM (a fellow Sapper) on Tuesday 14 September 2010 at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. The fascinating book covers the very origins of much of the way Sappers operated in subsequent wars, particularly the tunnels and bunkers of Vietnam. Vietnam Tunnel Rats are welcome at the launch. Come along and meet the author, buy a signed copy of the book and maybe even meet The Boss.



Crumps and Camouflets is the first complete history detailing the amazing story of the unseen and largely unknown war that was fought by Australian tunnelling companies on the Western Front in World War I.

In amazing acts of bravery Australian miners or 'tunnellers', set out to destroy the German front line, blowing mines, carefully placed in dark, treacherous tunnels under no man's land. Completely aware that at any moment, and without warning, they could die slowly and alone in the dark, their lives extinguished by hundreds of tonnes of collapsed earth and debris.

Damien Finlayson spent ten years researching the topic, and is widely regarded as a leader in this field of military history. He has a Bachelor and Masters degree in Science (Major in Geology) and was involved as a technical consultant during the making of the Australian film Beneath Hill 60.

Damien was inspired to write the book after discovering a relative had died while serving with the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company. "I was very surprised at the number of other families that I contacted who knew so little about what their father/grandfather/uncle did in the war and there was a huge gulf in knowledge on the subject," he said.

"I wrote this book to redress that, by telling the story of the men who, like their brother soldiers, fought a daily duel with enemy over the wire, and the enemy within – the gnawing, paralysing fear of a sudden and violent death underground, below no man's land."

Crumps and Camouflets is the first complete history of all three tunnelling companies between

1914 and 1919. It includes personal reflections from tunnellers, lists of those who served and anecdotes from relatives.

It is an important part of Australian military history, providing the first real insight into the men and their personal battles as they waged the underground war on the Western Front.



**LEFT:**  
Top Dog - the book will be launched by Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie AO, DSC, CSM (seen here in Afghanistan with Explosives Detection Dog "Sarbi").

**Date:** Tuesday 14th September 2010

**Time:** 10.30am for 11.00am (until 12.00 noon)

**Venue:** Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne

**Dress:** Lounge suit and equivalent

**RSVP:** Wednesday 8 September, 2010

**Phone:** 02 9918 2168

**Email:** Sharon@bigskypublishing.com.au

**Post:** PO Box 303, Newport NSW 2106

**Book signing and sales will occur on the day**

## Sapper Snippets



### Sappers on special duty at RMC Duntroon - 1962

Work hard, then take a break and have a beer with the boss. It's that Sapper spirit, even way back in 1962 (The Beatles had just released their first hit "Love Me Do"! ). Under the guidance of Captain Rex Rowe (far left) the lads had just completed the installation of a cinder track at Royal Military College Duntroon. From left to right in the back row we have Captain Rex Rowe, Sapper David "Blue" Paine (chippy), Sapper Bernie

Cochrane (painter), Sapper "Yorkie" Cording (chippy), Sapper Laurie Cocker (draftsman), and far right unknown (apologies mate). In the front row we have Sergeant Alan East (plantie), and Sapper Dave Wilson (plumber). Rex Rowe was later to lead 1 Field Squadron in Vietnam as OC 69/70. Rex retired as Colonel, OBE and now lives in Melbourne with his wife Noema. They regularly attend our Tunnel Rat functions.



### Brothers in arms

The national service scheme had quite an impact on the Hynson family. Both Rodney Hynson (left) and Wayne Hynson (right) did national service. They also both went to Vietnam. Rodney served as a Private with 5RAR on their first tour 66/67. Wayne served as a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron 68/69. Rodney and Wayne met up at 5RAR's reunion on the Gold Coast. 2 Troop supported 5RAR in their second tour and 5RAR now invites former 2 Troop Sappers to join them at their main reunions. In his speech at the reunion dinner Brig. Colin Kahn made special mention of the role of the Tunnel Rats with 5RAR.

## Sandy's still in there fighting for his lads from 3 Field Troop

Sandy MacGregor, Troop Commander of the original Tunnel Rats (3 Field Troop Vietnam 65/66), is lobbying hard to have a bit of Sapper history put in its right place. The emails below describe Sandy's spirited and ongoing campaign to have a sniper rifle found in the tunnels at Cu Chi placed in the Museum of the Corp of Engineers. Go for it Sandy!

**From:** Sandy MacGregor  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 July 2010 12:01  
**To:** Lee, Roger MR  
**Subject:** Rifle recovered at Cu CHI Tunnels Transfer of Russian sniper rifle to engineer museum

Dear Dr Lee,

A Russian Sniper Rifle was captured in Vietnam by Sapper Alan Christie in January 1966. This rifle, a "live firer", is currently housed at the Infantry Museum at Singleton and there is no dispute as to the ownership of this weapon.

A request by AAMME to have this weapon rendered and transferred to the Engineer Museum was not recommended by the HQ AHU on the grounds of "technical rarity".

On my investigation at the website <http://www.snipercentral.com/mosin.htm> and other sites "The rifles were mass-produced, with as many as 330,000 of the sniper variants being produced between 1941 and 1943." My belief is that for reasons of : Ownership of the rifle by the Engineer Corps. Public Interest in seeing the rifle, and "Righting" a "wrong" (I believe the rifle should never have been in the Infantry museum) that the rifle should be rendered innocuous and transferred to the Engineer Museum.

Please consider this request to transfer the rifle to the AAMME where it will be rendered and displayed.

All the best

**Sandy MacGregor MC RFD**  
**Honorary Colonel UNSWR**  
**Formerly Comd 3 Fd Tp Vietnam 1965-66**

-----  
**From:** Lee, Roger MR  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 28 July 2010 4:20 PM  
**To:** Sandy MacGregor  
**Subject:** RE: Rifle recovered at Cu CHI Tunnels

Dear Mr MacGregor,

Thank you for your email regarding this matter. I am familiar with this situation from earlier discussions with some of my staff. I acknowledge your point that the rifle was mass produced during WWII, along with many other pieces of equipment. How many survived the war, though, is open for debate. Certainly, not many examples of this rifle in the original calibre. This model rifle in its original configuration is rare; particularly in Australia. There is only one in Army ownership (the one in question)



*ABOVE: Sapper Alan Christie with the rifle in 1966 back at Bien Hoa base camp. Alan had carved "3 Fd Tp" into the butt of the rifle*

and one at the Australian War Memorial. It is not known of any in state museums or in the hands of private collectors. There are many Mosin Nagant rifles but not this model in the sniper configuration. It is on that basis that AAHU claims that the rifle has technical rarity. It is also unique in that it was captured by an Australian soldier and, quite possibly, used against Australian troops. Its historic significance and technical rarity make this rifle an object of National Importance.

The Infantry Corps weapons collection is technical based and recognised internationally. AAHU prides itself on adhering to museum best practice. Irreversibly damaging this historically important and technically rare object would be seen as a serious breach of museum practice.

I sympathise with your position and appreciate the link this rifle has with the Engineer Corps. I don't propose to debate the ownership situation as it was decided more than 40 years ago by people directly involved. Suffice it to say, though, both parties have claims to ownership. I am charged with ensuring that the integrity of Army's heritage collection is maintained as well as preserving it for future generations of officers and soldiers as well as the general public. With that in mind, I am unable to approve the rendering of this rifle innocuous.

I trust you appreciate the position I am in and the rationale behind my decision. The rifle is available for viewing on request and Sapper Christie is acknowledged as capturing the rifle in the tunnels. Again, thank you for your email and your ongoing support of Army's heritage.

Best regards,  
**Roger Lee**  
**Head- AAHU**



## Top End Talks

Jethro Thompson and Jim Marett were privileged to be invited by 1CER Darwin to give a presentation to the Combat Engineers of 1CER on how the Tunnel Rats operated in Vietnam. Naturally there was time for socialising, including a classic Troop BBQ at the OR's boozier and (left) a few beers and a seafood feast on Darwin wharf. PHOTO: Left to right - Lt. John Leathley, Troop Commander, 3 Troop 1CER, Jethro Thompson (1 Troop 66/67, )Sgt. Craig Townsend, Troop Sergeant, 3 Troop 1CER, and Jim Marett (2 Troop 69/70).

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Card Number:

Name on card:

Expiry Date:

Signature

Post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Victoria 3142

## 3 Troop takes over Tamworth



The men who served with 3 Troop in Vietnam have led the way in terms of getting together for reunions. They've been doing it every three years for ages. It all started way back in October 1987 at the Sydney Welcome Home Parade when a smart Sapper from 3 Troop had the nous to gather all the names and addresses of the 3 Troop lads attending. From that point on they had the ability to communicate as a group. Since then they've held 3 Troop reunions at all points across Australia, with huge numbers attending, and of course with the great Sapper comradeship to the fore.

Their latest reunion was over the Anzac Day

weekend and held at Tamworth in NSW. It was organised by Vic Underwood (3 Troop 67/68) and was again a huge success. They marched through town on Anzac Day, had a big dinner on the Friday night and a BBQ at Vic's place on the Saturday.

As usual, some of the best of times were had when just getting together with some troop mates in the pub, remembering times past and perhaps "gilding the lily" on a few war stories - a Sapper art form.

*The next reunion, in 2013 will be in Darwin and is being organised by Barrie Morgan (3 Troop 67/68). You can contact Barrie on 0419 820 290.*



## The tragedy of war

*These four classic Aussie kids have just lost their Dad, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron, killed by enemy fire while searching a tunnel in the Long Hai Mountains on 5th April 1968. Photographed just a few weeks after the event, the kids are showing off a giant Easter egg sent to them by the local RSL. It was a minor gesture, but we hope it helped to briefly ease the unbearable pain and sorrow*



*Left to right: Stephen, Chris, Kathleen and Terrance Gollagher*

Staff Sergeant Peter Gollagher (172377) arrived in Vietnam on 18th December 1967, posted to 21 Engineer Support Troop. He was keen to move to one of the Field Troops where the men were going out into the field, attached in two-man teams to Infantry and Armoured units.

He got his wish, and on 9th March 1968 he joined 1 Field Squadron. Less than a month later, on 5th April 1968, while on Operation Pinnaroo, Peter was killed in action, shot by enemy fire while searching a tunnel in the Long Hai Mountains.

A book is in the process of being published on Peter's life, concentrating on his Vietnam tour, the tunnel incident and the events which led up to him being shot by the Viet Cong in the tunnel.

The publishers (AKA Publishing) are currently conducting extensive research for the book and are seeking information or photographs from comrades who served with Peter in Vietnam.

The incident occurred on 5th April 1968 while Peter was attached to 7 platoon, C Coy, 3 RAR in the Long Hai Hills on Operation Pinnaroo. Peter was in a two-man Splinter Team, with Sapper Jovan 'Joe' Desnica as his No.1. They were asked to search a tunnel the Infantry had found.

Not long after they entered the tunnel Sapper Desnica flashed his torch at what appeared to be a bundle of bloody bandages. Shots from an AK47 were fired and Staff Sergeant Gollagher was killed instantly. Sapper Desnica managed to get out of the tunnel. Second-Lieutenant Lawrence Applebee of 7 platoon organised a small patrol to go back into the tunnel and recover Peter's body.

The research team from AKA Publishing would like to hear from anyone who may have information regarding this incident, or regarding Staff Sergeant Gollagher. It is understood, but not confirmed, that Sapper Joe Desnica who survived the war has since passed away. You may have known Staff Sergeant Gollagher or Sapper Desnica, or have photographs of them, or photographs of that operation, or you may have been one of the men sent into the cave by Second-Lieutenant Applebee to recover the body. If you are able to help at all, please contact AKA's project manager, Jasmine Davidson, on (02) 9326 1499 or email her at [jasmine@akapublishing.com.au](mailto:jasmine@akapublishing.com.au)

AKA Publishing's director and senior writer, Graeme Brosnan, is more than willing to meet with you and collect your thoughts on the subject and the events surrounding the period of the incident. Any information at all will assist with the book project and would be greatly appreciated.



*Staff Sergeant Peter Gollagher*

## High-tech tunnel finder flunks out

*This original 1968 report shows that way back in 1968 a Ground Penetrating Radar device was tested by 1 Field Squadron in Vietnam. It was aimed at finding tunnels, but seems to have failed miserably. GPR devices are used successfully by Combat Engineers today in Afghanistan.*



### GEODAR - 1 FD SQN RAE

#### GEODAR – Training – Operations

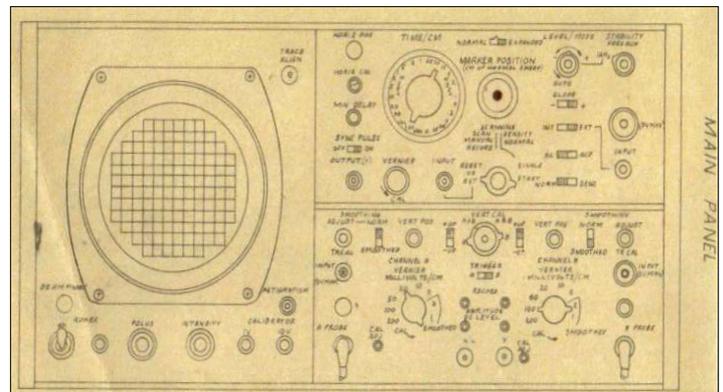
#### **Annex B to 1 Fd Sqn Monthly Tech Report 5th September 1968**

During the month of July 9. members of 1 FD SQN trained in the operation of GEODAR, then in August carried out further training and also used the device operationally.

The MK I GEODAR is basically a radar system that transmits a low power pulse to a transmission line type antenna. The antenna in turn radiates through the Air/Ground interface, into the ground.

The antenna is a flat, approx 6" high, square shaped box measuring approx 3' X 3'. The underside tapers from the centre to both the forward and rear edges and is fibre glass covered. The antenna may either be pulled by vehicle or hand. From the top centre of the antenna, an electrical cable (umbilical cord) approx 50' long connects to the electronics cabinet.

The cabinet has three plain sides and an operators panel on the fourth side. The panel consists a radar screen and approx 40 switches. However most of the switches are pre-set and only three are required to be moved by the operator. The picture on the screen changes when the antenna passes over changes in earth formations, culverts,



metal objects etc. As the picture changes the disturbance is also recorded on a paper tape record.

Various objects although giving a similar picture change on the screen, can be identified by the mark on the tape ie: culvert, fishhook, wire, a series of chevron like marks right across the width of the paper.

The cabinet was mounted in the back of the standard American 1 ton truck and requires a 24 Volt supply. One man is required to drive the vehicle, one to operate the controls, and two to adjust, or when in a confined area to hand pull the antenna.

The device arrived at 1 FD SQN early in July and training was carried out for approx one week. The training was carried out over single, double and treble pipe culverts and a training tunnel in the Sqn Area. After two days all members of the team could



set up and operate the device. At the end of a week all members were quite competent in all aspects.

In early Aug the device again returned to 1 FD SQN and a further three days training was carried out. On the following day a tunnel search and destroy operation was carried out in the Long Phouc area. The antenna was pulled manually over a known tunnel (found visually) six times with no result either on the screen or the paper tape. The device then returned to NUI DAT, and left 1 FD SQN area the following day. The known tunnel was approx 8' Deep and Approx 2' 6" in diameter.

### SUMMARY.

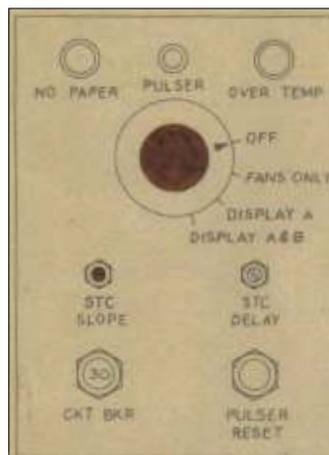
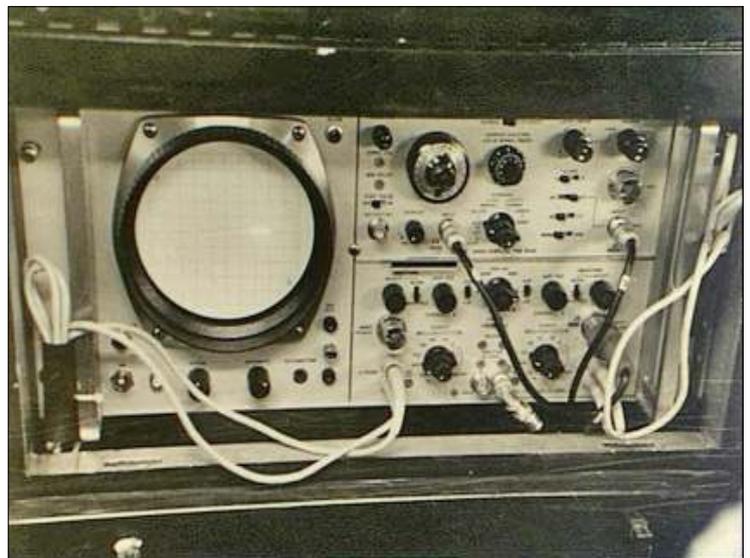
The small number of men required to operate the device is good.

The number of switches required to be altered makes training of operators quick, however there is a feeling of not knowing enough about the actual workings of the device.

The device found culverts very efficiently but when required to find tunnels, failed.

If the device can find tunnels it would be an extremely useful piece of equipment.

The device has now been returned to the American Contractor Sylvania Electrics, however no satisfactory explanation has yet been forwarded concerning its inability to locate a proven tunnel.



TOP: The printed read-out tape is being studied.  
 ABOVE: The main control panel.  
 LEFT: Switch detail sketch from original report produced by 1 Field Squadron in Vietnam

# Latest list of Tunnel Rats

Here's our updated list of former Tunnel Rats from 3 Field Troop and 1 Field Squadron RAE, Vietnam 1965-71. This is not a complete list, it is simply a list of all the men we have been able to find and make contact with. If you can help with names and numbers, please contact our "Master of The List", Graeme Gartside on 08 8725 6900, or by mail to Graeme Gartside, 9 Park Street Mt Gambier SA 5290 or by email: [ggart@internode.on.net](mailto:ggart@internode.on.net)

## LISTS ARE NOW ALPHABETICAL

### 3 Field Troop (1965-66)

Peter Ash 02 6771 4623  
Ian Biddolph 02 4472 9434  
Al an Christie 07 5494 6628  
Brian Cleary 07 5500 6363  
Al an S Coleman 07 3283 6689  
Bill Corby 07 5502 1193  
John "Tex" Cotter 07 4723 1244  
Des Evans 07 4128 2390  
Wilfred Eyles 02 4390 0150  
Ray Forster 07 3409 1907  
Geoff Green 03 6272 8167  
Barry Harford 08 8088 4371  
Sandy MacGregor 02 9457 7133  
Frank Mallard 08 9377 4560  
Keith Mills 07 4770 7267  
Warren Murray 03 5728 3341  
Bernie Pollard 08 9248 3178  
Ross Thorburn 0408413204  
Al an Tugwell 08 8552 5229  
Bill Unneopa 08 9300 5561  
Snow Wil son Jnr 02 6649 3998

### OC's 1 Field Squadron

John Kemp 02 6288 3428  
Rex Rowe 0419 251 420

### 1 Troop (1966-67)

Dick Bentley 08 8386 2334  
Nick Burgerhof 07 3271 1592  
Ray Burton 08 8268 4575  
Joe Czey 07 3710 8102  
Al an S Coleman 07 3204 7401  
Grahame Cook 02 4390 5159  
Mick George 02 6882 8574  
Al an Hammond 0423491091  
Cul Hart 02 4392 0912  
Neil Innes MM 02 9875 2962  
Ken Jolley 02 6624 4066  
Barry Kelly 07 4661 2898  
Axel Kraft 08 9572 9597  
Peter McTiernan 02 6557 5211  
Gavin Menzies 02 6584 7257  
John Olsen 0414433341  
Ron Rockliffe 02 9789 4302  
Trevor Shelley 0419784954  
Kevin Smith 03 9787 1506  
John Thompson 0732168906  
Ross Tulloh 0418223345

### 1 Troop (1967-68)

Henry Baggaley 07 5433 0482  
Reg Bament 02 6948 2524  
Bruce Bevan 02 9580 3327  
Neville Bartels 07 4055 9871  
Bob Coleman 03 5342 0941  
Ross Comben 08 9535 2273  
Jack Green 07 3278 8719  
Ray Kenny 07 3881 3648  
Peter Koch 04 3822 3100  
Mike McCalum 02 6288 5113  
John Neal 02 9982 6694



Clive Pearsall 03 9459 4470  
Al an Rantal 03 9434 2031  
Peter Sheehan 03 9390 2834  
Jim Trower 0418842744

### 1 Troop (1968-69)

Phil Baxter MM 02 4625 6213  
Peter Carrodus 02 9759 6383  
Albert Eysens 03 5944 3127  
Ken Ford 02 6645 2738  
Max Goiser 02 9792 1765  
Peter Hollis 02 6581 5401  
George Hulsey 07 3399 7659  
Robert Laird 03 6356 1748  
Brian Lamb 02 6059 6947  
Kent Luttrell 0408387641  
Kerry McCormick 03 6344 5291  
Richard Reilly 02 6262 7374  
Tom Smith 07 5594 4659  
Col in Spies 07 4743 4676  
Garry Von Stanke 08 8725 5648  
Cliff Truelove 02 6495 7844  
Ken Wheatley 07 4774 0045  
Bob Woolley 03 6264 1485  
David Wright 03 9435 4131

### 1 Troop (1969-70)

Kevin Atkinson 08 9041 1571  
Larry Batze 07 4033 2025  
Al an S Coleman 07 3283 6689  
Paul Cook 02 4946 5321  
Garry Degering 03 9796 0136  
John Felton 07 4661 8679  
Grahame Fletcher 0408822489  
P. "Guts" Geisel 07 4092 1735  
Terry Gleeson 03 5623 2886  
Trevor Kelly 08 9538 1184  
Des McKenzie 07 5448 3400  
Les Slater 08 9361 0603  
Max Slater 0412 772 849  
Vic Smith 02 4364 0372  
Dave Sturmer 02 8407 9812

### 1 Troop (1970-71)

Mick Augustus 07 3205 7401  
Eric Banfalvi 07 3201 8234  
Dan Brindley 02 6643 1693  
Ian Cambel 03 9870 0313  
Bruce Fraser 07 5499 0508  
Peter Krause 02 6723 2835  
R Loxton 0419944755  
Barry Mel drum 03 5427 1162  
Roger Newman 07 5450 6054  
Dennis Pegg 03 6224 9090  
John Pritchard 02 9626 3376  
Garry Sutcliffe 07 4684 3229  
Donald Stringer 07 4151 2659  
Paul Taylor (NZ) (64)42990915  
Terry Ward 02 6566 6163  
Jim Weston 02 4987 7179  
John Wright 03 6398 6211

### 2 Troop (1966-1967)

Richard Beck 07 3208 5808  
David Buring 02 6254 6689  
Ron Cain 02 6586 1412  
Graeme Carey 02 6056 0997  
Terry Gribbin 03 9727 1839  
Bill Harrigan 08 9447 1127  
Peter Hegarty 07 4169 0372  
Graeme Leach 07 4777 8627  
Ken McCann 03 5985 3276  
Rod McClennan 07 3267 6907  
Noel McDuffie 0427051678  
Bob McKinnon 07 3267 0310  
Peter Matthews 03 6250 3686  
Mick Shannon 08 8552 1746  
Stan Shepherd 0412 232 197  
Bob Sweeney 08 9248 4432

### 2 Troop (1967-1968)

M. Ballantyne 08 8298 2515  
John Beningfield 07 4778 4473  
Peter Bennett 0418915550  
Dennis Burge 08 8281 2270  
Kenneth Butler 0414897889  
Harry Cooling 07 4778 2013  
Garry Cosgrove 02 4845 5153  
Peter Fontanini 0438 881 940  
Rol and G loss 02 6367 5324  
John Gol dfinch 02 6674 0855  
Paul Grills 07 4162 5235  
Ron Johnston 07 3351 1609  
Eddie Josephs 0417882491  
Lew Jordan 03 6397 3261  
Ray Kenny 07 3881 3648  
John Kiley 02 4228 4068  
David Kitlley 02 4735 4991  
Robert Knowles 08 9535 6416  
Bernard Ladyman 08 9795 7900  
Warren McBurnie 02 6687 7030  
Stephen McHenry 08 9344 6939  
Eric McKerrrow (Silent number)  
Dave McNair 08 9725 2821  
David Matulik 07 4055 1915  
Tony Parmenter 0417856877  
Brian Rankin 07 4775 5095  
Hans Rehorn 03 5623 5572  
Andrew Rogers 08 8087 5671  
Mick Rowbotham 03 9439 7566  
Geoff Russell 02 6342 1292  
Brian Sheehan 03 9336 3137  
James Smith 0413 669 087  
John Willis 03 9363 7878  
"Snow" Wil son 08 9752 2935

### 2 Troop (1968-1969)

Janis Atrens +371 2944 6521  
(This is Janis's mobile in Latvia)  
Bob Austin 02 6644 9237  
Ross Bachmann 07 5495 1443  
Don Beale 02 6971 2424  
Richard Branch 07 4947 1044  
Harold Bromley 03 9726 8625  
Peter Brunton 03 5156 5531  
Jim Castles 02 9639 2941  
Harry Claassen 07 3273 6701  
Peter Clayton 0418 823 266  
Rod Crane 08 9530 3083  
John Douglas 08 8376 3788  
Robert Earl 02 4990 3601  
John Gilmore 08 9795 6847  
Stan Golubenko 03 9361 2721  
Paul Grills 07 4162 5235  
Geoff Handley 03 5593 1791  
Ross Hansen 07 3202 7540  
Wayne Hynson 03 5245 6898  
Ray Jurkiewicz 07 3886 9054  
Brian Lamb 02 6059 6947  
Phil Lamb 08 8564 2001  
Wayne Lambly 07 3851 1837  
Darryl Lavis 08 8263 9548  
Peter Laws 02 4942 8131  
Bud Lewis 07 3881 1230  
Rick Martin 02 6928 4253  
Bill Morris 08 9384 2686  
Don Nicholls 02 9579 4126  
Col in Norris 02 4627 1180  
Terry O'Donnell 03 5334 3443  
Rod Palmer 0417672643  
Ted Podlich 07 3862 9002  
Daryl Porteous 07 4973 7663  
Mick Weston 07 5444 3307  
Ray (Phillip) White 03 9740 7141

### 2 Troop (1969-1970)

"Arab" Avotins 07 4129 8012  
Bruce Bofinger 02 4861 5715  
Frank Brady 02 6555 5200  
David Brook 03 9546 2868  
Jim Burrough 03 9885 8285  
Ron Coman 07 3355 7279  
Kevin Connor 0408 748 172  
Garry Cosgrove 02 4845 5153  
Arthur Davies 07 3408 1556  
Frank Denley 02 6571 2056  
Roy Elbourne 02 4868 1493  
Grumpy Foster 07 4041 2321  
Graeme Gartside 08 8725 6900  
Doug George 03 9889 2116  
Greg Gough 0417 911 173



Brad Hannaford 08 8389 2217  
John Hopman 02 9398 5258  
Chris Kouris 02 4952 6341  
Bill Lamb 0418 424 208  
Mick Loughlin 07 4060 3039  
Mick Lee 07 5543 5001  
Marty McGrath 02 6059 1204  
Jim Maret 03 9824 4967  
Bob Ottery 03 5199 2516  
Bevan Percival 07 5537 1577  
Pedro Piromanski 08 9306 8169  
Ian Pitt 03 5349 2018  
Jack Power 07 4955 3761  
Col in Redcliff 02 9673 0597  
John Ronaldson New Zealand  
Brian Scott 07 3204 5691  
Peter Scott (219) 02 4341 3782  
"Roo Dog" Scott 07 5535 6290  
Les Shelley 07 3264 4041  
Jimmy Shugg 08 9776 1471  
Bob Smith 07 5456 1194  
Mick Van Poeteren 03 9435 0383  
Gerry Walbridge 03 9803 4223  
Dennis Wilson 08 8892 2671  
Stephen Wilson 07 5538 2179

### 2 Troop (1970-1971)

Bruce Arrow 02 6288 3872  
Mick Bergin 03 5974 2165  
Graham Besford 03 9439 2671  
Mal Botfield 02 9872 2594

John Brady 02 6888 1192  
Keith Bruley 07 5543 0990  
Peter Cairns 03 6267 4646  
Brian Christian 07 4778 6602  
"Sam" Collins 08 8262 6107  
Ron Cook 03 8787 7377  
Jock Coutts 08 9279 1946  
Bill Craig 08 9530 1008  
Denis Crawford 03 9497 3256  
John Crocker 07 3206 7995  
John Cross 02 4757 2273  
Robin Date 03 9783 3202  
Tom Dodds 040672260  
Des Evans 07 4128 2390  
Bruce Fenwick 02 4977 3530  
Ray Ful ton 03 6288 1176  
Ziggy Gniot 0418 885 830  
Bob Hamblin 08 8672 3930  
Cec Harris 02 6629 3373  
Paddy Healy 02 4930 7541  
Kevin Hodge 08 8322 2619  
Paul Jones 02 6231 5963  
Jim Kel ton 02 6948 3927  
Chris Koolen 03 5237 1147  
Kevin Lappin 07 3273 8614  
Gary McClintock 07 4788 0123  
Peter McCol e 03 5155 9368  
Bob McGinn 07 5426 1597  
Ian McLean 02 6286 3928  
Jeff Maddock 03 5442 2875  
Leon Madel ey 07 5497 1038  
Butch Marsden 08 9921 6183  
Bill Marshall 07 5545 0389  
Rod O'Regan 02 6550 6068  
Graeme Pengeley 0407 138 124  
Des Pol den 03 6223 3830  
Keith Ramsay 02 6585 6503  
Mick Rasmussen 0428 790 645  
Ron Reid 0427 461 297  
Gary Sangster 0409 522 099  
John Scanlan 0488 132 903  
Peter Schreiber 02 6569 3390  
Garry Shoemark 02 6546 6778  
Al ex Skowronski 0407954570  
John Smith 0400032502  
Roy Sojan 08 9926 1235  
John Stonehouse 08 9653 1895  
Peter Swanson 0401392617  
John Tick 04 3898 7262  
Harry Eustace 07 5521 0856  
Steve Walton 07 3261 9446  
Terry Wake 07 4786 2625  
Dave Young 02 4283 3439

### 3 Troop (1966-67)

Wilfred Eyles 02 4390 0150

### 3 Troop (1967-68)

Ken Arnold 02 6974 1181  
Chuck Bonzas 08 9330 3490  
Bruce Breddin 0418766759  
Norm Cairns 03 6267 4629



Kerry Caughey 03 5971 4188  
David Clark 08 8388 7728  
Bob Coleman 03 5342 0941  
Jim Dowson 03 5662 3291  
Barry Gilbert 03 5023 6657  
John Hoskin 08 8270 3002  
Jack Lawson 0429 798 673  
Peter MacDonal d 08 9448 5418  
Barrie Morgan 0419 820 291  
Viv Morgan 02 9331 3252  
Michael O'Hearn 02 4932 7509  
Gary Pohlner 0427172900  
Tom Simons 03 6344 6058  
Kevin Shugg 0411144500  
Frank Sweeney 07 3882 6025  
Brian Thomson 0428551368  
Al an Tugwell 08 8552 5229  
Vic Underwood 0429 907 989  
Murray Walker 08 9332 6410  
Glenn Weise 0427 741 170  
Mick Woodhams 08 9459 0130  
Bob Yewen 07 5532 4560  
Ken Young 02 9602 5204

# SHAMELESS FUND RAISING EFFORT

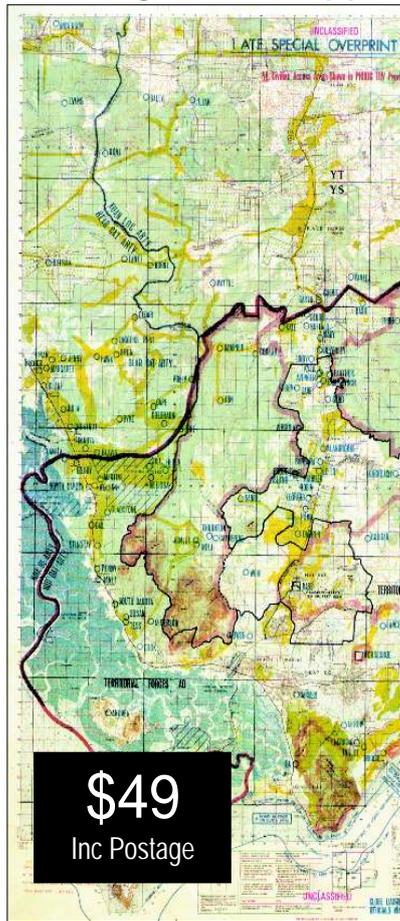
ALL PROFITS GO TO THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION

- 3 Troop (1968-69)
- Geoff Box 08 9731 2757
  - Eric Banfalvi 07 3201 8234
  - Barry Chambers 08 8927 8237
  - Neil Garrett 03 5798 1522
  - Brian Glyde 02 4455 7404
  - Peter Gray 02 4285 8877
  - John Holis 02 6662 6660
  - "Sam" Houston 07 5495 5480
  - Phil Lamb 08 8564 2001
  - Ian Lauder 08 9419 5375
  - John Murphy 08 9493 3771
  - John Nulty 02 6931 1884
  - Ted O'Malley 07 4054 3472
  - Barry Parnell 07 4947 1976
  - Bob Pritchard 07 4779 0608
  - Greg Roberts 03 5941 2269
  - Don Shiels 08 8297 8619
  - Ray Vanderheiden 02 4776 1373

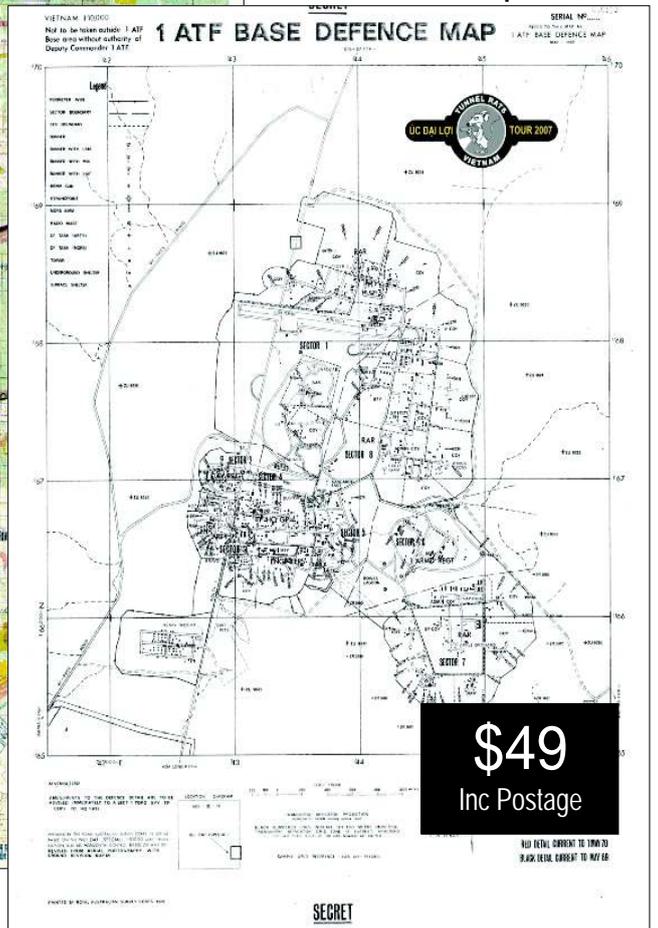


- Ray (Phil) White 03 9740 7141
- Three Troop (1969-70)
- Tony Bower-Miles 0412 317 306
  - Chris Brooks 08 9271 2811
  - Jim Burroughs 03 9885 8285
  - Terry Cartledge 03 5367 1472
  - Bruce Crawford 02 6628 0846
  - Richard Day 08 8088 4129
  - Phil Devine 0418 830 169
  - Bob Done 02 4944 9321
  - Ray Fulton 03 6288 1176
  - Graham Fromm 08 8532 2561
  - Doug George 03 9889 2116
  - Graham Harvey 07 5445 2636
  - Trevor Hughes 07 5532 3497
  - Darrel Jensen 07 4938 7203
  - Rod Kirby 07 4973 7726
  - Peter Knight 02 6247 6272
  - Gerry Lyal 07 3343 4725
  - Phil McCann 03 5442 3459
  - Chris MacGregor 02 4472 3250
  - Norm Martin 02 4953 1331
  - Jock Meldrum MID 0405 677 448
  - Roel of Methorst (Silent No.)
  - Gary Miller MM 07 5495 5647
  - "Jacko" Miller 03 6267 4411
  - Chris Muller 07 4653 0457
  - Danny Mulvan 08 9356 6890
  - Vin Neale 03 9786 1549
  - Peter Phillips 0429362935
  - G. Rentmeester 03 9735 5236
  - Brenton Smith 08 8388 5501
  - Gordon Temby 08 9757 2016
  - Peter Thorp MID 02 6288 0008
  - "Curly" Tuttleby 08 8952 6598
  - Hank Veenhuizen 0407 487 167
  - "Wonzer" White 02 9833 0580
- Three Troop (1970-71)
- Steve Armbrust 07 5545 1073
  - Errol Armitage 0427 855 482
  - Geoff Ansell 0448 013 712
  - Mike Barnett 02 9869 7132
  - John Beningfield 07 4778 4473
  - Darryl Binns 08 8988 5827
  - Mal Botfield 02 9872 2594
  - Ian Campbell 03 9870 0313
  - Bob Clark 03 5439 5532
  - Graeme Clarke 07 4128 4660
  - Ted Clarke 03 5682 2584
  - Alan J Coleman 02 9838 4848
  - Steve Collett 08 9371 0075
  - John Davey 07 3378 4316
  - Chris Ellis 08 9398 1718
  - Kevin Hodge 08 8322 2619
  - Kenny Laughton 08 8297 4010
  - Garry Lourigan 02 4844 5545
  - R. McKenzie-Clark 08 9729 1162
  - Robert McLeay 03 5386 1122
  - Carl o Mikkelsen New Zealand 0064 9 4797857
- Three Troop (1971-72)
- Ben Passarel 02 9610 3949
  - Robert Reed 07 3351 4440
  - Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
  - Les Shelley 07 3264 4041
  - John Steen 0419772375
  - Gordon Temby 08 9757 2016
  - David Wilson 07 3855 1370

Australian area of Ops map showing all fire support bases

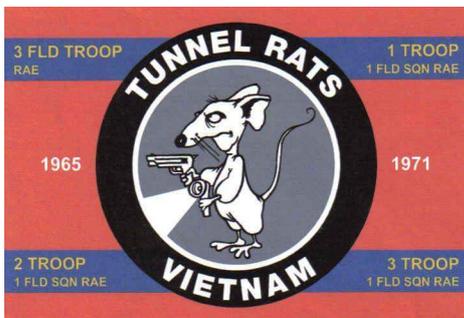


Nui Dat defence plan map, with units, roads & all defence positions



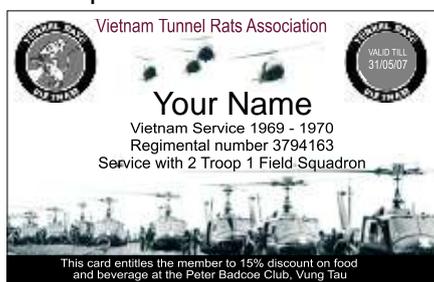
**Huge historic maps**  
(each one approx 36"x26")  
Highly detailed with fascinating information  
Superbly printed on quality paper

<b>I wish to order the following maps (please tick):</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Australian area of Ops map	
<input type="checkbox"/> Nui Dat Defence plan map	
<b>NAME:</b>	
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<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	
The cost is \$ (Please fill in the amount)	
You can pay by credit card (your statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics"), or by cheque or Postal Order. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association	
Tick which card you wish to use: <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Master Card <input type="checkbox"/> Amex	
<b>Card Number:</b>	
<b>Name on card:</b>	<b>Expiry Date:</b>
Post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Victoria 3142	



### Who can join?

The Association was formed for all who served with one of the Royal Australian Engineer Field Troops in Vietnam. Membership is exclusively for men who served in Vietnam with either 3 Field Troop or 1 Troop, 2 Troop or 3 Troop of 1 Field Squadron.



A superb "Tunnel Rats" membership card is provided for Members, detailing your name, Troop and service in Vietnam.

### Why we formed the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association

Our status seemed to be getting a bit blurred. It had reached the point where any Engineer who served in Vietnam was calling himself a Tunnel Rat. The members of the Field Troops fought alongside the Infantry plus they performed their additional tasks of mine and booby trap detection and clearing, plus bunker and tunnel searching, bomb disposal and demolition.



The Tunnel Rats paid a huge price in casualties during this service - with an average of over 30% of us being either killed or wounded during the six years of the war. Our association was formed to recognise and honour that service and those lost comrades.

By wrongly claiming Tunnel Rat status, some men from non-field Troops had begun to blur the line defining the unique role of the Tunnel Rats. If it became generally accepted that all Engineer units in Vietnam were Tunnel Rats, then our unique service would not be properly recognised. Nobody has a right to do that. We should not allow anybody to diminish something we are so proud of. The forming of the Association is not an elitist thing, it is simply intense pride in what we did and a move to protect our status.

### Holdfast Newsletter

is edited by Jim Marett and published quarterly by the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association Inc.

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Ph; 03-9690 7888 (W)

Mobile 0403041962

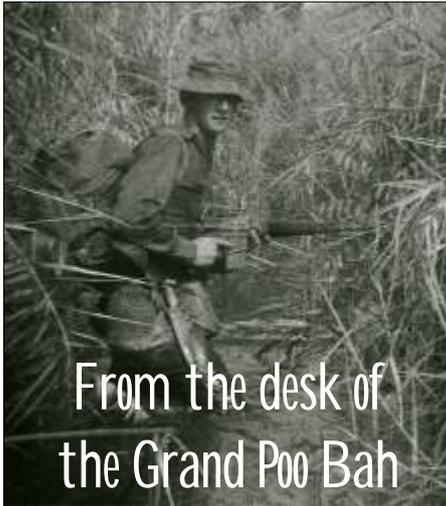
[tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au](mailto:tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au)

[www.tunnelrats.com.au](http://www.tunnelrats.com.au)

## Join now - it's only \$50

NAME:		SERVICE NUMBER	
ADDRESS:			
		POST CODE	
PHONE:		MOBILE:	
EMAIL:			
Please tick unit/s served with and fill in dates of service in Vietnam			
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 FIELD TROOP	FROM	TILL
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
The cost is \$50. You can pay by credit card (your statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics"), or by cheque or postal order. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association			
Tick which card you wish to use: <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Master Card			
Card number			
Name on card		Expiry Date	
Signature:			
POST TO:		VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOC 43 HEYINGTON PLACE TOORAK VIC 3142	

If you don't want to cut into this fantastic newsletter - simply photocopy the form



We're late again with this issue, but we've made it up with another bumper 40 page edition, plus two free Tunnel Rat car stickers. We've supplied two stickers each this time because of the number of requests we've had for additional stickers after we provided the last one. It's obvious there are a lot of rich Rats out there with more than one car. The usual guarantee applies regarding the sticker's ability to fend off all speeding and parking fines - just stand near the sticker while you talk to the officer, And please report all success stories - we like to gloat.

### **Membership Cards**

This issue also contains your membership card. Let us know if your card was not included in the newsletter or if any of the details on the card were incorrect. Producing these cards, each with the individual service details of the member is a mammoth task, but we feel it adds to the validity of the card. our strong relationship with the management team at the Peter Badcoe Club in Vung Tau continues to enable us to offer you extraordinary benefits. Your membership now entitles you to five free nights accommodation and 50% off all food and beverages at the Club. Please note, the 2100hrs curfew no longer applies at the club.

### **Vietnam Trip**

Take a look (pages 24-27) at the exciting trip we have planned back to Vietnam, this time sharing the experience with current serving Sappers. Again, by working through local travel organisations in Vietnam we've kept the costs right down. This has also enabled us to arrange very special meetings with former VC who actually served in the areas where we operated. Many who went on our trip back in 2007 still describe it as "the trip of a lifetime". This one promises to be even better.

### **Reunion plus a get together with 1Fld Sqn Group Qld**

This is early notice of our next reunion - this time to be held in the Gold Coast area in August next year. Full details will come in the next issue, but we plan a trip to 2 Combat Engineer Regiment based at Enoggera, plus a nostalgic journey back to Canungra (bring your runners). The 1 Field Squadron Group Qld will be holding their reunion at this time, so we plan to attend their main dinner on Saturday 27th August 2011 at the Twin Towns Services Club. We've been assured we can book our own tables, so there will be none of the previous bunfights experienced to try and sit together. This is the last reunion for the 1 Fld Sqn Group before they hand the organisation over to current serving Sappers. More details in our next issue.

### **Can you help?**

If you have any photos, stories or information on Sapper Bryant (Brian) Hansen who served with 1 Troop February 1969 to October 1969, please contact Phil Baxter MM ( 02-4625 6213 or 0411 242 618). Sapper Bryant was killed in action in a mine incident on 21st October 1969. We recently presented Brian's

wife and son with his Army Combat Badge. At that presentation it was learnt that they have no photos and no correspondence at all from Brian's Vietnam tour. Brian served with 5 section commanded by Peter Hollis. Phil is trying to gather as much material as he can to present to the family.

### **Are you on the list?**

Each issue we publish a list of our members names along with a contact phone number. This has proved to be a phenomenal aid in helping us get together with old mates. We know the list is not complete, so please let us know if you are not on it. At the moment our "Master of the list" Graeme Gartside is touring Vietnam, so send me your details for the list and we'll ensure you're included in the next issue. Send by email, post or phone - my contact details are on the facing page.

### **Let's welcome them home**

The Sappers of 2CER currently supporting 6RAR in Afghanistan will March through Brisbane on, 20th November 2010 (Saturday morning). Our Association will be on the streets with our banner to thank them and welcome them home. We also plan to gather with them for drinks afterwards at their Enoggera Base. Come and join us to show these men how proud we are of them and how thankful we are for their service. Peter "Roo Dog" Scott is co-ordinating our involvement, so to join in and to find more as we get closer to the date, give "Roo Dog" a call on 0400 799 577.

*Sapper Jim Marett  
2 Troop 1 Field Squadron  
Vietnam 1969 - 1970*

# SHAMELESS FUND RAISING EFFORT

ALL PROFITS GO TO THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION

## Tunnel Rat's Woolen "Bomber" Jackets

Personalised with the Troop/s you served with and your date/s of service. Superbly made, fully lined, and beautifully embroidered with the Tunnel Rat's logo plus your personal details of service. These are tailored in "generous" sizes, so order your normal size, not one size up.



Jackets are in deep navy blue only  
Tunnel Rats logo is black, grey and white  
Personalised lettering is in red

Only  
**\$100**  
Plus  
Postage  
Order now!  
Don't send  
money, we'll be  
delivering it  
to you COD

NAME:	SERVICE NUMBER	
ADDRESS:	POST CODE	
PHONE:	MOBILE:	
EMAIL:		
SIZE (Please Tick):	<input type="checkbox"/> sml <input type="checkbox"/> med <input type="checkbox"/> lge <input type="checkbox"/> X-lge <input type="checkbox"/> XX-lge <input type="checkbox"/> XXX-lge	
PLEASE TICK AND FILL IN DATE DETAILS OF UNIT/S SERVED WITH IN VIETNAM		
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 FIELD TROOP	FROM	TILL
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
Don't send any money! Simply fill in the form above and post it to the address below. The jacket will be delivered COD to your local Post Office, who will advise you when the jacket arrives. You then pay the Post Office \$100 plus postage.		
POST TO:	VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOC 43 HEYINGTON PLACE TOORAK VIC 3142	