



HOLDFAST

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MINE LIFTING HERO

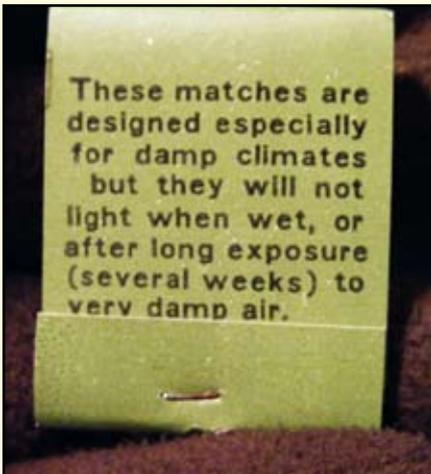
It was Viet Cong soldier Duong Van Manh who first discovered how to lift M-16 mines fitted with anti-lift devices from the 11km long barrier minefield laid by 1 Field Squadron in 1967. Our own mines were then used against us, causing hundreds of Australian casualties. Today in Long Phuoc Village he is recognised by this statue as a local hero. Full story inside:

SECRET

Free map of Nui Dat inside, but don't show it to anybody, it's classified secret



Nostalgia Pages



Pages of great pics from the past to amaze and amuse. Photo contributions welcome. Send your favourite Vietnam pics (with descriptions, names and approx dates) to Jim Marett 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142 or by email to: tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au



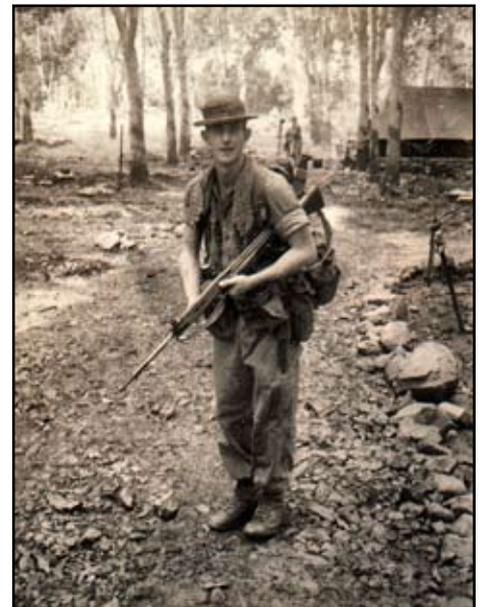
A few drinks before flying off to Vietnam

Three Sappers fresh out of Corp Training and excited about the adventure of being posted to Vietnam. It's 27th of May 1969 and Greg Gough, 2Tp (left) and Gary Degering, 1Tp (right) are heading off that night, while Mick Van Poeteren, 2Tp (middle) will depart some six weeks later. After Corp Training and Jungle Training at Canungra, Sappers were posted to Holding Wing at SME and simply waited for their Vietnam posting. It became a tradition to go to the airport and see your mates off with a few beers in the posh International Departure Lounge. It was so flash in there you had to wear a tie, hence Mick's Army tie with his civvie gear.



"It was safer to do it in two stages Sir"

Cutting down big trees with explosives was often done by Tunnel Rats to create a clear landing zone for helicopter evacuation. The job above has obviously proved "difficult" as they are having another go at it, placing new explosives where the previous ones had failed to do the job. The Sapper is checking the set-up before lighting the fuse (again).



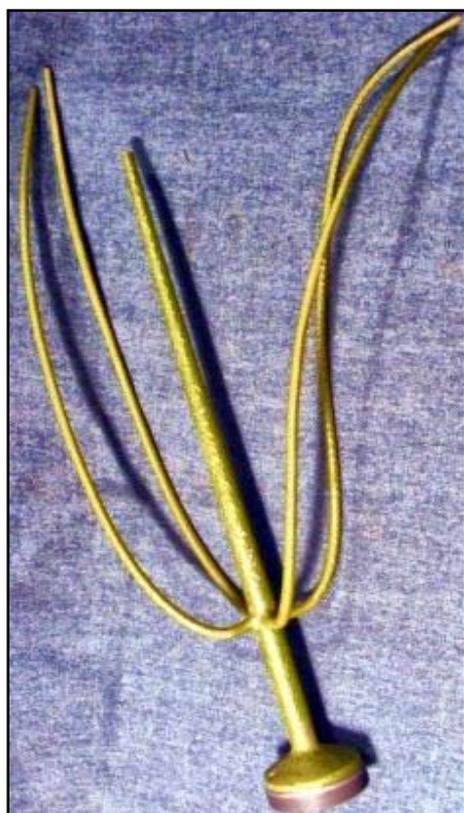
Ready to Roll

Tunnel Rat "Dick" Bentley (1Tp 1966-67) is all kitted out as he departs Nui Dat on an operation attached to the Infantry as the "No.1" of a two-man Splinter Team. Extensive tunnel systems were found in Phuoc Tuy Province during this period, so Dick would have been a busy boy out there.



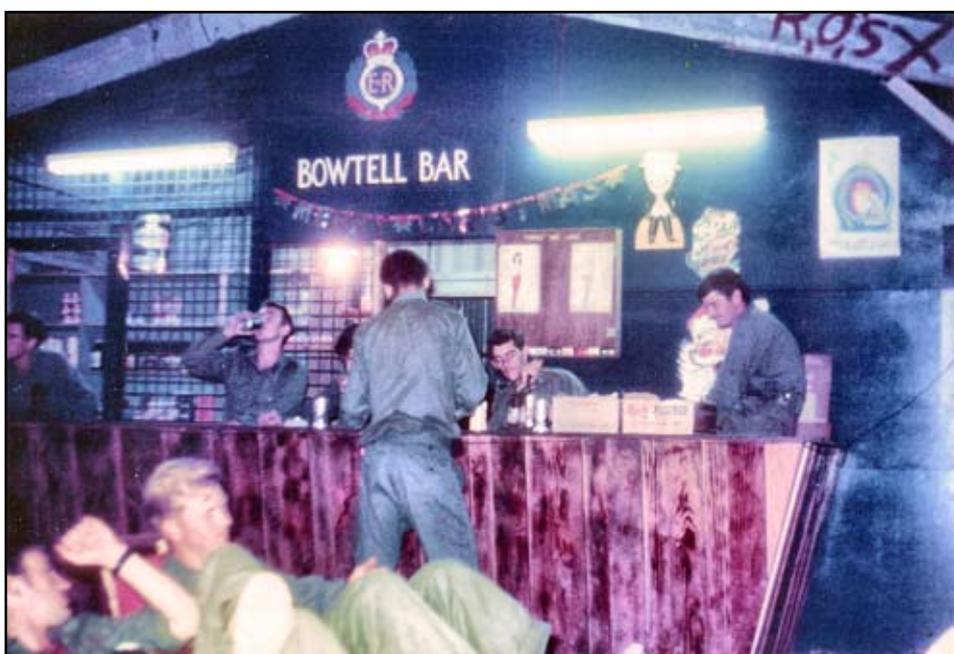
9RAR lads hit two mines while on US trucks

While travelling on Route 15 near Bien Hoa air base in late 1968, these two US trucks both hit anti-vehicle mines simultaneously. On board were Infantry from 9RAR. Australian APCs were accompanying the convoy and the Mini Team on board the lead APC was tasked to clear safe lanes to the wounded. The Mini Team was from 3 Troop and they also cleared a landing zone so that helicopters could take away the casualties.



There was some weird stuff out there

This strange device was found near trails leading into the Rung Sat Secret Zone (a known enemy staging area). It turned out to be the aerial from a movement sensor. These were dropped into areas where enemy foot traffic was suspected. The right readings would bring a world of hurt in the form of artillery, helicopter gunships or even "Puff the Magic Dragon".



This is hallowed ground

The 1 Field Squadron boozier was the social hub of the unit, but by tradition each Troop had their own sitting area, and without anybody telling you "the rules" you stuck to your patch. While out on four to six week long operations with the "Grunts" or "Tankies", there were several things you really looked forward to when getting back to Nui Dat, a shower, clean greens, and a session at the boozier with your Troop mates.



Sweet snack

The US "C Rations" were a bit of a novelty for the Aussies. They tended to be sweeter than our palate was used to, but there was certainly plenty of variety. A good quick snack during a "smoko break" on patrol was jam on cracker biscuits. Plenty of sugar to keep you going and no cooking required!



“They’re getting closer”

This quintet of Tunnel Rats (the driver too) are on board HMAPC George, 1 Field Squadron's very own APC. It's 1971 and they'd been called out to look at a freshly started tunnel found very close to Nui Dat base camp. John Severyn of 1 Troop (on the left) supplied the photo, and John thinks the other guys are from 3 Troop. Does anyone know the names of the 3 Troop lads?



A classic Sapper

Sapper Ron Davies was a Tunnel Rat with 3 Troop 1Fd Sqn, and he looks every bit the classic Sapper - a strong smile, a few “tatts”, and a nose bent a little from perhaps an altercation or two defending the honour of The Corp. Seen here in his tent back at Nui Dat base camp, Ron arrived in country on December 19th 1968, the day after his 24th birthday. Five months later on 28th May 1969 he was killed in action, from gunshot wounds he received during an ambush while attached in a two-man Splinter Team to B Company 9RAR. Rest in Peace Sapper.



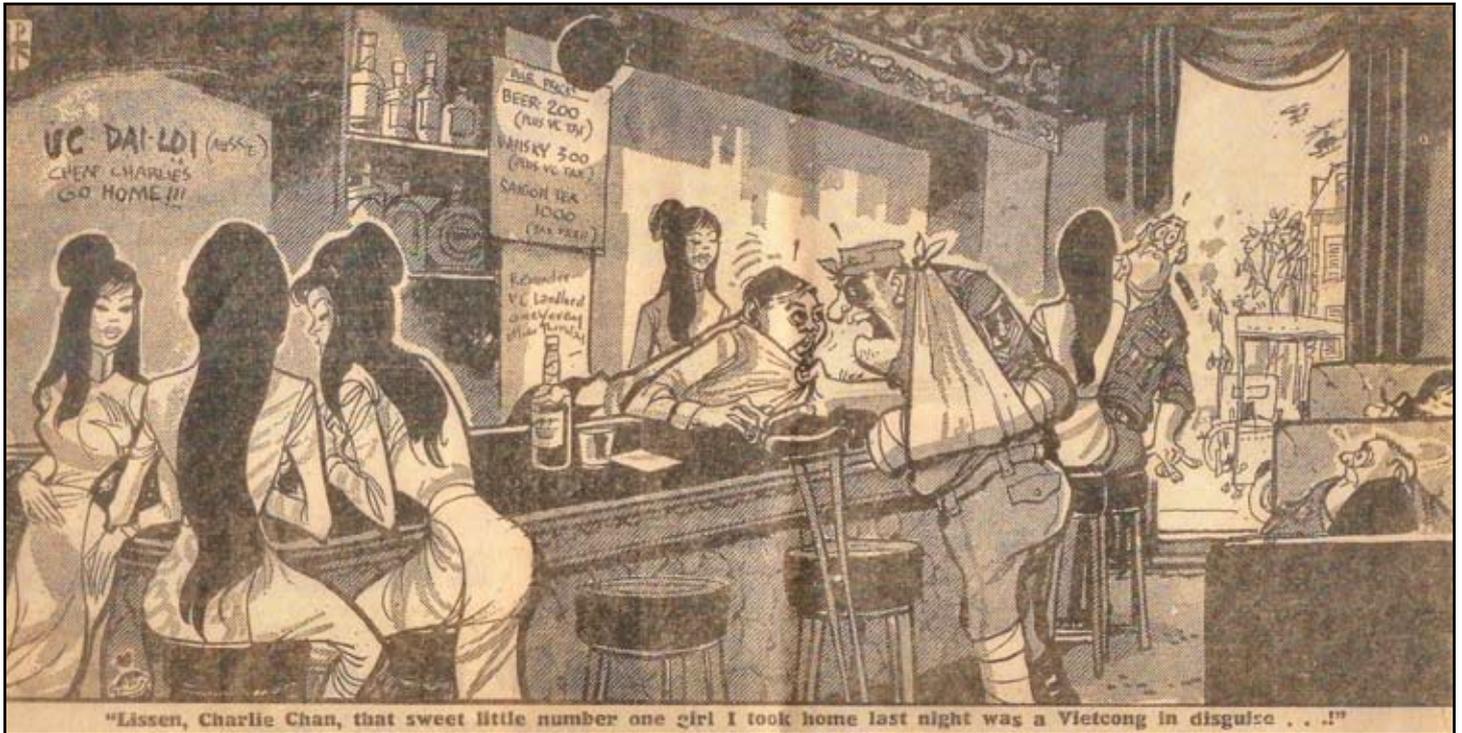
Bum Pack

This piece of US equipment wasn't on official issue to Australian troops, but somehow every Tunnel Rat in Vietnam managed to scrounge one from somewhere. We used it to carry our blocks of C4 explosives plus Det Cord, lengths of safety fuse, pliers and other bits and pieces. Officially it was known as our Demolitions Bag, but we called it our Bum Pack because that's where it was usually positioned on our patrol gear.



Chemical warfare

There's been a lot of fuss about the possible ill-effects of Agent Orange on troops, but what about this stuff? Every night while out on patrol we'd rub this insect repellent religiously onto our hands and faces. Your lips would immediately go numb, and if it got on your Army issue watch it would cloud the clear plastic face permanently!



“That girl I took home last night was a Viet Cong!”

Paul Rigby was a famous newspaper cartoonist of the era, and he often chose Vietnam as his subject matter. Here he portrays with incredible accuracy and insight, a typical scene in a Vung Tau girlie bar - not that any of us went to such places of course, but we heard about them from the Construction Squadron guys!

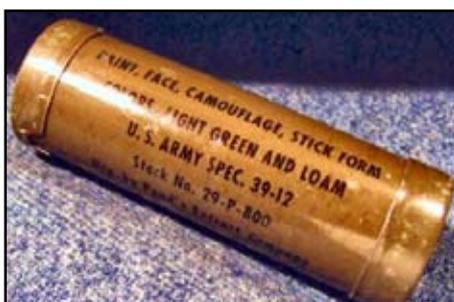


“Sarge they’re doing it again”

A good Troop Sergeant doing his job well would quickly recognise that these two lads need a few days rest and recreation in Vung Tau. They’re only kidding of course, but these 3 Tp Sappers, John Olsen and Art Richardon certainly wouldn’t say no to a few days break, combing the bars and beaches of Vungers.

The Green Machine in action

This is a simple stick of two colour face paint but the Army of course has to give it a much longer name because that is how it’s done in the Army.



Three Amigos on a mission

Did we ever really look this young? Three 2 Troop Tunnel Rats (69/70) are on R&R leave together in Bangkok. Having a “Singha” beer before hitting the town (left to right) Jimmy Shugg, Marty McGrath and Greg Gough contemplate where to go. There’s plenty of options on offer - ancient temples, crocodile shows, snake shows, souvenir shopping, traditional Thai dancing, Thai cooking lessons - Oh, and the bars are pretty good too, and maybe a massage.....



Culverts provided ideal mine locations

A Viet Cong explosive device found in a drainage culvert beneath a road. The device consisted of a block of TNT with an electrically fired detonator which could be command detonated via the red electrical wire. Photo provided by John Kemp , OC 1 Field Squadron 67-68



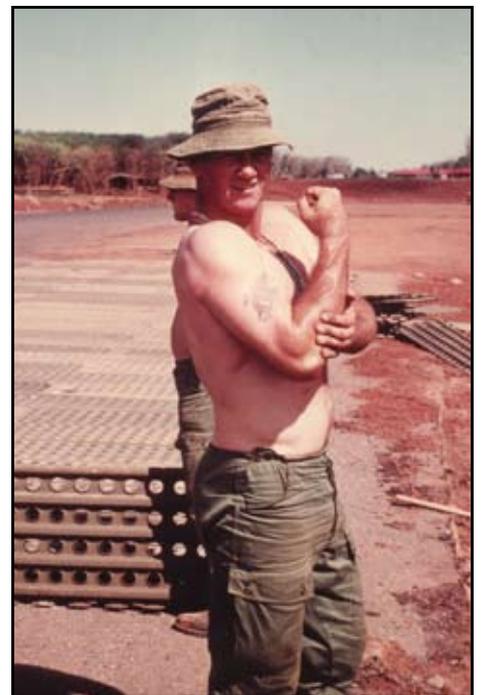
Essential item

If you didn't have one of these out bush, you went pretty hungry. It's the nifty little can opener which came with US ration packs ("C Rations"). The Australian version was considered superior however, as it was larger, making it easier to handle and harder to lose, plus it incorporated a spoon.



"You better blow them up Sapper"

Geoff Handley, a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron 68/69 is seen here tasked with blowing up a collection of old enemy mortar rounds. The rounds were found in a cache while Geoff was attached to 5RAR . Though these rounds were decayed and probably not useable as mortar rounds, it was important to destroy them because the enemy still used them against us by converting them to anti-tank mines, burying them on likely routes, wired up to a pressure switch.



Muscle Man

Laying PSP sheeting in the intense heat is hard work, but it does wonders for your muscles. Here Sapper Eddie Peckett, a Tunnel Rat with 3Tp 68/69 shows off the results of his enforced hard labour.

The most famous photo ever from the Vietnam War - bar none

Forget the photo of the Vietnamese Colonel shooting the Viet Cong in the head during Tet 1968, and forget the photo of the the chopper lifting evacuees from a rooftop during the fall of Saigon - this is in fact the most famous photo from Vietnam. It's an all-revealing photo of singer/actress Ann Margret in concert at the Bob Hope Show in Danang in 1968. Evidently a US Air Force surveillance technician took the photo with an infra-red filter. Ann was wearing red nickers, and voila, all was exposed. If you didn't have this photo up in your tent, either the bro-mide dose in the tea was overdone or your sexuality was of a seriously questionable nature. Ann was a real patriot and gave many concerts for troops in Vietnam. Those concerts are fondly remembered by the thousands of men who saw them. This photo is signed "To all Supply officers everywhere - Love Ann". The photo was presented to "Holdfast" by a former Tunnel Rat who had kept it under lock and key for decades. He felt it was time for it to surface again. Well done Sapper.



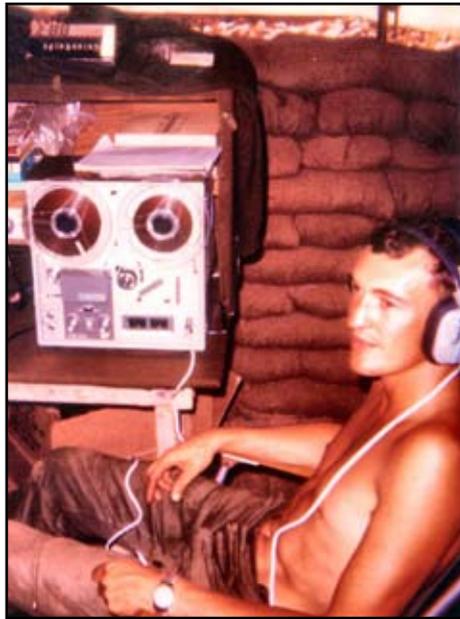
Chinook still waiting at Saigon airport

This old Chinook helicopter is still sitting on the tarmac in the back blocks of the modern Saigon airport. As you taxi around the airport when taking off or landing you can often see a range of old, obviously Vietnam War era aircraft in the distance. An adventurous Sapper on a recent holiday to Vietnam took a wander into off limits areas and took this photo. Well done! Also lining the runway are old revetments, some with half-pipe concrete covers, which obviously once housed jets and helicopter gunships. Take a look next time you visit.



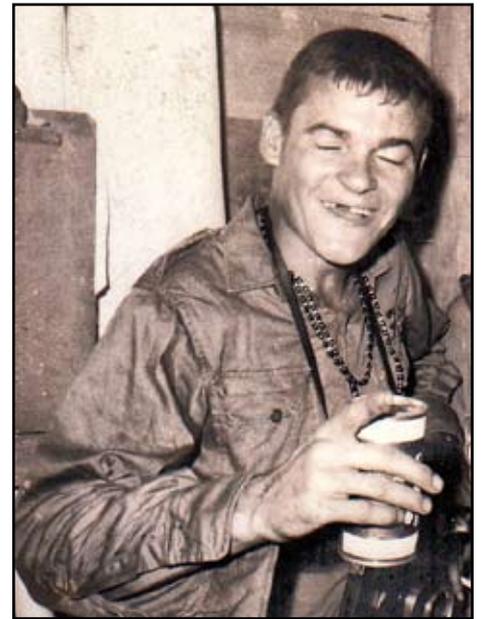
Gently does it!

Sapper Gary Pohlner, a Tunnel Rat with 3Tp 1FD Sqn 67/68 is disarming an M-16 mine found near the perimeter of the barrier minefield. About half of the mines in this field were fitted with anti-lift devices.



Wired for sound

Electronic goods were dirt cheap at the military outlets in Vietnam. It became the in thing to set your tent up with the very latest reel-to-reel deck plus speakers. Here Sapper Barry Chambers, a Tunnel Rat with 3Tp 1FD Sqn 68/69 listens in to his brand new Akai gear.



Amazing comeback for Sapper Denley

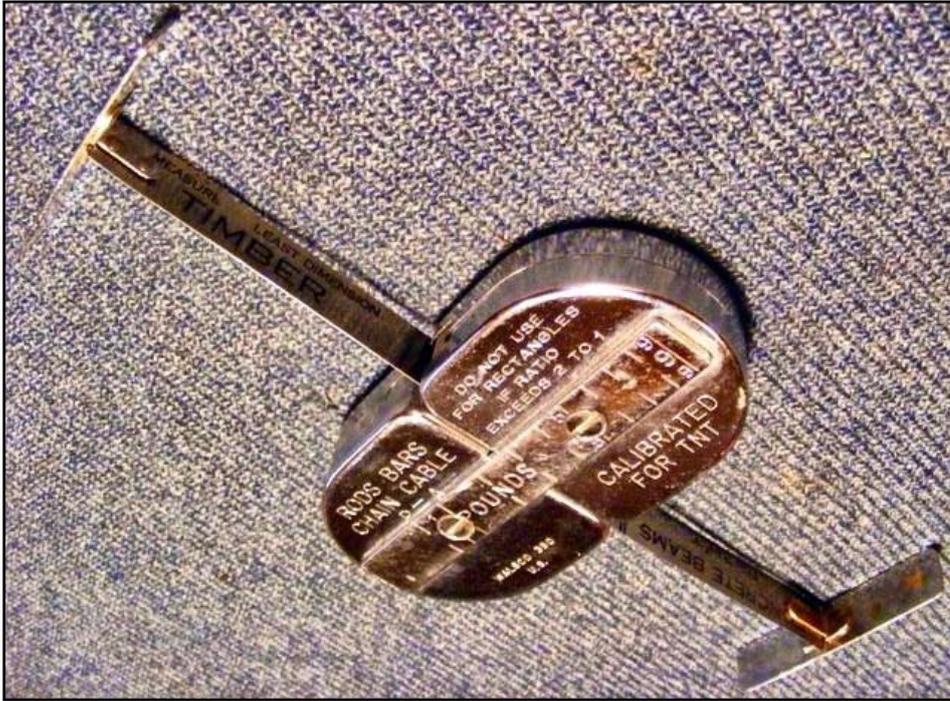
Sapper Frank Denley was one of the great characters of 2Tp during the 69/70 era. Embracing the Age of Aquarius, Frank was our Troop Hippie, adorning himself with beads, bangles and bells. He was a good Tunnel Rat out bush on operations, but a bit of a menace in base camp or on leave. If anyone was going to lose their wallet, watch or camera while on leave in Vungers, it was Frank. In fact his record performance was losing all three at once, along with a few teeth. Pushing the envelope too far one night at Nui Dat, Frank blew up the Squadron OC's dunny, getting 28 days in the slammer for his trouble. Despite rumours of Frank's demise, he's alive and well. In fact he's well enough to have recently rung and abused us for taking him off the mailing list because we thought he'd gone to that great Sapper paradise in the sky. Welcome back Frank.



Double whammy

Above: A US Forces APC operating in Phuoc Tuy Province in 1969 hit an anti-tank mine and a Mini Team from nearby Aussie APCs helped by clearing safelanes and finding the triggering device. Searching the surrounding area, the Sappers also found an explosives charge (right) set up on a railway line 100m away from the mine incident. Photos supplied by Sapper Brian Forbes 2 Troop 68/69.





Explosives calculator

For Aussie Sappers out in the field, the tried and true method of calculating how much explosive we needed to blow things up was simple: "Take a calculated guess - and then add a bit more for good measure." The Americans actually had a device (above) which calculated how much explosive they needed. Operating like a tape measure, it took into account whether you were blowing up timber, steel beams, rods or chain. The calculator above was calibrated for TNT, but they also had one for using with the C4 plastic explosives we were used to working with.



A bridge to the community

In April 1969, Sapper Brian Forbes, a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop 68/69 is helped by local kids as he works on repairing a Bailey bridge on Route 23 in Phuoc Tuy Province. The bridge made it easier for villagers from Xuyen Moc to transport their goods to markets in Dat Do and Ba Ria. The Viet Cong would often set mines or booby traps on bridges because they were a "choke point" across which troops were likely to cross.



"Is that you Sapper Pengelly?"

After being out on operations with the Infantry, being safe and sound back in base camp was great, but not without its hazards. Troop staff worked on the basis that an idle Sapper was a dangerous Sapper, so they were constantly inventing meaningless tasks to keep us busy. Raking leaves, painting rocks and hoeing down long grass were classics. To avoid this nonsense, good Sappers learnt how to "disappear" while in base camp. Here Sapper Graeme Pengelly, a Tunnel Rat with 2Tp in 1970 attempts to avoid recognition by shielding his face from view from the Troop hut as he makes a dash for the boozier.



Tagged and bagged

By the foot-scraper in the background, it looks like some smart Sapper has managed to get this captured enemy rifle, webbing and helmet back to base at Nui Dat. It will either end up on the wall of his Troop's recreation hut, or in his trunk for illegally shipping home.

Mine-lifting legend Duong Van Manh

In the village of Long Phuoc near our old Nui Dat base camp there's a prominent and well-maintained statue of a man who is obviously held in high regard. The statue is very much in that "Heroic" style so common decades ago in Russia and China – and still prevalent in North Korea today.

Though many Australian Veterans visit this area these days, few know who the man is and few bother to ask. His connection to the Australian Tunnel Rats is direct and painful, he is the Viet Cong soldier who figured out how to lift the M-16 mines fitted with anti-lift devices from the 11km long barrier minefield.

His name is Duong Van Manh, but he is known locally as "Hero Manh".

The minefield was laid in the direction of the Task Force Commander at the time, and comprised some 21,000 mines, and about half of them were fitted with the anti-lifting device, which was an M-26 grenade fitted with a pressure release switch. The mine sat on the switch so that if the mine was lifted the grenade would explode, which would set the mine off as well for good measure.

The local Viet Cong forces quickly realized the minefield was not only a barrier to their normal supply and communications routes, but had the potential to be an arms depot for them. Thousands of lethal weapons they could use against the Australian troops were just sitting there for the taking.

Even before the minefield was completed, the Viet Cong were lifting the mines, but they were suffering a lot of casualties in doing so. This was confounding them because they knew the



The statue of Duong Van Manh in the village of Long Phuoc

M-16 was in fact an easy mine to neutralize and lift. Logic told them that all they had to do was stick the safety pin in the right hole and they could remove it and carry it back to their village safely. This was happening in some cases, but in others, the mine blew up in their faces. No accurate figures are available, but it is commonly stated local-

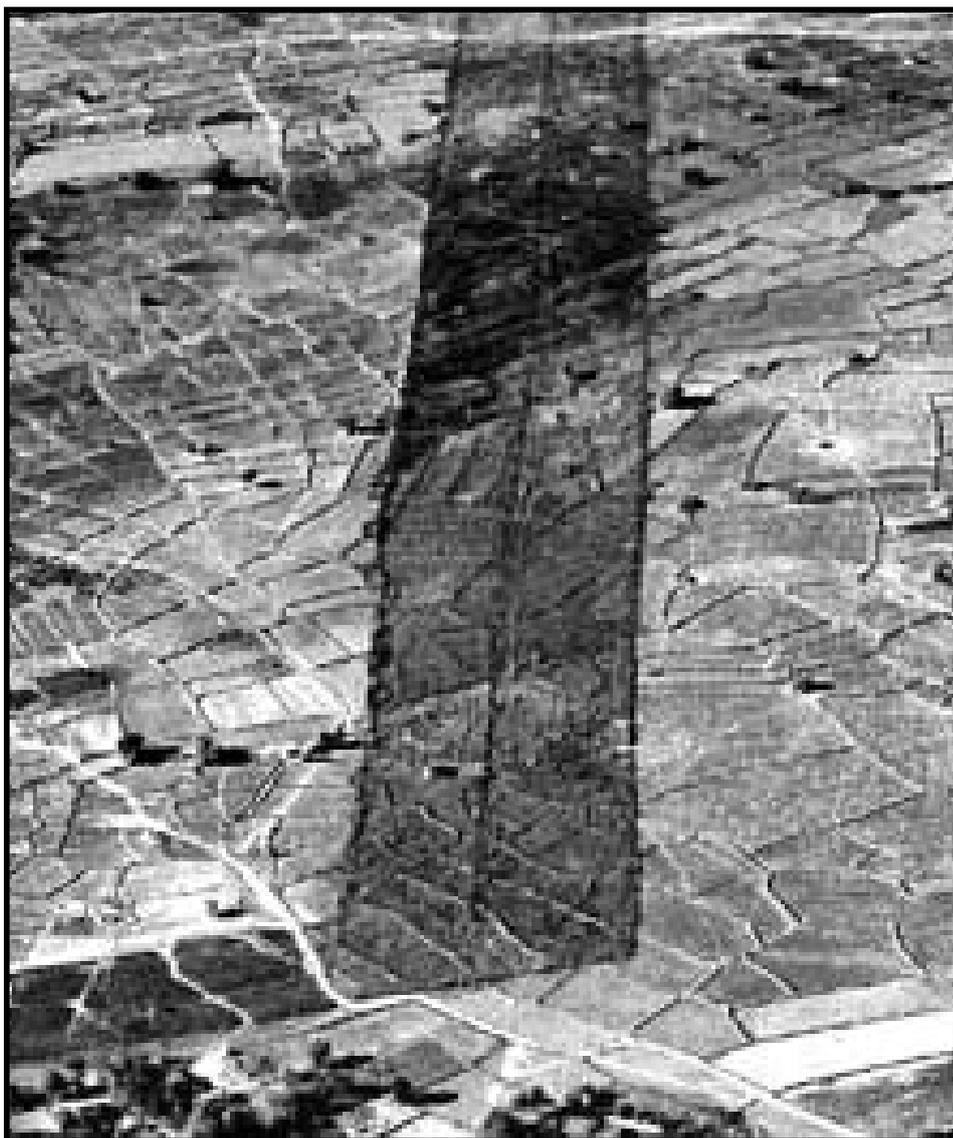
ly that over 30 Viet Cong were killed trying to lift the mines.

Duong Van Manh entered the minefield one night to see if he could figure out what was happening and why so many of his comrades were being killed in what should be an easy task. Manh quickly found a mine by feeling gently for the three prongs protruding from the ground. He dug the earth from around it and rather foolishly attempted to lift it from the ground. He said he actually heard a click (the pressure switch on top of the grenade), but nothing happened. As luck would have it, the grenade must have been faulty. This stroke of luck enabled Manh to return to the village with the whole device – the M-16 mine, the pressure switch and the M26 grenade.

Manh had solved the mystery of why some of the mines were blowing up as the

BELOW: Incredibly, by 1969 the Viet Cong had established an underground room within the minefield where they stored lifted mines. Here Sapper Frank Denley, a Tunnel Rat with 2Tp emerges from the cache





VC attempted to lift them. He then devised a technique for pinning both the mine and the pressure switch, making it possible to safely cart away the mine and the grenade, to be used to great effect against Australian troops.

Manh then spent months going around the villages of Phuoc Tuy Province, training local Viet Cong in the art of safely removing the mines from the Australian barrier minefield.

In the following few years hundreds of Australians were killed or wounded by mines lifted directly from the minefield. The Tunnel Rats from the Field Troops of 1 Field Squadron, attached to Infantry Battalions in two-man Splinter Teams were invariably at the centre of the horror of those incidents. Their task was to clear safe lanes to their wounded comrades so they could be evacuated to hospitals. Many of the Tunnel Rats became casualties themselves in these incidents, either from the initial mine explosion or from a second mine explosion, usually caused by one of the wounded triggering a further mine. It was an horren-

ABOVE LEFT: An M-16 anti-personnel mine fitted with the anti-lifting device comprising an M-26 grenade with a pressure switch replacing the normal ring-pull and handle triggering device.

ABOVE: A section of the minefield near Dat Do

dous task, but one which created a rock solid bond between the Tunnel Rats and the Infantry.

Duong Van Manh continued his crusade on mine recovery, even organizing cash rewards for Viet Cong who lifted mines from the minefield.

The extensive number of the mines taken from the Australian minefield and used against Australian troops actually changed the course of the war in our area of operations. The lifted mines allowed the Viet Cong to form formidable minefield barriers around their own base camps, particularly in the

Long Hai Hills.

These enemy minefields filled with stolen Australian mines were so effective at causing Australian casualties in the Long Hai Hills area that commanders, and eventually Australian politicians balked at entering the zone.

Duong Van Manh had created a complete reversal, effectively being responsible for giving the Viet Cong the ability to move our minefield and turn it against us.

The decision to create the minefield and to leave it unprotected is seen by many as a monumental military blunder.

"Why were you in the Vietnam War Grandpa - did you win?"



Media reporting on the Vietnam War during and immediately after the conflict was so polluted by left wing propaganda it was near impossible for those who served there to form and air their own opinions on their return.

The damning barrage from the anti-war elements was relentless, and any attempt by Veterans to speak to the contrary was usually met with ridicule, sometimes even from friends and family whose opinions had been cleverly shaped by the leftist lobby.

This was a bitter pill to swallow for all returning servicemen. For the Tunnel Rats who'd had 35 of their mates killed in action and over 200 wounded, it was a bewildering and grossly disappointing injustice.

We knew a sacred line had been crossed by protesters belittling the value of the ultimate sacrifice made by our 35 comrades - but with no voice of our own at the time, we just sat there



The last patrol, B Co. 4RAR move into Nui Dat on the 10th of November 1971

and fumed. We bit our tongues and got on with life.

A direct result of this is that even today, many of us find it hard to answer those inevitable questions about Vietnam from friends and family. We don't have a ready script, which is a pity because now, with a far more receptive society, we have

the chance to set the record straight.

The following story can help you with that script. Written in 2005 on the 30th anniversary of the fall of Saigon by Greg Sheridan, the Foreign Editor of The Australian newspaper, the article is a masterpiece of logic and clear thinking.

"Blinded by six myths" brings clarity and reason out of the fog of war and propaganda. It gives you the ammunition to answer those questions on why we were there, what we did, who betrayed who and what we were met with on our return.

In publishing the piece in "Holdfast" we acknowledge the Australian newspaper and thank the author Mr. Greg Sheridan.

Note: The photos and photo captions illustrating this story in Holdfast were added by the editor of Holdfast and were not a part of the original story published in The Australian.

Blinded by six myths



Greg Sheridan

First published April 30, 2005

The Australians were the best performing allied troops in Vietnam, though they got, then and now, precious little recognition for it.

The Australians were less brutal than the South Koreans, less profligate with casualties, and more disciplined, than the Americans. Though their number was small, the Diggers did their job well. But the war's growing unpopularity in the 1970s meant that they were never honoured as they should have been, at least not until the mid-'80s.

Still, of late our Vietnam veterans have risen very high. Tim Fischer was deputy prime minister, Peter Cosgrove is Chief of the Defence Force, soon to retire, and Michael Jeffrey is Governor-General. All of them served in Vietnam.

The Vietnam War, though it ended 30 years ago, never really goes away. It pervades our discussion of Iraq, it is the metaphor on everyone's lips, in the US it damaged John Kerry in his run for the presidency last year.

In Australia the most visible manifestation of the Vietnam War is our sparkling and brilliant population of Vietnamese Australians. More than 200,000 of

them, 1 per cent of our population. No one guessed, in 1965, that they would be the outcome of our involvement in the Vietnam War.

Yet we seldom listen to their stories or anything they have to tell us about the war. Our cultural elites have disappeared the South Vietnamese from history. One of the most evocative sights in the Sydney Anzac Day march last week was the big delegation at the end. All Asian men, marching behind the haunting flag of South Vietnam, the three red stripes across the field of yellow.

The television commentator seemed flustered by their presence and kept referring to them as South Koreans.

Yet these Vietnamese had been our allies, our brothers-in-arms. Now they're our citizens. Thirty years ago today, Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, fell to the communists.

It did not fall to the Viet Cong, the guerillas of popular legend, but to a completely conventional military invasion by the army of North Vietnam.

Fifty thousand Australian soldiers served, and 500 died, trying to prevent this. Did they

die in vain? Were they puppets of the Americans?

The truth is that Vietnam was a morally just war. The chances of success were high. And there was a strategically compelling case for us to be involved.

The narrative runs like this. During World War II the Japanese took control of Vietnam, which before that was a French colony. At war's end Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese communist leader, declared independence.

The French decided to re-establish colonial rule in Vietnam and the communists led the resistance to them. After the French were defeated in 1954 the communists took control of the north and independent nationalists, led by Ngo Dinh Diem, governed the south.

It is boilerplate orthodoxy, taught at times on every campus in the US and Australia, that Ho was popular throughout Vietnam. Yet when he came to power in

We must never forget that our allies and brothers in arms, the South Vietnamese lost so many killed and wounded in their fight against communism.



the north, a million people fled south, with only 100,000 going the other way.

It's a funny thing about communist revolutions, they are always more popular in the West than with their own people.

After consolidating a typically barbaric communist regime in the north, Ho turned his attention to the south and throughout the '60s ran an escalating military campaign against it, with the purpose of subjecting the whole of Vietnam to communist rule.

The Americans began to help the south in the early '60s and towards the end of that decade briefly had 500,000 military personnel in Vietnam. Australia sent a contingent in 1965, which peaked at 8000, and which stayed until 1971.

The Americans too had withdrawn most of their troops by late 1971. South Vietnam fought hard for its independent existence. But the scandal of Watergate crippled first the Nixon and then the Ford administrations in Washington, which radically reduced aid to South Vietnam. The north, munificently backed by China and the Soviet Union, ultimately invaded in 1975.

The primary tragedy was endured by the South Vietnamese, hundreds of thousands of whom were enslaved in a vast gulag of re-education camps after the communists took power. Later in the '70s the Vietnamese communists enacted one of the greatest acts of ethnic cleansing in the 20th century by persecuting their ethnic Chinese minority into flight. Thus we got the boat people.

The Americans, and by association the Australians, were humiliated by the defeat of their allies in Vietnam, their societies radicalised, and the use of American power became more



In 1954 Vietnamese were given the choice of living in the communist north or the democratic south. Over a million headed south. Few headed north. Here LST-516 embarks refugees from North Vietnam to South Vietnam during Operation Passage to Freedom.

problematic.

Yet over the past 10 years a significant revision of sentiment has occurred in the US, and to some extent in Australia. A whole slew of revisionist books such as *A Necessary War* by Michael Lind, *A Better War* by Lewis Sorley and *Unheralded Victory* by Mark Woodruff have re-examined the case for the Vietnam War and found it compelling.

Not that popular opinion, in either Australia or the US, had ever turned decisively against the war. Elite opinion certainly had, but in the only true tests, national elections, the anti-war candidates always lost in the US and Australia.

Gough Whitlam's victory in 1972 had nothing to do with Vietnam because Australia had already withdrawn all but a handful of its troops.

The revisionists attack what we might call the six myths of Vietnam.

Myth one is that Ho Chi Minh was a nationalist rather

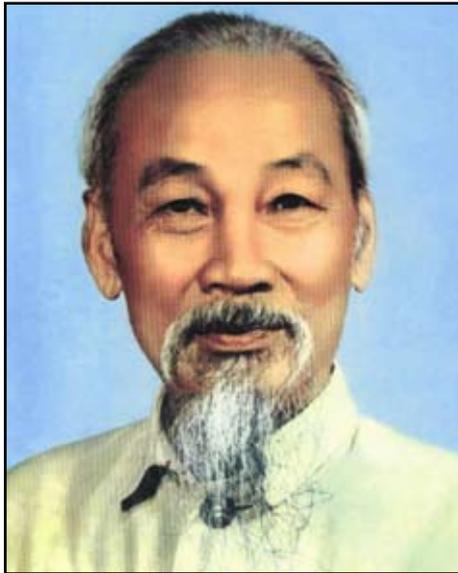
than a communist. William Duiker has written the definitive biography on Ho and although it is a fawning and hagiographical work, Ho's life as recorded in it is one of abundant and lifelong devotion to communist ideology. Ho was a founding member of the French Communist Party. He worked full-time for the Comintern (the Soviet agency for promoting communism in other countries) for decades. He worked at the direction of the Soviets and always in their interests. When he ruled North Vietnam, he established a completely orthodox communist system. It is actually condescending to Ho not to take his own word about his beliefs, to think that somehow or other when he proclaimed his communism he really didn't know what he was talking about.

Myth two is that South Vietnam could never have won. The Americans under general William Westmoreland, appointed to Vietnam in 1964 and relieved in 1968, ran the war

most incompetently. They over-mechanised the South Vietnamese army and tried to make it a replica of the US Army, though never properly equipped. They thought they could do all the fighting themselves. Instead of running an intelligent counter-insurgency operation, they ran a mass war of attrition and manoeuvre, which was ineffective against a guerilla enemy.

Westmoreland was replaced by the much more effective Creighton Abrams. It is from the Westmoreland period that all the legendary tales of US incompetence and overkill have grown. Abrams, under Richard Nixon's instruction, implemented the policy of Vietnamisation. US troops withdrew rapidly and the South Vietnamese took their place. And they fought well and bravely. Neil Davis, the famed Australian cameraman, always preferred to go on patrol with South Vietnamese troops because he thought they were better soldiers.

In any event, when the Vietcong launched the Tet offensive in 1968, breaching the truce they had negotiated, they were



Trained in Russia and China, Ho Chi Minh went on to establish communist cells throughout Asia. He was a classic hard line communist rather than a Vietnamese nationalist.

wiped out as a military force and virtually all the serious fighting after that was carried out by members of the North Vietnamese army.

Under the terms of the

Paris peace agreement of 1973, the South Vietnamese government was to continue in office and the US kept huge air power in Thailand and in the South China Sea. When the motorised divisions of the North Vietnamese army rolled southwards in 1975, they could have easily been destroyed by US air power, but by then Watergate had rendered Washington impotent.

It is true that it would have been difficult for South Vietnam to have defended indefinitely its long, narrow neck, which bordered Cambodia and the North Vietnamese supply trail. But it would not have been impossible.

Another option would have been for the South Vietnamese to withdraw into a more defensible area, abandoning some of the centre. Such garrison states in Asia have prospered, like South Korea and Taiwan. There can be

To the surprise of southern communists, it was the North Vietnamese NVA who marched in victory through the streets of Saigon, not the VC.



little doubt that had South Vietnam survived as an independent state, it would today be rich and democratic, as are South Korea or Taiwan, instead of still being an impoverished and alienated redoubt of Stalinism, though certainly somewhat softened in the south compared with the north.

Myth three is that the communists enjoyed majority support in the south. The communists certainly never did anything foolish like subjecting themselves to elections after they took power. In contrast, millions of people in the south took part in elections under the nationalists. Millions later fled their homeland as refugees from the communists. If this is popularity, I'd hate to see what unpopularity looked like.

The general slanders to which the South Vietnamese are always subject in popular presentation of the Vietnam War are as cruel and unjust as they are untrue. In Hollywood films the South Vietnamese men are always presented as cowards, corrupt or pimps, and the women are almost always prostitutes. The truth is millions of South Viet-



The flag of South Vietnam, still an emotional rallying point for former refugees

namese dreamed of and worked towards a normal society and a free life without communism. We are lucky to have these people in Australia and we should stop defaming them.

Myth four is that the Vietnamese communists were not Stalinists. As late as 1979, decades after Stalin's death and discrediting, official Vietnamese Radio was broadcasting paeans to Stalin's "defence of the purity of Marxism-Leninism". He was a lifelong Stalinist and imported his land collectivisation policies, in

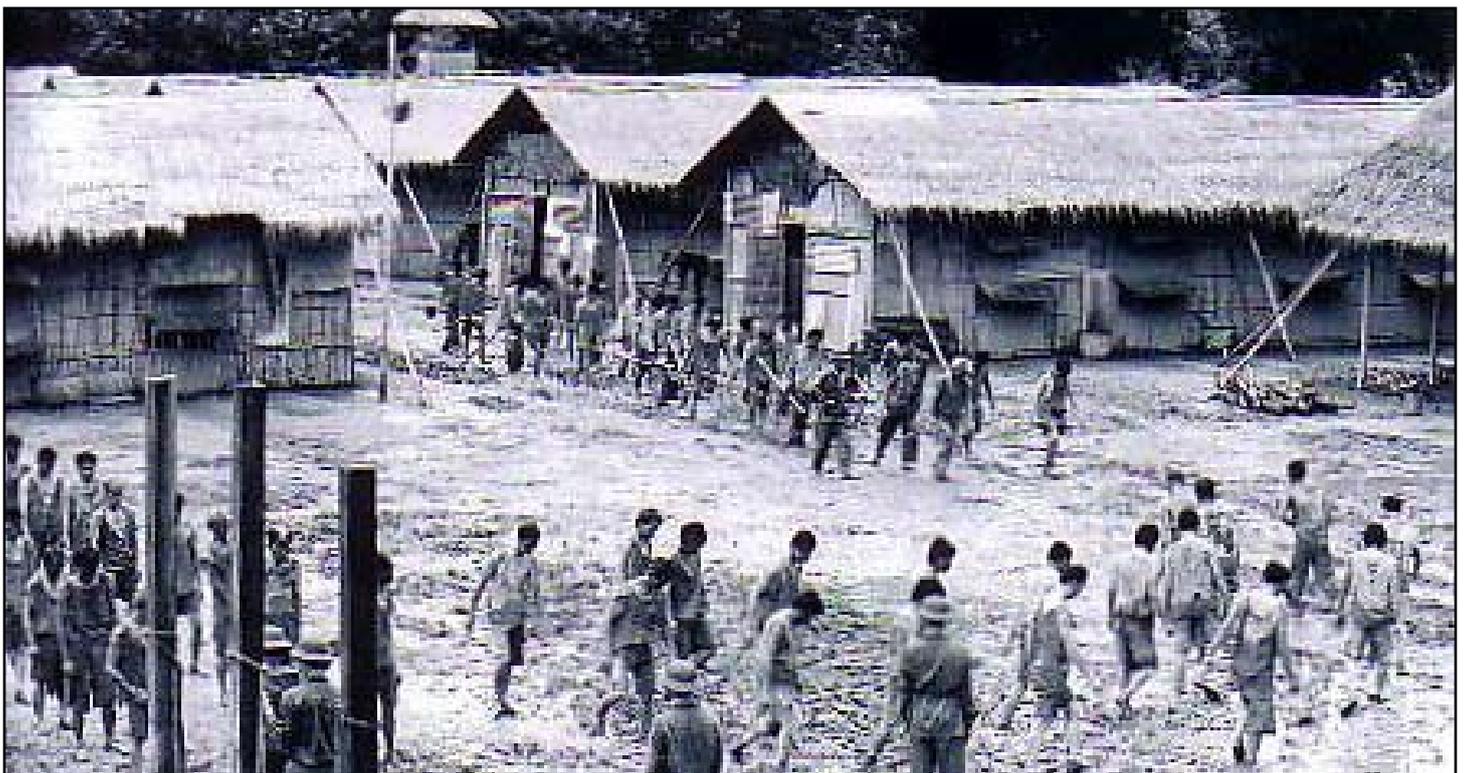
which tens of thousands of North Vietnamese designated as "landlords" were slaughtered, directly from Mao Zedong's China.

After conquering the south the communists established a huge gulag of re-education camps, in which hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese suffered, and suppressed any trace of political or religious pluralism. Even today the children of minor civil servants in the old South Vietnamese regime suffer systematic discrimination in Vietnam.



Myth five is that the Australian or US Left actually cared two hoots

Hundreds of thousands of former South Vietnamese soldiers and public servants were sent to re-education camps by the new communist regime. Many never returned.



Big bang on “Warburton” Mountain



Bob O'Connor served as a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop, 1 Field Squadron in 67/68. He was at Fire Support Base Coral for over a month with a contingent of 2 Troop mates, and was there for the legendary Battle.

Bob recently joined our association and is an avid fan of our newsletter. A photo (right) which ran on the first page of the “Nostalgia” section in issue 19 caught his eye, and he makes the following comment:

“It is difficult to judge the scale of the ‘landscape’ because of the lack of background and not knowing the year renders my suggestion pure guesswork but here it is anyway.

The unusual, cylindrical shape of the ‘cloud’ of smoke and debris looks like the effect of the blast is still in progress and rising.

This suggests that it took place in a hole or cave, the latter being my preferred guess as this throws the force out gun-barrel fashion. As this blast is still in progress it also suggests that



Was this the big bang on “Warburton Mountain?”

the photographer was ready, waiting with thumb on the shutter release button.

Here’s my guess and I’ll be brief. Around April May ‘68 I was on an operation somewhere in the Nui Thi Vai Mountains, when we came across a cave. Although it had a relatively

One of the RAAF choppers tasked with dropping off crates of explosives for blowing the cave in the “Warburtons”

small entrance it opened up into a cavern and somebody decided to blow it up.

This demolition ended up being a huge production directed by an Infantry officer who fancied himself as an expert powder monkey. Well I don’t know about the former but in my opinion he certainly qualified as the latter.

He was giving us orders and throwing his weight around and loading up the cave with TNT that was being choppered in and carried up the mountain by the grunts and set up by us Sappers, under this officer’s direction of course.

What started out as somewhat of a joke to us few Sappers soon became serious when we were told to just put the boxes of TNT in the pile which ended up rather large and measured roughly 16’ x10’ in the old money and stacked to the ceiling, which at that point was about 7’ high.

We were told that there was more than 12,500 lbs in the set-up, and at about 1300 hours we were told to move out of the cave. We moved alright! Settling about 300 metres around the other side of the mountain, putting a ridge or spur between us and the cave.

We passed lots of grunts on the way and advised them to put more distance between them and the cave but got scornful comments back like: 'who's scared of a bit of C4 mate, we use it to heat up our 'brew' (cup of tea or coffee).

We didn't have time to argue with them, and just made our way around the mountain, got behind trees and waited.

At the allotted time this God almighty 'crack' sounded. The whole mountain shook. Huge trees snapped as they 'whip-lashed, and a massive red flame shot straight up into the sky, followed by what seemed to be half the mountain.

First there were the branches, then the leaves, then the big branches, then the small stones, then the big stones, then the rocks, then the boulders.

When it finally stopped we made our way back to where the grunts were, only to find dozens of hurt and bleeding grunts with serious wounds, ruined equipment including many SLR's with bent barrels and smashed stocks.

I saw two completely smashed M60s that boulders had fallen on. I don't know how many grunts were hurt and med-evacted out by choppers but there must have been a lot. I saw about 20 blokes that were bleeding from head wounds and/or nursing broken arms or injured legs.



This was a serious incident, but amazingly, back at Nui Dat we heard nothing more about it.

The force of this bang went straight up into the sky, exactly like the photo in 'Holdfast', and I know there was a photographer on the scene, so maybe this is the big bang staged by that incompetent officer."

ABOVE: Bob O'Connor (right), with two other Tunnel rats from 2 Troop, Bernie Ladyman (left) and Bob Knowles (middle). They're looking pretty happy because they're finally heading back to Nui Dat after spending four weeks during May/June 1968 at Fire Support Base Coral (below), the scene of one of the largest battles involving Australian troops in Vietnam



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2 Troop 1 Field Squadron
Vietnam 1968-1970

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SYDNEY HERE WE COME

Tunnel Rats Reunion

November 8-11 2012

It's time for our next grand gathering. We've had trips back to Vietnam and various unit visits, but our last full blown national reunion was in Hobart, way back in April 2009. It's time to gather the clan. It's time to let the Rats loose on Sydney.

We're planning a huge get-together in Sydney, including an official visit to SME and an official visit to the Special Operations Sappers at the Incident Response Regiment.

Plus 9RAR are holding their reunion in Sydney at the same time, and on the Sunday they've invited us to join them for a memorial service in Hyde Park followed by lunch and a tour at the historic Victoria Barracks.

The big 2012 event is taking place over the period 8-11 November, so mark the dates in your diary, and if you make your booking now it will help us work out the numbers we need to cater for.

You might want to hold off booking your accommodation till our next issue of Holdfast (it will be out early - honest) as we

are still negotiating with several Sydney venues for the welcome drinks and the main dinner. We've established costings but are after the best deal on what's included in the cost. The venue will be in Sydney CDB. So if you want to stay at or near the function venue, hold off booking your accommodation till we announce the function venue.

All Tunnel Rats who

A march and service at the Hyde Park Memorial on the Sunday



served with 3 Field Troop or 1, 2 or 3 Troop of 1 Field Squadron are welcome, as of course are all former SSM's and OC's of 1 Field Squadron.

The main activities of the reunion will be spread over four days, with the welcome drinks on Thursday afternoon, the Army base visits (shopping tour for the ladies) on Friday, the main dinner on Saturday and the service and lunch on Sunday. During the day Saturday you're free to tour the delights of Sydney - but keep yourself in good order for the big dinner that night.

Key events of the reunion:

Thursday 8th November: Welcome drinks and snacks late afternoon as we gather on the first day. A chance to see mates you haven't seen for ages.

Friday 9th November: For the Ladies, a shopping tour of Sydney, visiting fabulous factory outlets. For the guys, in the morning, an official visit to SME, including a tour of the base and a service and wreath laying ceremony at the Vietnam Memorial at SME to honour our fallen com-

rades from 3 Field Troop and 1 Field Squadron. Includes a light lunch. Followed in the early afternoon by an official visit to the Incident Response Regiment at Holdsworthy, including briefings on how the Sappers operate today in Afghanistan, and a sneak look at their incredible gear. Plus we'll hold a wreath laying ceremony at the Regiment's Memorial, allowing us to honour our Sapper comrades who have fallen in Afghanistan. Ending the day with drinks in the Regiment's boozier and a BBQ.

Saturday 10th November: Our official Reunion Dinner. A big sit-down dinner in a posh venue in Sydney with great guest speakers. We're still negotiating with several venues on what they'll provide for the set price per head. The Next of Kin of our fallen comrades will be invited to join us at the dinner.

Sunday 11th November: We join up with our 9RAR comrades for a Remembrance Day Service followed by an official visit to historic Victoria Barracks. There will be a march and service at the Anzac War Memorial and Pool of Reflection in Sydney's Hyde Park at which we'll lay a wreath on behalf of the Tunnel Rats. We will march behind our Tunnel Rats banner, and suits (or jacket) and tie plus medals will be the dress of the day. On completion of the formal service, buses will take us to Victoria Barracks for lunch and a tour over the facilities. Lunch will be provided and the bar will be open. Buses will run from the Barracks back to Hyde Park throughout the afternoon.

We'll anoint a "designated Boozier" in the Sydney CDB – a place where you'll be guaranteed to meet a mate for a beer or two at any time of the day or night.



ABOVE: Super Sappers - We'll visit those bad boys at Incident Response Regiment. Helmets and flack jackets optional.

BELOW: At the Vietnam Memorial at the School of Military Engineering we'll lay a wreath for our fallen comrades



We are also inviting some key serving members of the Army from SME and the Incident Response Regiment to our main dinner. Their attendance will depend on their availability and operational commitments, but shine your shoes, get your hair cut and clean your fingernails lads – they might be recruiting.

Dinner table arrangements

At the main dinner we'll have allocated tables and seating. We realise that you want to sit with your Troop mates, so on the booking form you'll have the

opportunity to specify where you want to sit in terms of your Troop and your year of service (we'll do the best we can to meet your request).

A registration form is included with this issue of Holdfast. The cost covers the snacks at the welcome function (drinks at bar prices), the return bus transport for the visits to SME and the Incident Response Regiment, plus for the shopping tour for the girls. It also covers the main dinner including drinks, and the visit to Victoria Barracks includ-

ing lunch. Total cost is \$250 per person.

To secure your spot, book using the booking form with this issue of the newsletter. Do it now!



ABOVE: You'll see the mine-buster HMAPC Flint at SME

Why are we getting together?

Some of the greatest achievements of our Association have been in bringing mates together, and in reinforcing our pride in what we did in Vietnam.

We did everything the Infantry did in Vietnam, plus we carried out our hazardous specialist tasks of mine clearing, booby trap delousing, demolitions and tunnel and bunker searching.

As Tunnel Rats, when we came home, we dispersed all over Australia, and in those days it was hard to find your mates. Which state did they live in now? Sometimes you could only remember their nickname! And looking for interstate phone numbers meant a trip to the Post Office to read interstate directories.

This separation combined with a lack of access to records meant we didn't really know the full story of what happened to us in Vietnam. None of us realised we had the highest casualty rate of any unit in Vietnam. Averaged over the duration of the war that rate for us was 33%. One in three of us was being killed or wounded. Some years that casualty rate was as high as 40%.



ABOVE: Lunch with 9RAR at the historic Victoria barracks in Sydney, including a tour of the facility

Over the years since we came home, many small close groups from specific Troops and years of service have been getting together. Those small reunions are great fun and treasured experiences, and they will continue. There's no greater bonding experience than getting together with the mates you served closely with.

But now it's time to all get together again, and we'll continue to do this every few years. We

did an extraordinary job in Vietnam. We saw and experienced things that few men are privileged to experience. We have much to be proud of, and many hilarious events to recall. And we have 35 Comrades who paid the supreme sacrifice to honour.

Our Association and the newsletter have brought us to this point where we're all in touch again and it's time to celebrate – Sapper style, so book now using the form opposite.

BELOW: It's time to get together and enjoy some of that incredible comradeship we're privileged to enjoy





TUNNEL RATS REUNION SYDNEY 8-11 NOVEMBER 2012

Registration form

You can cut out or photocopy the form and mail it to us, or scan the form and email it to us.

FIRST NAME:	FAMILY NAME:
PREFERRED NAME OR NICKNAME: (If you leave this blank your First Name will be on your reunion card)	
VIETNAM UNIT/S SERVED WITH – PLEASE TICK AND FILL IN DATE DETAILS BELOW	
<input type="radio"/> 03 FIELD TROOP – FROM	TILL
<input type="radio"/> 01 TROOP 1 FLD SQN – FROM	TILL
<input type="radio"/> 02 TROOP 1 FLD SQN – FROM	TILL
<input type="radio"/> 03 TROOP 1 FLD SQN – FROM	TILL
<input type="radio"/> 0 OC OR SSM 1 Fld Sqn – FROM	TILL
At the sit-down dinner we want to sit at the following table (please tick troop and year):	
<input type="radio"/> 03 Field Troop <input type="radio"/> 01 Troop 1 Fld Sqn <input type="radio"/> 02 Troop 1 Fld Sqn <input type="radio"/> 03 Troop 1 Fld Sqn <input type="radio"/> 65/66 <input type="radio"/> 66/67 <input type="radio"/> 67/68 <input type="radio"/> 68/69 <input type="radio"/> 69/70 <input type="radio"/> 70/71 <input type="radio"/> 71/72	
ADDRESS:	
POSTCODE:	
PHONE NUMBER:	MOBILE NUMBER:
EMAIL ADDRESS:	
ACCOMPANYING FAMILY OR FRIENDS:	
1. FIRST NAME:	FAMILY NAME:
2. FIRST NAME:	FAMILY NAME:
3. FIRST NAME:	FAMILY NAME:
4. FIRST NAME:	FAMILY NAME:
TOTAL PEOPLE ATTENDING:	AT \$250/PERSON = TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$
You can pay by credit card (statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics"), or 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="radio"/> Visa <input type="radio"/> Master Card	
CARD NUMBER:	
NAME ON CARD	EXPIRY DATE:
POST TO:	VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOC 43 HEYINGTON PLACE TOORAK VIC 3142
OR EMAIL TO:	tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au

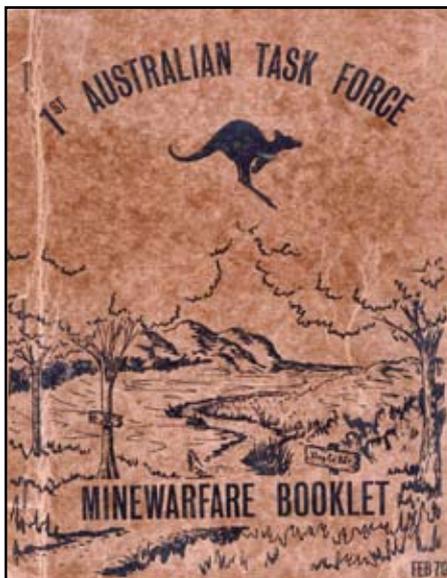
Our Squadron's Guide to Mines and Booby Traps

With mine casualties mounting to horrendous levels in Vietnam, this booklet was published by 1 Field Squadron to help newly arrived Infantry and Armoured troops counter the enemy's mine warfare

Section 1

The Enemy - Introduction

1. Mines and booby traps are a traditional facet of war and are perhaps the most feared of weapons. In Vietnam the Viet Cong and NVA are well aware of this and use these weapons as a major part of their armory. The important factor is that they have produced a completely new and unconventional set of tactics for mine warfare. Australian troops must be prepared for and able to counter these guerrilla tactics.



where one mine is found, there are usually more nearby. This is of critical importance to Australian Troops, and to the tactics we employ when a mine incident occurs.

7. The enemy is adept at using mines as a terrorist weapon. Experience gained in recent operations in Phuoc Tuy Province has shown that the enemy will place mines inside actually occupied local villages. This has occurred in Dat Do, Phuoc Loi and Lo Gom in each of which Australian casualties were suffered, although the villagers were still present. The enemy's training pamphlet stresses the need for villagers to know the location of the mines the enemy sets. Australian troops cannot count on the villagers to inform us of their presence. Even inside villages the enemy will not lay mines indiscriminately.

The Enemy's Doctrine

2. As far as the Enemy is concerned the conventional principle of fenced and marked minefields is not valid. He will very seldom use a fence to indicate an area he has mined or booby trapped.

3. This does not mean that he is unaware of the value of mining. On the contrary his use of Anti Personnel and Anti-Vehicle mine is extremely professional and calculated to create casualties, build fear and slow down our operational movement without exposing himself to contact with friendly troops.

4. The enemy will use mines and booby traps to protect his campsites base areas and caches intelligently and frequently. In addition he will place these in and around areas in which Australian troops are likely to move and to work.

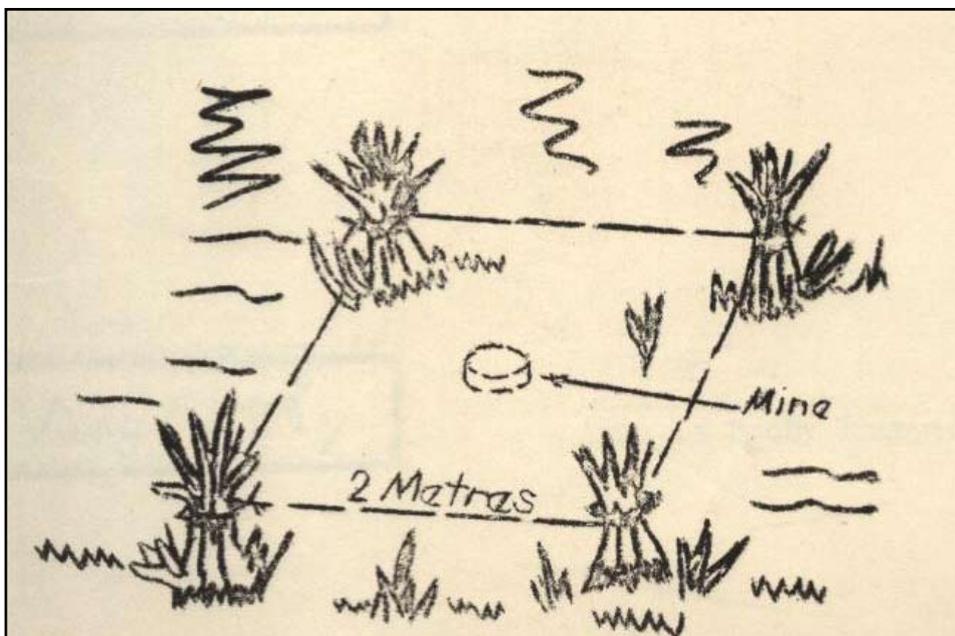
5. Practical experience has shown that most mines laid by the Enemy in Phuoc Tuy Province, have been laid by Village Guerrillas and District Companies rather than by main force

units. It is important to note that although the enemy does not believe in fenced minefields he will almost always mark his mines in some way.

6. The enemy is well trained in the laying and concealment of mines and booby traps, and uses the basic doctrine: "Each group must be comprised of two or more mines" (Extract from captured mine training pamphlet). Therefore

8. The enemy prepares and maintains mine maps in or-

Bunched tufts of grass indicate a mine at the centre of the tufts



der to avoid accidental casualties to himself. These mine maps are high priority documents if captured and must immediately be passed to responsible authority. Good information on enemy mines can also be gained from Hoi Chanh (returnees) and Chieu Hoi (surrendered enemy), as well as the local population and Sops and Civil Affairs teams. This information should be treated with caution and confirmation should be sought wherever possible.

9. The enemy will rarely engage Australian troops involved in a mine incident. His doctrine does not appear to include the use of mines to initiate a fire fight or ambush.

10. Although not an enemy tactic attention must be drawn to the fact that local ARVN RF and PF posts are almost always surrounded by mines and booby traps. Unfortunately, the language barrier makes these posts a definite mine and booby-trap hazard to Australian troops. The areas surrounding these posts must be considered suspect, Do not disturb barbed wire or move off obvious tracks in the close vicinity of any of these posts. Before operating near, or entering any Vietnamese installation, it is essential for Australian elements to carry out a detailed recce and establish firm liaison with the local Vietnamese commander. This will be a positive step in reducing the risks which exist in close proximity to any Vietnamese defensive post,

11. Finally in dealing with enemy mine doctrine it is essential to remember that the enemy is ingenious and versatile in the use of almost any captured or recovered Allied mines or explosive devices. He is also completely capable of local manufacture of expedient mines and booby traps. All he needs is basic ma-

terials and any type of available explosive and he will produce weapons which will be able to kill effectively. Examples of the expedients commonly encountered in Phuoc Tuy Province are:

a. Use of unexploded US Cluster Bomblets as anti personnel and anti vehicle mines.

b. Use of slabs of melted down TNT in conjunction with torch batteries and bamboo detonation switches to form an effective Anti Armour Mine.

c. Use of allied grenades to form the basis of booby traps

designed around trip wires.

d. Use of Chicom RPG's as anti vehicular mines.

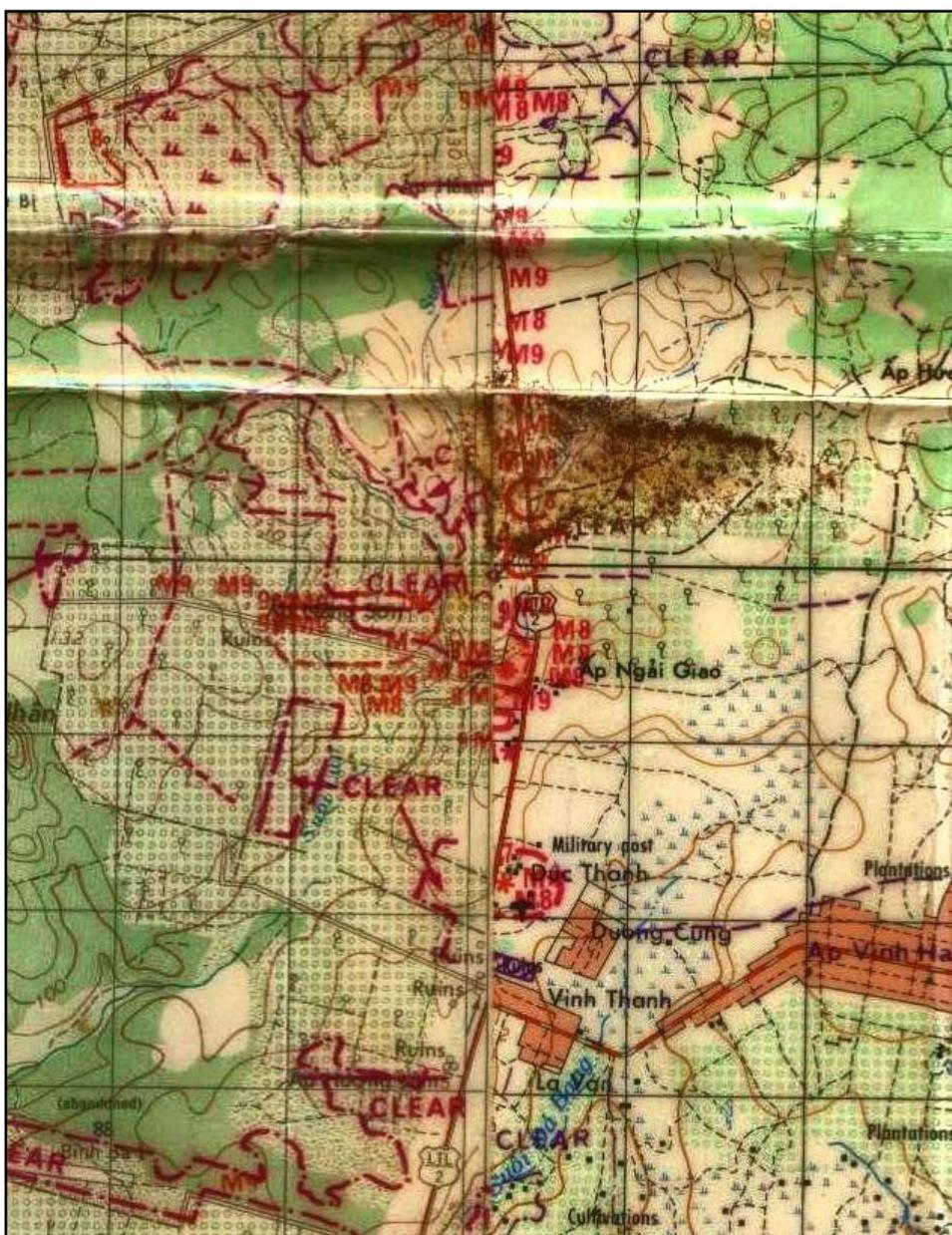
e. Use of recovered small arms ammunition to produce foot breaker mines.

f. Use of blind Allied artillery rounds as anti vehicular mines.

g. Turning around of Claymore mines in darkness around defensive perimeters to cause self inflicted casualties to allied troops.

12. All of these expedient mines and booby traps are well conceived and require properly

On each Operation the Tunnel Rats carried maps specially marked with all the previous mine incidents in the area. "M8" meant there was a mine incident in that location in 1968



trained Sapper or Assault Pioneer teams to neutralise or destroy them. Inexpert troops must not attempt to neutralise mines and booby traps,

Typical Enemy Siting Areas

13. It is evident from practical experience and captured documents that the enemy makes a study of Australian troop habits before siting mines or booby traps.

14. He will carefully site mines where they will cause maximum casualties to the unway. Typical sites for Anti-Personnel mines are;

a. Along and on either side of known and defined paths such as tracks, roads, streams etc.

b. Near and around shade trees where troops are likely to gather to rest.

c. Around and in road blocks.

d. In or on the edge of craters after an air strike or road denial task.

e. Under stones sticks etc, lying on paths or tracks.

f. In likely or known ambush and harbour sites.

g. Behind likely fire positions that allied troops may use in a cordon.

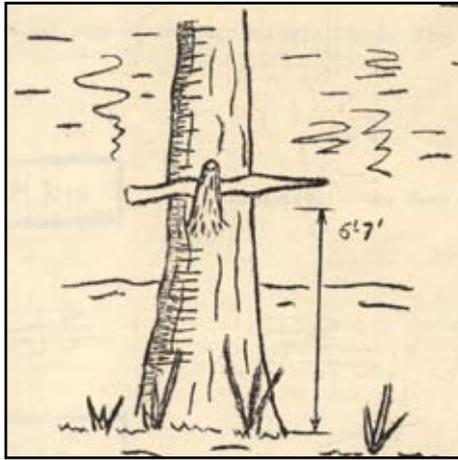
h. In and around fire positions that he has used very recently to harass allied troops.

i. Around the fringes of clearings, particularly likely LZ's where friendly troops will normally disperse as helicopter insertion drill.

j. In and around Engineer worksites.

k. On approaches to his own base camps and caches. (It is important to note that a mine found in an unusual or unpopulated area will usually have something worthwhile nearby.

l. Almost anywhere near



Stick in a tree fork indicates a mine or booby trap 10 to 20 away in the direction the stick is pointing

heavily populated areas where Australian troops will obviously be frequently present.

Typical sites for Anti Vehicular Mines are;

a. Narrow tracks and defiles i.e. wheel rut tracks, land

cleared trails, new road works, fords, (It is far more common in Phuoc Tuy Province to encounter nuisance set electrical and pressure mines than to encounter command detonated mines).

b. Around diversions (blown culverts and road blocks).

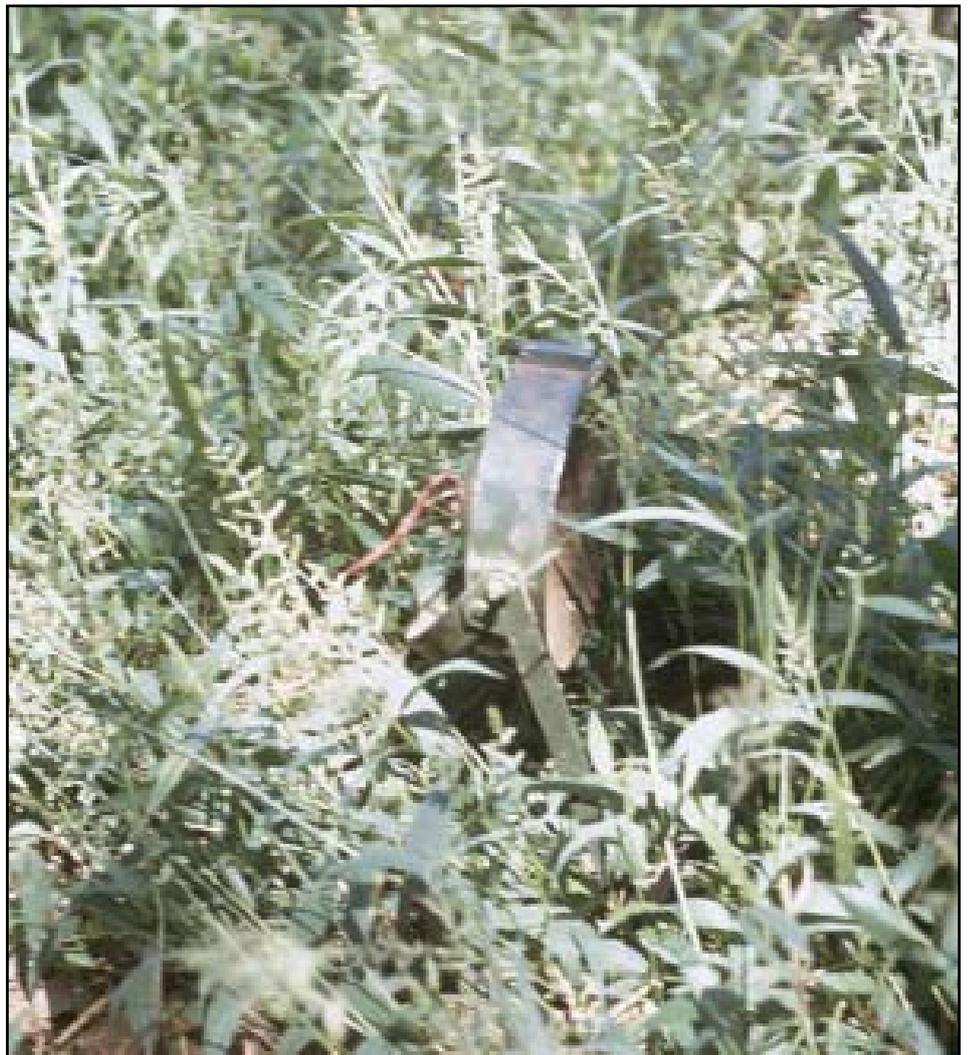
c. In commonly used APC and Tank routes, i.e. high ground in wet and inundated countryside, and at bends in tracks.

d. Puddles in roads

e. Patchwork repairs on roads.

Note: Where the enemy sets anti vehicular mines he may commonly also set anti personnel mines nearby to cause casualties to evacuating personnel and repair/recovery crews. This

An enemy claymore mine concealed in grass and scrub



tactic is of prime importance in our counter measure drills and training.

Markers

15. As has already been written, the enemy although he does not use a set pattern of mining, will almost always mark his mines in some way.

16. To do this he uses a variety of mine markers

17. It must be realised that the enemy has no set doctrines on markings, and usually ensures that the local markings are passed to transient units by word of mouth.

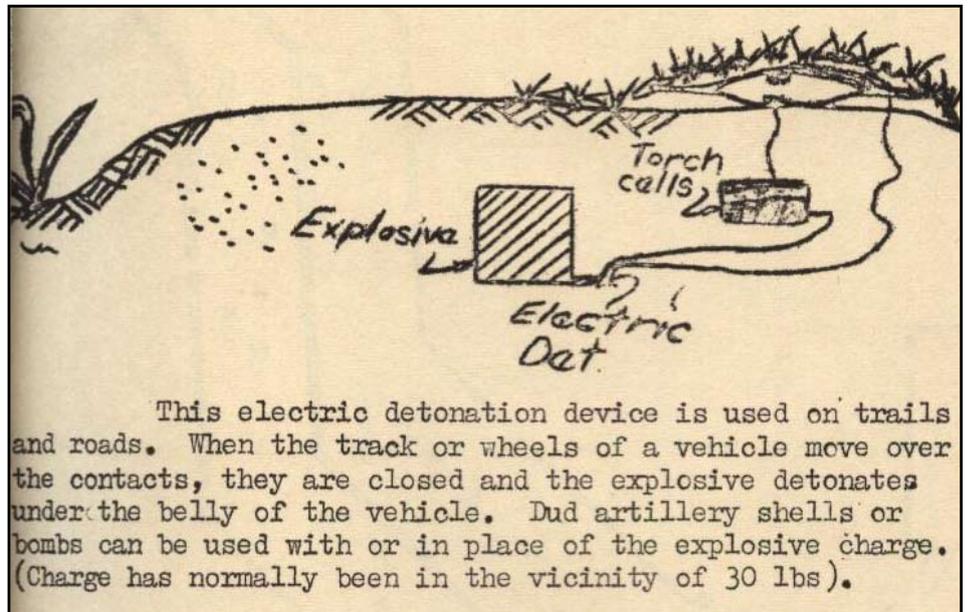
18. All Australian troops must learn to recognise these markers and always be on the alert for the unusual or unnatural. A pair of sharp eyes are perhaps the best defence against the enemy's mine tactics.

Other Important Factors

19. The enemy will sometimes attempt to draw our troops into mined areas by offering the chance of physical contact. He will engage Australian troops by fire from a specific direction and withdraw so that follow up Australian elements move into mined areas, All Australian troops must be careful not to be decoyed into mine incidents. When working in mine suspect areas, tactical commanders must bear this in mind when making their appreciations.

20. Whether on foot or mounted it is paramount to avoid using the same track or path on more than one occasion. Developing the habit of using the same route time after time is inviting enemy mine action. This applies particularly to Armoured movement on Fire Trails, and to foot patrolling, especially clearing patrols.

21. This section has dealt



with all of the basic doctrine which has been used and noted by experience in Phuoc Tuy Province. Remember however that we are opposed to a versatile and trained enemy and that new tactics are to be expected and must be guarded against. The keynote to this is for all Australian Troops to develop a high degree of mine caution and within the framework of our tactics retain the highest degree of flexibility in dealing with enemy mining and booby trapping.

Section 2 Counter Measures Introduction

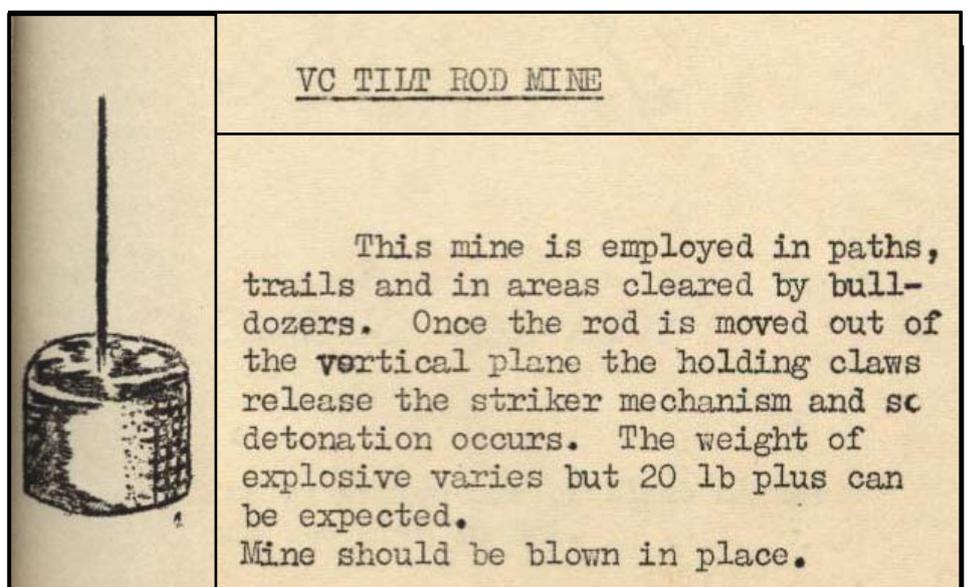
1. As has been made clear in the previous Section, the conventional aspects of counter

mine warfare are no longer sufficient for the Vietnam conflict. This section will outline the current doctrine in use to counter the enemy mine threat.

Training

2. The most important counter measure is a constant and high degree of anti mine training, both refresher and rehearsal. Constant revision is essential for without this, initial mine warfare training will be useless.

3. Reference to this booklet will keep the mind active on this subject, and gives all Australian troops a ready insight into the problems faced. Refresher training and rehearsals on a



100% basis must be carried out prior to operations in likely or known mine prevalent areas. Every soldier of all ranks involved on operations risks the danger of mines and so all ranks of all Corps so involved must undergo this refresher training.

4. In-theatre training for individual replacements (arms) and infantry units is carried out by the Sappers of 1 Field Squadron. This service and advice is available to ALL units; So consult the SAPPERS. This is part of their game. Use them.

5. Prior to operations in suspect areas, units should request additional training including practical training prior to the operation commencing. 1 Field Squadron is available to provide refresher training.



The Tunnel Rats blew up any unexploded bombs found so the enemy couldn't convert them into booby traps or anti-tank mines

Physical Protection

6. If a mine incident occurs there are a number of ways in which casualties can be minimized or negated;

a. *Dispersion - The natural tendency to all troops is to bunch up. This is wrong; troops must be drilled to keep the maximum possible dispersion that is allowed by the tactical situation.*

b. *Wear flak jackets and steel helmets when in a mine prevalent area. A little discomfort from these is far preferable to serious wounds due to failure to use protection.*

c. *Sandbag the floors of vehicles to absorb blast and shrapnel from anti vehicle mines. Also where possible arm the vehicles with steel belly plating for the same reason.*

d. *Be alert look for the unnatural;*

(i). Loose dirt, new filled areas.

(ii). Loose or taut wires, rope, string, vines etc.

(iii). Sticks and stones in

unnatural looking positions.

(iv). Look out for marker indicators.

(v). Be alert for disturbed foliage damaged foliage, foreign looking grass, weathered camouflage.

(vi). Look out for plastic wrapper material protruding from ground.

(vii). Any electric lead wires.

(viii). Look for irregular tread patterns on roads.

(ix). Try to avoid stepping in puddles (water is probably the easiest and most ideal mine camouflage).

(x). Request expert advice if you have any doubt. Sappers are far more expert at the subject than the average soldier. For Infantry Battalions, Pioneers can provide immediate advice on mine warfare.

(xi). If an area is suspect always have the Sappers or Pio-

neers clear it, especially harbour and ambush areas.

(xii). Avoid establishing regular patterns such as same harbour or ambush sites

(xiii). Avoid picking up souvenirs.

(xiv). Avoid movement close to or on tracks.

(xv). Avoid foot movement in mined areas when mounted movement in APC's is available. Ride inside these armoured vehicles, not on top of them.

(xvi). Avoid areas obviously avoided by locals. Also be on the lookout for unusual behavior on the part of locals such as early departure from working areas when allied soldiers are present. Agitation at your moving close to their location. Sudden disappearance of people from villages or roads. All these are indications that the villagers are aware something is about to happen.

Action on Suspicion

7. Should something arouse suspicion the Commander of the element should immediately be informed, he will recce the area in company with Sapper or Pioneer Commander. In mine prevalent areas Sappers and/or Pioneers will always be readily available in the form of a Mini or Splinter team. A brief description of these teams is;

a. Splinter Team: A team of two Sappers or Pioneers who are never separated. One is known as a No 1 and is the more experienced of the pair, the other is his No 2. These men are equipped to travel with Infantry on foot, and have an amount of explosives, detonating cord detonators and fuse, they also carry other ancillary gear for Engineer tasks i.e., Tunnel search torch and pistol, grappling hooks long and short safety pins and most importantly they carry in their heads a very, large knowledge of all likely mines and booby traps,

b. Mini Team: The same team of two Sappers (Pioneers are not normally used in this role though they may be in an emergency) who are additionally equipped with a flak jacket, and helmet each, and a mine detector. This, type of team is designed to move mounted with Armoured elements or in a deliberate breach of a known mine area. Either of these two types of team may carry extra equipment depending on the threat expected.

c. Combat Engineer Team: For larger operations involving mines, or when there is a heavy mine danger, a Combat Engineer Team may be available, or moving with the Infantry elements. This team is basically 3 Splinter or Mini Teams commanded by a Corporal or Lance Corporal. A total of 7 men.



ABOVE: Flak jackets really did save lives, but we hated wearing them in the heat, and generally got slack about wearing them at all. BELOW: Some of seven soldiers of Charlie Company, 5RAR, injured with shrapnel from a booby trap during Operation Canberra in 1966. Five more soldiers of the company were injured in another booby trap explosion after these men were evacuated by helicopter.



8. If for some reason these teams are not present when a suspect area is found, the Commander on the spot will decide what to do. Unless he is convinced that the suspicion is unfounded, he should always seek immediate Sapper advice and support.

9. 1 Field Squadron have up to date mine incident maps

showing all previous mine incidents and suspect mine areas. Each Sapper team will have at least one copy of these maps. Copies may be taken from these maps on request to OC 1.Fd Sqn at any time. Commanders at lower levels who do not possess these maps must consult their engineer advisors in regard to contents of these maps.

Amendment to Mine Warfare Booklet revised 3 Sept 69 Action on a Mine Incident

10. When a mine incident occurs, a mine incident being anything that confirms the presence of mines, the following actions should take place;

a. Nobody in the area moves unless directed. Movement in the area can only be made in marked safe lanes and areas.

b. The senior Engineer or Assault Pioneer in the area directs all clearance activities through the Commander who retains overall control.

c. The two man Mini or Splinter team clears and marks a safe lane to any casualties using a Mine Detector if available or by prodding with a bayonet. Assuming a detector is available the process is as follows;

(i). One member moves forward sweeping the detector to clear a path of 4 feet width. He is wearing a head phone set, carries a pistol and is blind to any outside occurrences.

(ii). The other member follows at a distance of about 2 yards. He carries both weapons and is responsible for clearly marking the safe lane with mine marking tape or cord. (If neither are available, he can mark with tree branches, rifle slings weapons or scratch the ground surface but the marking must be obvious and not able to be obliterated by rain).

(iii). The infantry protection element must provide protection for the team while maintaining a safe distance of at least 10 yards. They must not lose sight of the team.

(iv). Where there is a weak confused signal on the detector the two members will continue to work as a team to investigate



The aftermath: On 10 March 1970 the General Officer Commanding Eastern Command, Major General M. F. Brogan talks to two soldiers wounded in Vietnam as they watched the march of 7RAR through Sydney. Lance Corporal Noel Godbold (left), served eleven months in South Vietnam with 7RAR, and Private Ian Crisp was wounded in a mine explosion after serving nine months with the 2RAR.

the cause of the reading. When there is a strong positive reading the No 1 will then take action to investigate, mark or dispose of the mine. The No 2 will withdraw to a safe distance. The decision of how best to dispose of the mine i.e. pull or blow is made by the No 1. The decision on when to do so is the commanders.

d. Once all clearances have been effected, First Aid will be applied prior to Dust Off.

e. If a known safe area is not readily available an area for litter extraction will be prepared by the Engineer Team, and will similarly be clearly marked by well secured tapes to avoid the Dust Off helicopter moving the

markers with its blade wash.

f. If the clearance develops into a lengthy operation the No 1 and No 2 will switch positions as required to combat fatigue, but again within the limitation of experience.

g. The non casualties in the area will not move but will wait until the clearance party has cleared a safe lane to them. It is stressed that no movement will occur even to assist casualties crying for aid until clearance is complete, as any movement may create more casualties. A tragedy can easily be transformed into a disaster by foolish movement - albeit well meaning.

h. The Commander will

then make an assessment in conjunction with his Engineer advisor as to the next action. Often a deliberate breach clearance may be required to either continue his aim or evacuate the areas.

11. The following points are emphasized;

a. Extremely firm control by the Commander is essential.

b. No movement unless directed.

c. Minimum No of people engaged in clearance operations

d. Everyone must be aware of methods of marking safe lanes.

e. No one steps outside a cleared area.

f. All involved must remain calm, despite casualties needing urgent attention, priority must be given to clearing safe lanes first to avoid further casualties.

Application to Anti Vehicle Mines

12. With minor variations the same procedure as above will also apply to a mine incident involving a B vehicle or APC or Tank.

Summary

13. To summarise, all soldiers should know and understand these key words:

Know the enemy's mine habits.

Know where he lays mines.

Know the markings used.

Where there is one mine there are more.

Look for the unnatural.

Check the mine incident map.

Revise, refresh and rehearse action on a mine incident.

Avoid regular habits.

Knowledge overcomes fear.

Seek out sappers.



ABOVE: APCs were highly vulnerable to anti-tank mines and were regularly and skillfully targeted by the VC. This vehicle hit a mine in the Long Hai hills in February 1970.



LEFT: Home made but highly dangerous, these crude VC mines were filled with explosives melted down from unexploded bombs

BELOW: Casualties from a mine incident on 25 February 1970 in the Long Hai Hills



“Starlight” at the sharp end

In 1966-67 Dr Tony White, AM, RFD served in South Vietnam as the regimental medical officer (RMO) with 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR).

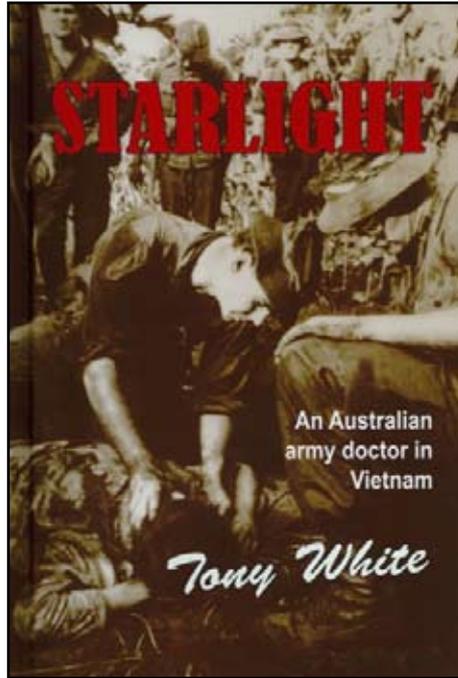
In 2011 he published his book, titled “Starlight”, covering his experiences with the Tiger Battalion on their first tour. As many of us will remember, “Starlight” was the radio callsign for the medics.

Below Tony describes his role in what was one of the most horrendous mine incidents involving Australian Troops in Vietnam. Though concentrating on the medical aspects, strong and positive mention is made of the involvement of the Sappers, some of whom were there attached to 5RAR and the APCs, while others were flown in to assist. Sapper Noel McDuffie of 2 Troop was wounded in the incident but remained in country, completing his 12 month tour on 27th September 1967.

Operation Renmark

A B52 strike had been arranged for early on the morning of 18 February to coincide with the start of 5RAR’s next stage, Operation Renmark, searching the foothills of the Long Hai hills. Because of Operation Bribie, the start was delayed and the element of a surprise strike was lost. Nevertheless, the search got under way and the first two days were relatively uneventful.

On the third day, the companies moved south to position themselves for the next phase of the operation. At 1330 hours on 21 February, 5RAR’s B Company, mounted on armoured personnel carriers (APCs), set forth towards the Long Hai hills. Battalion headquarters was to follow



after half an hour.

Shortly after 1400 hours, there was the sound of a large explosion from their line of travel and the sight of a black mushroom rising above the tree line. Four minutes later there was a second smaller explosion and a cloud of dust. After a delay, there was a radio call notifying headquarters of casualties, but with no details.

We in battalion headquarters were only two or three kilometres away. There happened to be an army aviation reconnaissance helicopter parked with us at that time and I was soon on my way to the site of the explosions.

Circling to find a spot to land, we were astonished by the sight of an APC lying on its side. Soldiers and equipment lay scattered over an area the size of a tennis court.

After landing, I found that one of the stretcher-bearers had been killed. All the others, and the company medical assistant,

BELOW: Just a few days prior to the Operation Renmark mine incident, Capt Tony White (far right) is seen here attending the aftermath of a booby trap at An Nhut which detonated near the headquarters group of C Company 5RAR, wounding five and killing three officers; Major Donald Bourne, the Company Commander, Capt Robert Miligan, 2IC and the NZ artillery FO Capt Peter Williams



Corporal Ron Nichols, were wounded. Most of the troops, even those not physically injured, were stunned.

The first group of casualties I encountered was the B Company headquarters group. The company commander, Major Bruce McQualter, had a head wound. He was conscious, struggling to get up on his feet, but unable to respond to questions or commands. Stretched out next to him, also with a head wound and unconscious was the 4 Platoon commander, Lieutenant Jack Carruthers.

The Platoon Sergeant, Tassie Wass, was the most urgent casualty with both elbows shattered and wounds to the back. After dressing his wounds and giving morphine, I moved on towards the upended APC. Near the rear of the APC there was a pyramid of what at first glance appeared to be discarded equipment and uniforms. It was a dark grey colour. On closer inspection, it proved to be a pile of dead and wounded soldiers blown out of the back of the vehicle. It was not until 30 years later that I discovered the cause of the blackened skin and uniforms. As protection against mines, two layers of sandbags had been laid on the floor of the APCs. The sand used was very fine and black; the boys had literally been sandblasted by the explosion.

Many of the wounded were suffering from the effects of the explosive blast and were peppered with shrapnel. They required little treatment apart from dressings. On the other hand, there were some horrific sights, including an arm with the attached hand grasping a rifle. This arm was protruding from under the APC, which had crushed the soldier to death. There was also the torso of another soldier



ABOVE: The OC, B Company, Major Bruce McQualter was killed in the incident. He is seen here (left) in September 1966 with the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Tom Daly (right) and Private Stanley English (inside the tent) while on Operation Toledo

separated by some distance from the lower half of his body.

To huge relief, four sappers with mine detectors were choppered in within half an hour of the explosions. They got to work, laying white tape to indicate clear pathways.

Soon dust-off helicopters started to arrive. It was a busy time, trying to get casualties away in order of need. The last casualties were evacuated within about 90 minutes of the explosions. Mercifully this proceeded without enemy interference. It was 4 Platoon B Company which bore the brunt of the casualties. Their platoon commander, Lieutenant Jack Carruthers died of head wounds in hospital three days later. Three others were killed and 13 wounded.

One of the wounded was Private Ted Lloyd. He was back in the platoon after three weeks, but was killed in a second mine incident three weeks later. In that same incident, Lieutenant Kerry Rinkin, who had replaced Jack Carruthers as platoon com-

Casualty list from the mine incident 21/02/1967

Name	Rank	Unit	CAT
Anthony R.L.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Benson K.R.	SSgt	5RAR	WIA#
Bockisch L.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Bouse J.A.	Cpl	5RAR	WIA
Bryant N.R.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Carruthers J.	T/Lt	5RAR	WIA
Clark D.M.	Pte	5RAR	KIA
Clark F.R.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Cogswell	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Duffy T.J.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Dwyer M.N.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Ferguson R.S.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Gee B.A.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
George D.L.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Green G.B.	LCpl	5RAR	KIA
Hillier D.E.	Pte	5RAR	WIA
Lloyd R.E.	Pte	5RAR	WIA
McAlister J.P.	LCpl	5RAR	WIA
McDuffie N.R.	Spr	1FdSqn	WIA
McKenzie R.N.	Cpl	5RAR	WIA#
McQualter M.B.	T/Maj	5RAR	DOW
Mitchinson	LCpl	A3CAV	KIA
Nichols R.F.	Cpl	5RAR	WIA
Nyhuis J.G.	Pte	5RAR	WIA
Poole M.D.	Pte	5RAR	KIA
Sandow R.W.	Pte	5RAR	KIA
Tape D.B.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Turner R.W.	Pte	5RAR	WIA#
Wass K.J.	Sgt	5RAR	WIA#
Webster J.C.	Pte	5RAR	KIA
Wilsen R.P.	Tpr	A3CAV	KIA

mander, was also killed. Major Bruce McQualter died of his head wounds in hospital after twelve days.

The engineers did a good forensic job of working out what had caused this disaster. The lead APC was hit by what is now described as an improvised explosive device. This was a buried, recycled, 8-inch US naval shell. It was rigged up with a detonator and battery. Pressure from the passing vehicle closed the wire circuit, detonating the explosion. The force was considerable, throwing the 11-tonne



APC three metres off to one side and leaving a 2 metre by 1 metre crater.

As Major McQualter and the medics went forward to assist the wounded, one of them stepped on an M16 mine. This “jumping jack”, with its half kilogram of TNT and a killing range of 25 metres, caused most of the casualties. Two more M16 mines were detected by the sappers in the immediate area as they carried out their search.

At that time, there were no clear instructions as to how to respond when it becomes evident that a party is stalled in a minefield. Logic declares that there should be no movement until sappers have cleared paths.

One soldier, a corporal section commander, swears to this day that he said he would shoot me if I walked any further after stepping out of the helicopter that had dropped me off. I have no recollection of this, but fortunately he did not follow through with his threat.

After this incident, when personnel found themselves in a minefield, it became standard procedure for all personnel to freeze until the area had been cleared by sappers. This must have presented some agonising dilemmas, preventing soldiers from going to the aid of wounded comrades.

ABOVE: Sappers clear safe lanes to and around an APC mine incident In 1970

My role as RMO was simple first aid, albeit in a very trying situation. Our shell dressings were made in England and date-stamped April 1915. Half-a-century later they were still perfectly serviceable. Triage was the other important function. This is the process of ranking casualties in order for evacuation to ensure that the severely wounded but salvageable soldiers were evacuated ahead of the mortally wounded or those with non-life threatening wounds.



The Author

Australian born but brought up in Kenya, Dr White graduated in medicine from the University of Sydney and served

as a doctor in the Australian Army for five years. This included a year in Vietnam where he was mentioned-in-despatches.

Subsequently, he practised privately as a dermatologist in Sydney for 32 years before retiring in 2010. During this time, he was a visiting medical officer at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and a clinical senior lecturer at the University of Sydney.

He also served as an Army Reservist in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, attaining the rank of colonel and being awarded the Reserve Force Decoration.

In 2009, he was appointed a member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for contributions to remote area dermatological practice and education.

Last year (2011) his book “Starlight: An Australian Army Doctor in Vietnam” was published by Brisbane based Copy-Right Publishing.



Conclusion

Mine incidents continued to plague the Australian forces throughout the Vietnam War and at times accounted for over half the casualties. To compound the grief, most of the mines had been lifted skilfully by the enemy from allied minefields and re-laid to the enemy’s advantage. The controversy over the use of mines continues to this day.

*From the desk
of the (not so)
Grand Poo Bah*



We have our big national reunion coming up in November this year in Sydney. It's a great chance for us all to get together, including our wives, to recall the extraordinary times we had in the "Funny Farm", have a bit of fun, and of course remember and honour our fallen comrades. We'll be visiting SME to lay a wreath at the Vietnam memorial there, and we'll be making an official visit to the Incident Response Regiment at Holdsworthy, to meet with an incredible bunch of Sappers and see how they operate today in Afghanistan. We will also be getting together with 9RAR, who've invited us to join them at their memorial service and lunch at Victoria Barracks during their reunion on the same weekend. Full details and booking form are in this issue.

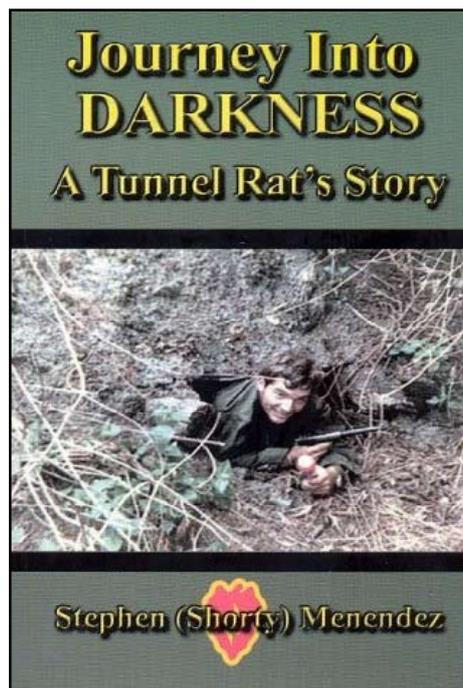
Power of the press

Tunnel Rat legend Jethro Thompson was looking for a publisher for the book he has written about his horrendous wounding and inspiring recovery, and last issue we asked anyone with book published contacts to come forward. Two blokes did just that and were a great help to Jethro.

Mick Bergin put Jethro in touch with his Ian Ferguson who is a well published author. And Blue Baker connected Jethro with Sarah Baker who is also an author and editor in the publishing industry. Both of these contacts gave Jethro really valuable advice and we're happy to announce that his book is in the hands of a publisher. Watch this space.

Early warning

We're planning another trip back to Vietnam, probably just after ANZAC day next year. There'll be many highlights, including honouring our fallen mates in a ceremony at "The Rock".



Global Tunnel Rats

Our website gets a lot of traffic, particularly the area where we have all the issues of Holdfast available to read. The internet of course is global, so we're being read well beyond our own borders. Last month we were contacted by a US Tunnel Rat, Stephen "Shorty" Menendez who served in Vietnam in 1969-1970 with the 25th Inf. Div. of

the 3/22nd Infantry Regiment. He has written a book of his exploits (see cover), which you can find on the Amazon website. "Shorty" has joined our association as our first Yank member. Welcome aboard mate.

You're late again Sapper!

We're desperately late with this issue of Holdfast, in fact we missed a whole issue in 2011. We hope this bumper issue and the free map of Nui Dat help ease the pain. In terms of providing value, we're still doing very well when you consider our first issue was just 8 pages at a time when our membership cost \$38, and we now do 40 page issues when our membership is \$50. This year we're resolved to keeping to our publishing schedule. And speaking of membership, our renewal notice is in this issue and we're providing the opportunity for anyone who feels aggrieved because we missed an issue, to cut \$10 off the annual fee. The rumour that we'll publish a list of the members who take this option is totally untrue!

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



Holdfast Magazine

Written and edited by Jim Marett and published quarterly by the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association

43 Heyington Place
Toorak Vic 3142

Tel: 03-9824 4967

Mobile: 0403 041 962

tunnelrat@optusenet.com.au

www.tunnelrats.com.au

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 08 8725 6900 by mail to Graeme Gartside, 9 Park Street Mt Gambier SA 5290 or by email: ggart@internode.on.net

3 Field Troop (1965-66)

Ian Biddolph 02 4472 9434
 Alan Christie 07 5494 6628
 Brian Cleary 07 5500 6363
 Allan S Coleman 07 4661 1924
 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
 Bill Unmeopa 08 9300 5561
 Snow Wilson Jnr 02 6649 3998

OC's 1 Field Squadron

John Kemp 02 6288 3428
 Rex Rowe 0419 251 420
1 Troop (1966-67)
 Nick Burgerhof 07 3271 1592
 Ray Burton 08 8268 4575
 "Stiffy" Carroll 02 4981 8209
 Joe Cazeay 07 3710 8102
 Allan S Coleman 07 4661 1924

Grahame Cook 02 4390 5159
 Mick George 02 6882 8574
 Alan 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
 David Martin 02 6379 6097
 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)

Billy Adams 03 5974 2916
 Henry Baggaley 07 5433 0482
 Reg Bament 02 6948 2524
 Bruce Bevan 02 9580 3327
 Neville Bartels 07 4055 9871
 Bob Coleman 03 5332 0957
 Ross Comben 08 9535 2273
 Jack Green 07 3278 8719
 Ray Kenny 07 3881 3648
 Peter Koch 04 3822 3100
 Mike McCallum 02 6288 5113
 John Neal 02 9982 6694

Clive Pearsall 03 9459 4470
 Terry Perkins 0413343168
 Alan Rantall 03 9434 2031
 Peter Sheehan 03 9390 2834
 Jim Trower 0418842744

1 Troop (1968-69)

Phil Baxter MM 02 4625 6213
 Adrian Black 0417756729
 Mike Bruggemann 0409441992
 Peter Carrodus 02 9759 6383
 Albert Eyssens 03 5944 3127
 Ken Ford 02 6645 2738
 Max Goiser 02 9792 1765
 Peter Hollis 02 6581 5401
 George Hulse 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
 Colin Spies 07 4743 4676
 Garry Von Stanke 08 8725 5648
 Cliff Truelove 02 6495 7844
 Ken Wheatley 07 4774 0045
 Bob Wooley 03 6264 1485
 David Wright 03 9435 4131

1 Troop (1969-70)

Kevin Atkinson 08 9041 1571
 Larry Batze 07 4033 2025
 Allan S Coleman 07 4661 1924
 Paul Cook 02 4946 5321
 Garry Degering 03 9796 0136
 John Felton 07 4661 8679
 Grahame Fletcher 0408822489
 Brian Forbes 0412047937
 P. "Guts" Geisel 07 4092 1735
 Terry Gleeson 03 5623 2886
 Trevor Kelly 08 9538 1184
 Des McKenzie 07 5448 3400
 Doug Myers 0421904562
 Les Slater 08 9361 0603
 Max Slater 0412 772 849
 Vic Smith 02 4339 2131
 Dave Sturmer 02 8407 9812

1 Troop (1970-71)

Mick Augustus 07 3205 7401
 Dan Brindley 02 6643 1693
 Ian Cambell 03 9870 0313
 Phil Duffy 0406020382
 Bruce Fraser 07 5499 0508
 Garth Griffiths 0435902386
 Peter Krause 02 6723 2835
 R Loxton 0419944755
 Barry Meldrum 03 5427 1162
 Roger Newman 07 5450 6054
 Dennis Pegg 03 6224 9090
 John Pritchard 02 9626 3376



John Severyn 0407008610
 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 9722 9717
 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
 Roland Gloss 02 6367 5324
 John Goldfinch 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 Kitley 02 4735 4991
 Robert Knowles 08 9535 6416
 Bernard Ladyman 08 9795 7900
 Warren McBurnie 02 6687 7030
 Stephen McHenry 08 9344 6939
 Eric McKerrow (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
 Robert Russell 03 5975 5329
 Brian Sheehan 03 9336 3137
 John Willis 03 9363 7878
 "Snow" Wilson 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 0409496294
 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 0433747401
 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 Lambley 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
 Colin Norris 02 4627 1180
 Rod Palmer 0417672643
 Ted Podlich 07 3862 9002
 Daryl Porteous 07 4973 7663
 Mick Weston 07 5444 3307
 Ray 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
 Roy Elbourne 02 4868 1493
 Brian Forbes 0412047937
 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 Koulouris 02 4952 6341
 Bill Lamb 0418 424 208
 Mick Loughlin 07 4060 3039
 Mick Lee 07 5543 5001
 Marty McGrath 02 6059 1204
 Jim Marett 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
 Colin Redacliff 02 9673 0597
 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 Wallbridge 03 9803 4223
 Dennis Wilson 08 8659 1189
 Stephen Wilson 07 5538 2179

2 Troop (1970-1971)

Bruce Arrow 02 6288 3872
 Mick Bergin 03 5974 2175
 Graham Besford 03 9439 2661
 Mal Botfield 02 9872 2594
 John Brady 02 6888 1192
 Keith Burley 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
 Gino De Bari 08 9437 5641
 Tom Dodds 040672260
 Des Evans 07 4128 2390
 Bruce Fenwick 02 4977 3530
 Ray Fulton 03 6288 1176
 Ziggy Gniot 0418 885 830
 Bob Hamblyn 08 8672 3930
 Cec Harris 02 6629 3373
 Paddy Healy 02 4930 7541
 Kevin Hodge 08 8322 2619
 Paul Jones 02 6231 5963
 Jim Kelton 02 6948 3927

Chris Koolen 03 5237 1147
 Kevin Lappin 07 3273 8614
 Gary McClintock 07 4788 0123
 Peter McCole 03 5155 9368
 Bob McGlenn 07 5426 1597
 Ian McLean 02 6286 3928
 Jeff Maddock 03 5442 2875
 Leon Madeley 07 5497 1038
 Butch Marsden 08 9921 6183
 Bill Marshall 07 5545 0389
 Rod O'Regan 02 6550 6068
 Graeme Pengelly 0407 138 124
 Des Polden 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
 Alex 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 5332 0975
 Jim Dowson 03 5662 3291
 Barry Gilbert 03 5023 6657
 Brian Hopkins 0401829744
 John Hoskin 08 8270 3002
 Jack Lawson 0429 798 673
 Peter MacDonald 08 9448 5418
 Barrie Morgan 0437861945
 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
 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

3 Troop (1968-69)

Geoff Box 08 9731 2757
 Barry Chambers 08 8927 8237
 Neil Garrett 03 5798 1522
 Brian Glyde 02 4455 7404
 Peter Gray 02 4285 8877
 John Hollis 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 Shields 08 8297 8619
 Ray Vanderheiden 02 4776 1373
 Wal Warby 0418240394
 Ray White 03 9740 7141

Three Troop (1969-70)

Tony Bower-Miles 0412 317 306
 Chris Brooks 08 9271 2811
 Jim Burrough 03 9885 8285
 Terry Cartlidge 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 Lyall 07 3343 4725
 Phil McCann 03 5442 3459
 Chris MacGregor 02 4472 3250
 Norm Martin 02 4953 1331
 Jock Meldrum MID
 0405 677 448

Gary Miller MM 07 5495 5647
 "Jacko" Miller 03 6267 4411
 Chris Muller 07 4653 0457
 Danny Mulvany 08 9356 6890
 Vin Neale 03 9786 1549
 Peter Phillips 0429362935
 G. Rentmeester 03 9735 5236
 Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
 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
 Darryll Binns 0417170171
 Mal Botfield 02 9872 2594
 Ian Campbell 03 9870 0313
 Bob Clare 03 5439 5532
 Graeme Clarke 07 4128 4660
 Ted Clarke 03 5682 2584
 Allan 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
 Carlo Mikkelsen
 (New Zealand) 0064 9 4797857
 Ben Passarelli 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

Three Troop (1971-72)

Ron Byron 02 6653 4791
 Brenton J Smith 08 8536 2923

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