



HOLDFAST

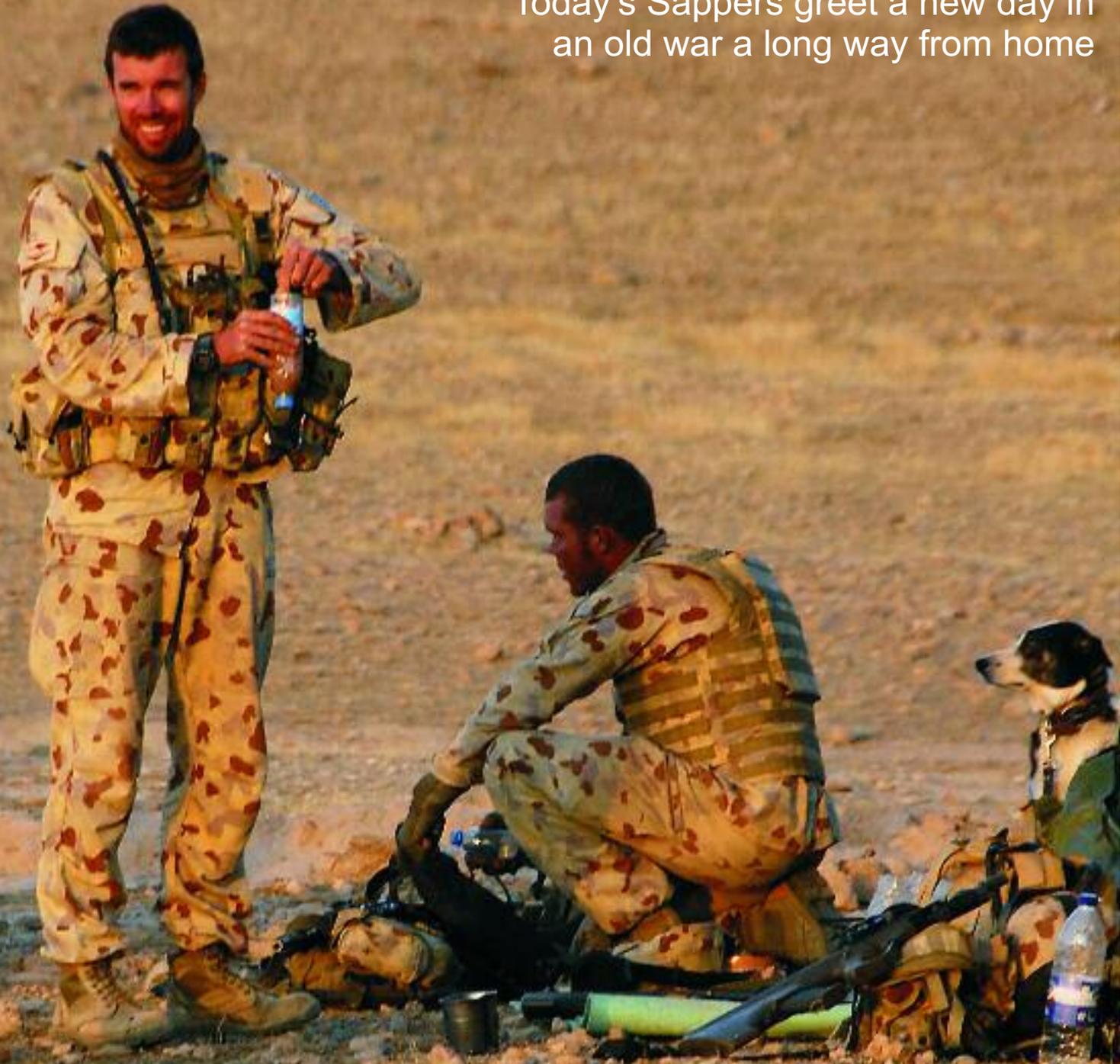
July 2007

NUMBER 10

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION INC

Gooooood morning Afghanistan!

Today's Sappers greet a new day in an old war a long way from home



We dedicate our cover this issue to all the Sappers currently serving overseas.

Above: Captain Carl Miller and Sapper Peter Lawlis with explosive detection dog 'Merlin' watching the sunrise as they prepare breakfast on an operation in Afghanistan in May this year.

Nostalgia Pages



Pages of great pics from the past to amaze and amuse. Contributions welcome. Send your favourite Vietnam photographs by mail to: Jim Marett 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142 Or by email to: tunnelrat@optusnet.com.au



Getting Sappers to smile is easy

All you have to do to raise a smile out of a good Sapper is stand him in front of a few dozen unexploded bombs. If you look closely, some of these guys are actually drooling with delight. To make things even more exciting, it looks like these UXBs have been through a grass fire as well! John Nulty 3 Troop 68/69 provided the photo, but who are these fine young men? If you can help name them, let us know.



Who are these tossers?

Who said we never had a social life? Sit in a circle with your mates, talk bullshit, drink beer, toss the empty can into the drum, open another beer, drink beer, accuse your mate of being a "Pogo", drink more beer - and so on. Paradise. But who are these guys? And which Troop, and which year? If you can help identify these Tunnel Rats, let us know. It's obviously early on in the piss-up, as there isn't a single empty can on the ground.



R & R Bound

Dressed up, cashed up and ready to roll. Tunnel Rats Gerry Wallbridge (left) and Frank Denley wait at Luscombe Field for their flight to take them on R&R leave. You looked forward to this so much, you really didn't believe it was going to happen till you actually walked onto the plane.



Hurry up and wait

Called out from Ready Reaction, Tunnel Rats Darryl Lavis (left) and “Twiggy” Branch wait for the chopper to turn up and take them out bush. Sappers were put on Ready Reaction during the 10-day “break” they had between operations. You had to be packed and ready to move at literally a moments notice. The only good point was they were usually only one or two-day tasks, enabling you to quickly get back to base for a beer.



Take-over at Nui Dat

A recent visitor on a tour back to Vietnam thought it would be a good idea to try and find our old 1 Fld Sqn lines at Nui Dat. He could only get so far before he was confronted with this sign stating that Vietnamese Army unit BB 445 now occupied the area (obviously related to our old enemy D445). It was hard to orientate, but he figures the sign is about where our old HQ used to be. We'll check this out when our tour group goes back in September.



Mine-catcher madness

We're not sure how long this went on for, but Sapper Vin “Jerry” Neale, seen here driving the mine-buster says that about one in five mines did not explode, flying about sixty feet in the air instead, before landing back in the minefield. The solution some bright-spark came up with was a giant pair of metal tongs (about 6' to 8' long) to pick them up, and a bag to drop them into. The shredded bag and its supporting hoop can be seen attached to the APC in the above photo. Sappers were definitely at the end of the food chain when tasks were handed out in Vietnam!



Mystery Man

Peter Bennett (2 Troop 67/68) says the guy above was the life of the party and Peter would love to get in touch with him. Sadly “Old-Timers” syndrome has set in and Peter can't remember the guys name. Can anyone help get these two Sappers back in touch? If you can, give Peter a call on 08-9385 5499.



Strange rituals over at 1 Troop

It was accepted that 1 Troop was filled with weirdos, but the above ritual seems beyond the limits of normal behaviour. Jack Green (on the dunny) says it was all part of what they called "Stand Down", where they sat around, talked and drank beer. If you mentioned Vietnam you had to sit on the throne while Ken Innes played the mouth organ to you. Go figure that one!



"Nice Stack"

Sapper Cul Hart, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Troop 66/67 leans against a stack of firepower. The Sappers of Cul's era had the unenviable task of laying the barrier minefield between Dat Do and the coast at Long Phuoc Hai.



Bag Man

In February 1968 in Bien Hoa Province, Sapper Geoff Coombs found himself filling sandbags around a mortar bunker. Geoff was on Operation Coburg at a FSB, which was a change from walking with the Grunts.



Hello Sailor

In July 1970 Corporal Bill Cummings of 1 Fld Sqn was manning the tiller of an aluminium assault craft while attached on operations to the Assault Pioneer Platoon of 2RAR. They were turned into sailors to conduct riverine operations in the Rung Sat, a vast tangle of waterways and mangrove swamps which run into the coastline. On left, beside Corporal Cummings, is a Vietnamese National Policeman, who interviewed intercepted sampan owners.



Grunted out

Being out bush with the Grunts can give you that “Thousand Yard Stare” - a look that might indicate that all brain matter has shut down. In fact, you’re probably on full alert. Here Sapper Chris Koulouris, a Tunnel Rat with 2 Troop, has “The Look” while out on an operation with 5RAR in 1969.



Tunnel Rats in the making

What a splendid bunch of men. Fresh from the SME Sapper Factory and ready to ship off to Vietnam. The sign in front says they are Field Engineers from 1 Troop, Grade 1 in 1970 - just in time to catch the last days of the war. Seriously, the training was very good at SME, probably sharpened by the constant reports of casualties coming back from Vietnam. Transition into Vietnam was greatly aided by the two-man team system, where in-country a “Number One” took you under his wing and showed you the ropes.



Ron’s Snake Pit

Jumping into your fighting pit in a “stand to” in the middle of the night can bring you face to face with snakes, spiders and all sorts of beasts. Ever careful, Ron Coman of 2 Troop checks out his pit in the bright light of day - just in case.



Suckers on a drive to nowhere

You’d just arrived in Vietnam. You’re disoriented and scared shitless, but you’ve been assured back at SME in Australia that the experienced blokes will look after you. You’re a “sponge” willing to take in everything they tell you. So when they announce it’s time to put your civvies on and board the truck for the Saturday night dance at a nearby village (the Hoa Long Stomp), you naturally believe them. You even feel a sense of pride that you’ve been accepted by the lads so quickly. Of course, there is no dance, and yet another bunch of new arrivals have been conned.



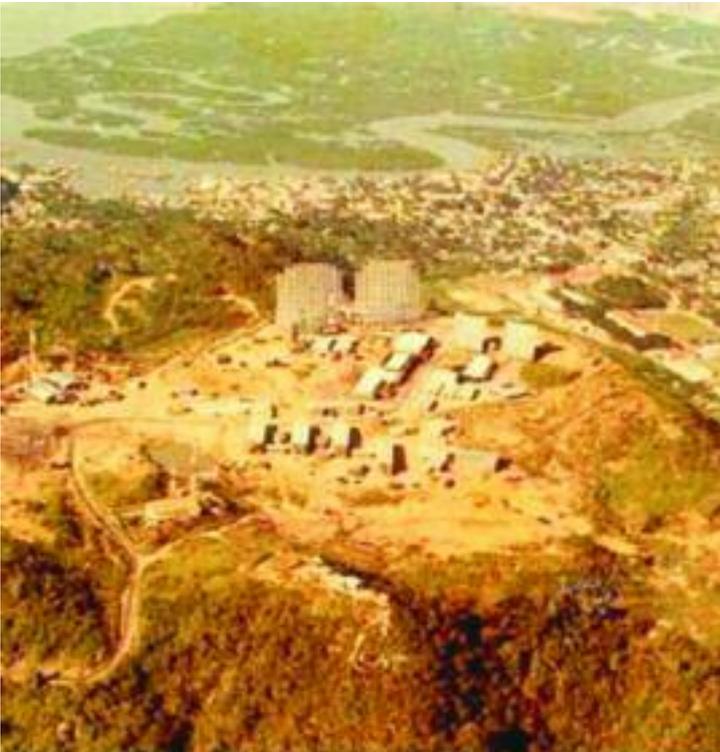
Modest 2 Troop

This rock graced the entrance to 2 Troop lines, proclaiming they were “second to none”. Jim Marett did most of the painting, stretching a two-day job into a week before Troop staff woke up to the scam and sent him out bush again.



The Gateway to Heaven

The front gate at the Australian base in Vung Tau. If you were coming out of here, you were heading into town for the time of your life with your mates, helped in the pursuit by an endless supply of good booze and bad women. If you were heading back into the base at night, you were either pissed or under arrest (or both). After curfew, the alternative to using the front gate was sneaking around the wire in the surf at the back of the base. It was a sobering experience, particularly when the Koreans next door started shouting and threatening to shoot you!



“Zero Alpha, say again, over”

Radio communications were an essential element while out on operations in Vietnam. If they failed you were in deep poo - with no air support, no artillery support, and nobody to talk to. Radar Hill in Vung Tau (above) was abuzz with all sorts of electronics and was critical to keeping the troops in action.



Snooping Sapper

A Viet Cong weapon pit is searched by Sapper Peter Gachia in 1966 during Operation Hardihood. He later found large quantities of rice, salt and fresh foods left behind by the enemy as they fled the action. Sapper Gachia was attached to 5RAR for the operation. Rubber plantations provided little cover because the foliage was all up high on the trees and the ground was kept clear for the workers.

OUR OWN TUNNEL RATS SHIRT

High quality, pure cotton, black polo shirts with the Tunnel Rats banner on the back and the Tunnel Rats logo on the front.

(Wimps option: you can choose to have the logo on the front, with no banner on the back of the shirt).



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PLEASE NOTE: THE SHIRTS ARE BLACK, NOT WHITE

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Where does the money go you thieving bastard?
After paying out the T-Shirt printer, the packaging and the postage, there is a profit of about \$12 on each shirt. Every cent of this profit goes to the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc to help pay the costs of the newsletter. No member or anyone associated with any member of this association makes a single cent of profit from this or any other income from our members. We have an absolute policy against any Veteran making a profit from fellow Veterans via our association or our newsletter. It won't happen here.

GUARANTEED

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

Tunnel Rats Rally for the big trip “Back to the Dat”

An update on the swan back to Vietnam, where bookings have gone way beyond expectations, with 41 participants so far, and more expected.



“Do you think the boozers still open mate?”

The reaction to the trip back to Vietnam has been extraordinary. At first we thought maybe we'd get 10 or 12 takers, but the list just keeps growing.

In total breach of the Privacy Act the list of men on the tour so far is shown opposite.

The great thing is that the participants are from all Troops and eras (except 3 Fld Tp so far). We also have four sons of Veterans comin with their Dads on the trip. Well done lads. Plus we have a resident journalist (Alan Armsden), a mate of Jim Marett's who works with News Limited and will cover the trip for various papers around Australia.

Here's a brief reminder of our itinerary, (remember we'll have our own bus and guide on all of this, plus at the end of each day we'll finish up with drinks and various dinner options).

Day 1 - September 15 we all arrive in Saigon and meet for welcome drinks at 6pm, followed by a welcome dinner. Day 2 - The Cu Chi Tunnels. Day 3 - Saigon

to Vung Tau on the hydrofoil ferry and a tour of Vung Tau by bus. Day 4 – Baria orphanage and the Long Phuoc Tunnels plus meet former VC. Day 5 - Nui Dat, Long Tan and the Horseshoe. Day 6 - Long Hai Mountains, Binh Ba and Cam My. Day 7: Free day in Vung Tau. Day 8: Vung Tau to Saigon by Hydrofoil and a tour of Saigon. Day 9 A free day in Saigon and our farewell dinner. Day 10 – Return to Australia (though some are staying on to see more of the country.

We decided to change hotels in Saigon once we discovered The Palace had a disco that went all night and could be heard in every room. We have changed to the Grand Hotel, a fully renovated historic hotel right in the heart of Saigon action on Dong Khoi Street. You can see details of the hotel on their website at www.grandhotel.vn

Based on advice from an ex 4RAR digger living in Vung Tau, we have changed hotels in Vungers to the Rex Hotel. This

hotel is opposite the beach, has a pool and a great bar which will become our “designated boozers” during our stay in Vungers.

This has increased the overall costs by \$100 each, but we're still much cheaper than the original prices. The standard package of 9 nights (covering all hotels, including taxes and breakfast, all tours, bus hire, guides and permit fees), for those sharing a room is now \$650 and for those taking a single room the cost is now \$950. This covers costs in Vietnam only, with everyone arranging their own airfares in order to get the best deal from their own city.

Obviously if you are staying extra nights by arriving in Saigon earlier than 15th September, the cost of those nights are added to this amount (for sharing a room it's A\$70 per night and for people in single rooms it's \$120 per night).

We can still take bookings, but the closing off date is 15th August. Book now!

Who's signed up for the big swan so far?

Name	Troop	Year	Name	Troop	Year
Barrie Morgan	3 Troop	67/68	Les Shelley	2 Troop	69/70
Harold Bromley	2 Troop	68/69	Bob Smith	2 Troop	69/70
John Kemp	OC 1Fld Sqn	67/68	Travers Smith (son of Bob - Navy Diver, Iraq)		
Clive Pearsall	1 Troop	67/68	Bob Ottery	2 Troop	69/70
Allan Coleman	3 Troop	70/71	Hugh Maltby	Transport	68/69
Jock Coutts	2 Troop	1971	Ted Podlich	2 Troop	68/69
Gary McClintock	2 Troop	70/71	Rod O'Regan	2 Troop	70/71
Mike Barnett	3 Troop	70/71	Ron Coman	2 Troop	69/70
Greg Gough	2 Troop	69/70	Wayne Lambley	2 Troop	68/69
Mike Woodhams	3 Troop	67/68	Wayne's Son		
Travis Woodhams (Son of Mike)					
Gary Pohner	3 Troop	67/68			
Steve Armbrust	3 Troop	70/71			
Brad Hannaford	2 Troop	69/70			
Ziggy Gniot	2 Troop	70/71			
Jim Marett	2 Troop	69/70			
Alan Armsden (Journalist mate of Jim)					
"BC" Scott	2 Troop	69/70			
Darren Scott (Son of "BC")					
Jack Lawson	3 Troop	67/68			
Mick Augustus	1 Troop	70/71			
Shaun Augustus (Son of Mick)					
"Curly" Tuttleby	3 Troop	69/70			
John Breaden (mate of Curly)					
Chuck Bonzas	3 Troop	67/68			
Kerry Caughey	3 Troop	67/68			
Norm Cairns	3 Troop	67/68			
Peter Cairns	2 Troop	70/71			
Mike Dutton	3 Troop	1971			
James Dutton (Son of Mike)					
David Mumford	17 Con	70/71			



VIETNAM TRIP \$100 DEPOSIT & BOOKING FORM - DO IT NOW!

"Where does the money go you thieving bastard?"

As per our usual policy, this trip is run entirely for the benefit of members. Not one cent of profit and no advantage of any kind goes to the Association or any member or office holder of the association.

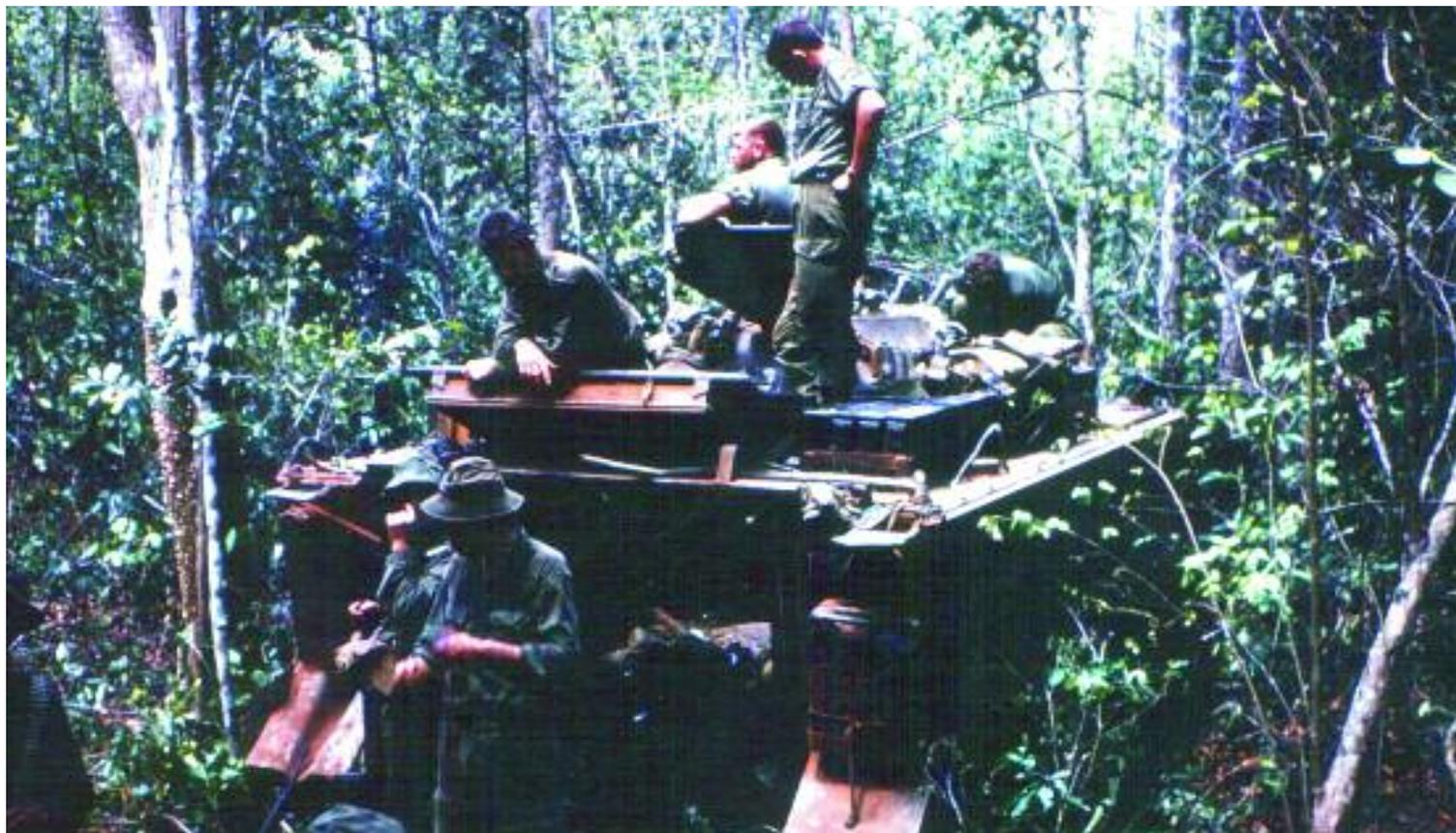
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Once we confirm all the details we'll call on you to pay the rest.

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<input type="checkbox"/> 3 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
The deposit required is \$100. You can pay by credit card (your statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics"), or by cheque or postal order. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association		
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Name on card	Expiry Date	
Signature:		
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Working with the Tracks

This issue we take a look at how the Tunnel Rats worked as Mini-Teams attached to the APCs, and we reflect on a terrible, but typical APC mine incident that decimated B Company 5RAR with 31 casualties, and tested the skills of the Sappers from 1 Field Squadron



The Tunnel Rats in Vietnam worked in basically three modes: attached to Infantry, attached to Armoured, and on ready reaction at a Fire Support Base. In each of these cases we usually worked as a team of two and were out bush for the duration of the operation, usually four to six weeks.

In past issues of "Holdfast" we've covered in detail the way we worked with Infantry, and in this issue we look closely at working with the Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs).

There were some good aspects of working with the APCs, such as always having plenty of rations, water and ammunition at hand without having to cart it around yourself. And it meant you didn't have to walk everywhere, like with the Infantry, but you were hardly riding in style!

We rode on the lead APC

and when sitting on top of the vehicle, the Number 1 sat on the hatch right behind the driver. His task was to look for signs of mines on the road or track, such as some loose earth, a bit of plastic sheet sticking out of the ground, or a twig which might be a tilt switch.

But with the rough ride and in the heat, the dust or the rain it was almost impossible to see anything. Consequently when a lead APC hit a mine, the Tunnel Rats were being blown up with it, leaving no skilled soldier to clear safe paths to the wounded.

This often resulted in more casualties because the enemy would lay anti-personnel mines, knowing men would rush to help the wounded.

When walking with the Grunts the Tunnel Rats could and did spot many mines and signs of mines, saving untold numbers of lives, But the Tunnel Rats lost this

ability to observe the dangers on the APCs and consequently were very edgy about riding them. They were basically powerless until a mine incident happened.

A terrible, but telling example of exactly this was Operation Renmark which took place from 18 to 27 February 1967. It was a search and destroy operation by 5RAR covering 13 square miles of the eastern approaches to the Long Hai Hills.

Field Engineer support for the operation was provided by 2 Troop, and comprised part of its headquarters and four Combat Engineer Teams plus three Mini Teams in support of A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.

For the first three days the Sapper teams destroyed camps and material and neutralised many booby traps. On 20 February, three unarmed M16 mines were discovered in a group. That same day a 100-ft

long tunnel was discovered which was destroyed using 70 lb of TNT. The following day two 155mm shells and a US Mk A1 mine, four anti-personnel projectiles and a 750 lb UXB cluster bomb were found, which were all demolished.

Early in the afternoon B Coy 5RAR was being lifted by APCs when the leading elements suffered 31 casualties due firstly to a mine exploding under the leading APC and later another affecting the rescue party. Sapper Deane Branson, a Tunnel Rat on a Combat Engineer Team with B Coy, described what happened:

“On the morning of Feb 21st spirits were high amongst the sappers and 4 Platoon. As far as we were concerned the worst was over and the arduous climb up and down the steep-sided hills through thick jungle was behind us. We looked into the distance at the last two small humps of the Long Hai hills where they dipped into the sea and congratulated ourselves that we only had two quite small hills left to search.

The APCs were to pick us up for the sweep and deliver us right to the bottom of the last of the range of hills. We were not to know that we would never reach our objective and that the operation would be called off.

We set off from the road through light scrub growing in white sandy soil. I was travelling atop an APC, which was second in the convoy taking troops into the coastal end of the Long Hai hills. 4 Platoon occupied the first two APCs then there was a break of a couple of hundred yards to the next group which contained headquarter people. Behind them another break then a couple more APCs and so on along the convoy.

Some several kilometres from the hills a single-strand barbed wire fence had been erected across our path with the



Two APCs positioned for a night ambush could provide attached Sappers with perfect support for a mammoek



Elements of B Company 5RAR disembark from the Tracks of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, (RAAC) in February 1967



February 1967, and B Company 5RAR patrol alongside the Tracks of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, (RAAC)



Major McQualter, OC B Co 5RAR (left) who was KIA in the 21/02/67 action, seen here in 09/66 with The Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Thomas J. Daly



Seen here in happier times, are Lance Corporal Joe McAlister (left) and Private Bob Turner of 4 Platoon, B Company 5RAR, both men were injured in the 21/02/67 incident



Also injured in on 21/02/07 was Sergeant Ken Benson, seen here on 04/07/66 in his role as Bandsman with 5RAR in Hoa Long

signs “Bai Minh” and “Mines” hanging from it at regular intervals. The commander of the APC leading the convoy halted the column and called up on the radio reporting the wire and signs.

The reply was that there was no minefield in that location, that the Americans had been through there just a couple of weeks earlier and the signs were probably a ruse to stop our entering the area. On the basis of the advice that there was no minefield, the column proceeded.

About one kilometre further on towards the base of the hills, the leading APC stopped, then started forward, slewing slightly to the left and setting off a huge explosion and dust cloud.

The APC had run over what was later suspected to be a 250 lb bomb set up as a booby trap. Parts of the left-hand track from the first APC appeared through the cloud of dust.

Dick Sandow was blown from the first APC into the hole the bomb had made and was scrambling out of the hole clutching his rifle.

The second APC reversed away from the explosion until it struck the track, which had been blown off the first APC and over the top of the second, to land some 15 or 20 feet behind. The second APC then drove forward and to the right to take up a defensive position.

By this time the dust cloud was clearing and Lt Carruthers and the rest of the people riding on the second APC dismounted and rushed in to help the wounded.

I had been blown backwards by the force of the explosion and down through the open cargo hatch into the body of the APC. When the rear door was lowered, I and the infantrymen inside, climbed out. The commander of this APC shouted a request for anyone



close to provide defensive support as someone was yelling out that "They are coming", I took up a position to the left of the APC with two infantrymen.

As the dust cleared further the extent of the damage became more evident. The cupola had been blown off the first APC and had landed some distance away upside down. The APC had landed on its side some 20 feet from where it was blown up, the rear door had been blown off and there was a hole about 2 feet across directly under where the driver had sat.

A few minutes later, Maj McQualter and a couple of others came rushing up from the APC's further back in the column. Someone either in or close to his party stepped on an anti-personnel mine, ultimately killing McQualter, Sandow, Carruthers and several others.

After the anti-personnel mine exploded, someone shouted that we were in a minefield and called for engineers. Spr Noel McDuffie and I, along with some men from



the infantry, searched for evidence of mines and laid out safe lanes using debris, rifles etc. The task of evacuating the dead and wounded and clearing the area progressed until late afternoon. Using a cable strung from another APC, the wreck was righted. The cupola from the

Top: A 13 ton APC flipped and shattered by a massive mine. **Middle:** It was a retrieved UXB like this that destroyed the APC on Operation Renmark. **Bottom:** The "Number 1" Sapper of the Mini Team sat on the hatch right behind the driver.

wreck, the rear door, radios, weapons etc, were stripped off for salvage and later transported back to Nui Dat.

The clean-up occupied the remainder of the day and the night was spent close by the scene of the explosion. During the night the APCs kept up firing at the hills and the muffled sounds of artillery hitting the hillside could be heard.

To deny any useful parts of the wrecked APC to the enemy, I was ordered to destroy as much as was possible of the damaged APC. All personnel, except one infantryman and myself, left the area. I packed grenades and any other explosives available around the

motor and detonated them. Then my escort and I rejoined the main body, which by now was about a mile away."

Maj B.G. Florence, OC 1 Fd Sqn, noted afterwards that the second explosion was an MI6 mine but, as Branson indicated, it was thought at first that the original explosion had been caused by a pressure-activated electric switch detonating a US UXB of about 250 kg of HE.

The switch was eventually recovered; the bamboo had been cut as a slab switch requiring no more than 20 lb pressure to activate. 1 Fd Sqn Wksp later recovered the APC hulk from which metallic fragments were analysed indicating that they came from a US 5-inch naval shell.

In his Technical Report for February 1967, Florence commented that 'the incidence of enemy mining has definitely



Two more casualties on 21/02/66, here seen earlier in different roles (Left photo) Corporal Ron Nichols (WIA) and (above photo) on the right, Private Mick Poole (KIA)

increased, no doubt in an endeavour to counter APC movement'. He believed that Combat Engineer Teams with APC-borne operations must be accepted as normal.

In the years following there would be many more APC mine incidents and many Sappers would be killed and

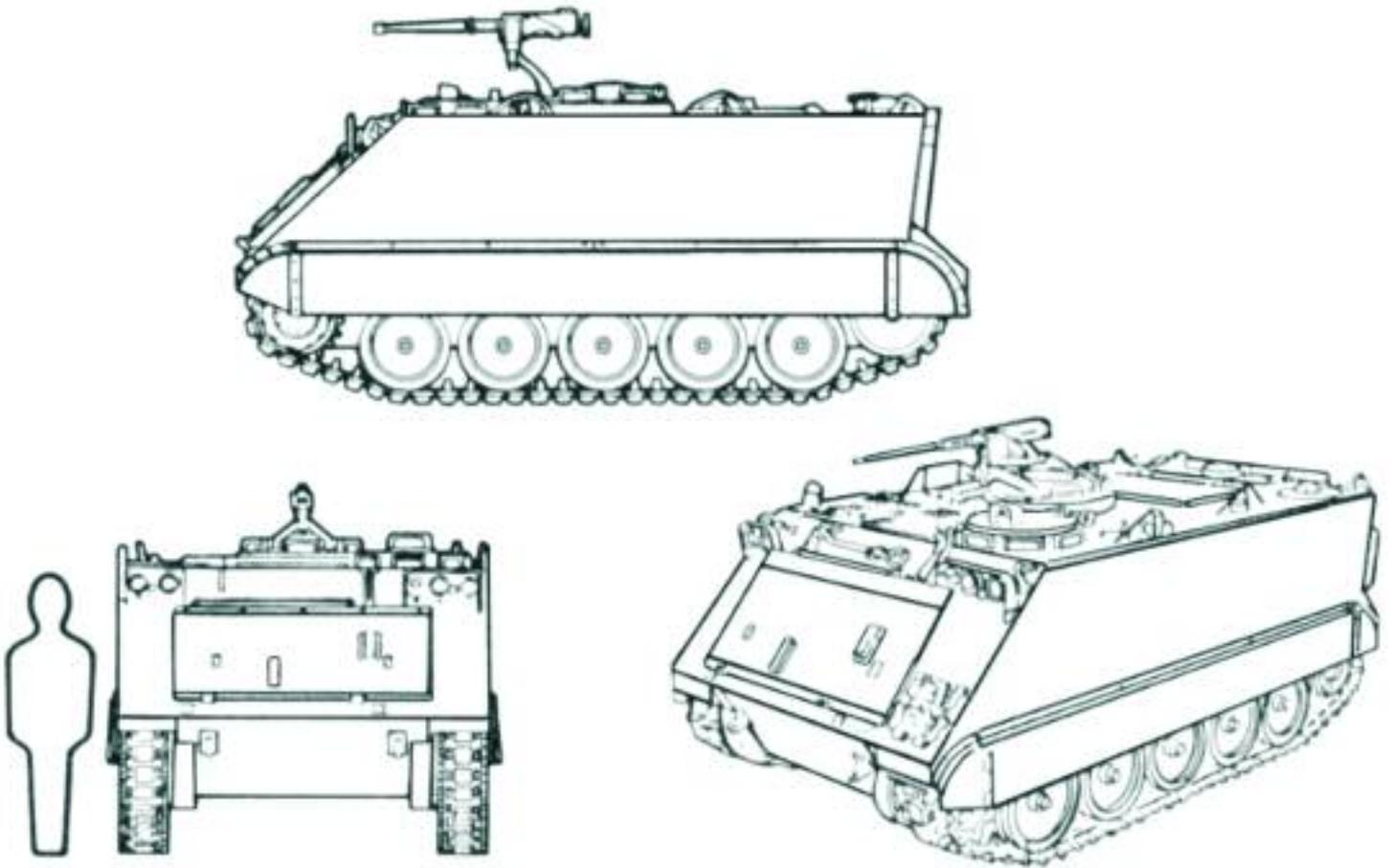
wounded working with the brave crews of these essential, but highly targeted vehicles.

The presence of the Tunnel Rats on board the APCs was considerable comfort to the Commanders and crews of the vehicles, resulting in a great bond building up between us which is as strong as ever today.

Casualty list from the multiple mine incidents on 21st February 1967

Pte Anthoney R.L. WIA
 SSgt Benson K.R. WIA
 Pte Bockisch L. WIA
 Cpl Bouse J.A. WIA
 Pte Bryant N.R. WIA
 T/Lt Carruthers J. WIA
 Pte Clark D.M. KIA
 Pte Clark F.R. WIA
 Pte Cogswell C.J. WIA
 Pte Duffy T.J. WIA
 Pte Dwyer M.N. WIA
 Pte Ferguson R.S. WIA
 Pte Gee B.A. WIA
 Pte George D.L. WIA
 LCpl Green G.B. KIA

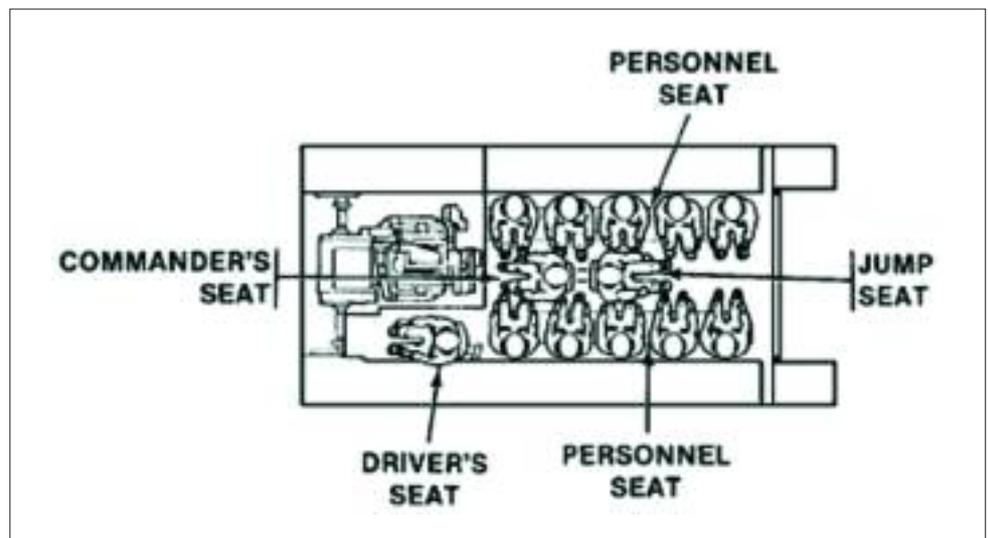
Pte Hillier D.E. WIA
 LBdr Jones PR WIA
 Pte Lloyd R.E. WIA
 LCpl McAlister J.P. WIA
 Cpl McKenzie R.N. WIA
 T/Maj McQualter M.B. KIA
 LCpl Mitchinson K.L. KIA
 Cpl Nichols R.F. WIA
 Pte Nyhuis J.G. WIA
 Pte Poole M.D. KIA
 Pte Sandow R.W. KIA
 Pte Tape D.B. WIA
 Pte Turner R.W. WIA
 Sgt Wass K.J. WIA
 Pte Webster J.C. KIA



The first version of the M113 armored personnel carrier (APC) was introduced in 1960. Operated by a driver and track commander, it was designed to transport a squad of 11 infantrymen across a hostile battlefield. To maximize strategic and tactical mobility, the M113 was made to be air-transportable, air-droppable, and swimmable, thereby enabling it to be employed in a wide range of combat scenarios.

In 1964 the original 209 horsepower (HP) gasoline engine was replaced by a more fuel-efficient 212 HP diesel package, which increased cruising range by 50 percent and made it less flammable, improving crew survivability. The APC was the primary ground combat vehicle used by American, Australian, and South Vietnamese troops in the Vietnam War.

It's a fully tracked vehicle capable of limited amphibious operation in lakes and streams,



extended cross-country travel over rough terrain, and high speed operation on improved roads. The M113 family has many variants and modifications that are used in a variety of combat and combat support roles.

Approximately 80,000 units of all types have been produced worldwide making it the most widely used armored fighting vehicle of all time.

The Vietnam War was the first combat opportunity for "Mechanized" Infantry, a technically new type of infantry with its roots in the Armored Infantry of World War II.

"Holdfast" acknowledges the use of extracts from "Ubique", a history of the RAE Corp in the compilation of this story.

Tunnel Rats proudly march under our own banner in three cities on Anzac Day



PERTH

The Tunnel Rats strutted their stuff in three capital cities this Anzac Day - in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

Perth was organised by Peter Bennett, who also had the banner made (and who promises to restore 3 Field Troop to the wording!). The turn-up was even better than the year prior, and the men felt justly proud as they strode through the streets of Perth.

Sydney was ably organised by Graeme Cook ("Cookie") who not only went through the process of gaining permissions from the RSL, but paid for the banner as well (that's the spirit Sapper!). Despite the pouring rain, the turn-up for the inaugural Sydney march was excellent, and will doubtless increase next year with more publicity and (hopefully) better weather.



SYDNEY



PERTH

Photos:

(Top): Perth - Some of the lads pose beneath their brand new banner - and great to see some of the kids being involved too.

(Middle left): Sydney - In a blaze of red and blue banners from various Engineer unit associations, the Tunnel Rats wait to march off.

(Middle Right): Perth - Bill Harrigan and Eddie Johnson (both served with 2 Troop, 1 Fd Sqn 1966/67) standing proudly in front of the Tunnel Rats banner before march off.

(Bottom): Sydney - Ducking the downpour long enough to take this photo, are (from left) "Cookie" Cook, "Skinny Innes MM", "Short Time" Bevan, and "Happy" Hammond.



SYDNEY



MELBOURNE

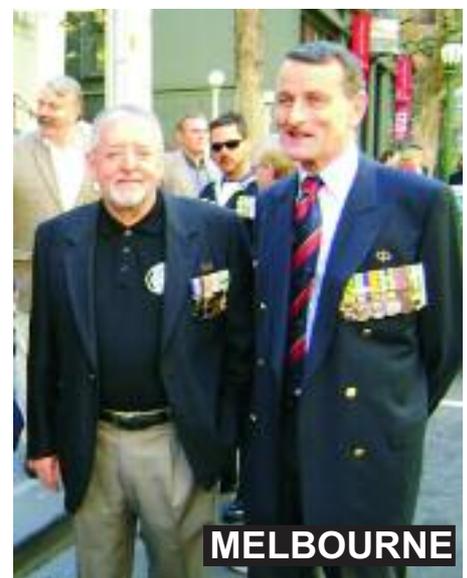
Top Photo: Melbourne - Colonel Sandy MacGregor leads our merry band of Tunnel Rats in the Melbourne March. Sandy led the legendary 3 Field Troop in Vietnam, the men who found and searched the famous Tunnels of Cu Chi (now a major tourist attraction). After the march we enjoyed a reunion lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant, where Sandy spoke positively and emotionally of the men who form this unique band of Veterans. We were privileged to share this with Sandy and we thank him for coming down from Sydney to join us and to lead our march.

Middle Photo: Melbourne - (in the centre) Sapper Ted Podlich, 2 Troop 68/69, hob nobbing it with two old friends from our visit to Darwin last year, both currently serving, (left) WO1 Stuart Rutledge, former SSM 1 Fld Sqn, and Major Robert Cox, former OC, 1 Fld Sqn. Stuart and Robert have been posted to Victoria.



MELBOURNE

Right Photo: Jim Marett (left) 2 Troop 69/70, hob nobbing it on an even grander scale, with Major General Mike O'Brien. Mike was Intelligence Officer and a Platoon Commander with 7RAR on their second tour (supported by 2 Troop 1 Fld Sqn). Mike wrote the book "Conscripts and Regulars" covering both of 7RAR's tours to Vietnam. General O'Brien was slightly miffed to see that our new Army Combat Badge has two swords while his Infantry Combat Badge has only one!



MELBOURNE

Your Association in action

We've only been going about three years but much has been achieved. Here we take a look at some of the highlights.





OUR
HONOUR
ROLL

VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS









The proud title of Tunnel Rat belongs exclusively to those Engineers who served in Vietnam with 3 Field Troop, or 1, 2 or 3 Troop of 1 Field Squadron RAE.

The Tunnel Rats led an odd life, usually being attached in two-man teams to Infantry and Armoured units instead of working together as a troop or squadron.

When attached to Infantry units, these two-man teams were called 'Splinter Teams'. If attached to Armoured units they carried mine detector and flack jackets and were called 'Mini Teams'.

An early task for the Tunnel Rats was the laying of minefields, an exceptionally stressful job, particularly when laying those mines fitted with anti-lift devices.

However, the main role for the Tunnel Rats was to carry out their specialist tasks: mine and booby trap delousing, tunnel and bunker searching, demolitions and bomb disposal - while attached to the Infantry and Armoured units for four to six-week long operations.

In addition to normal packs, food, water and sleeping gear they carried a torch, a 9mm pistol, detonating cord, safety fuse, explosives, detonators, mine-incident maps, pliers, tape, - and lucky charms!

The casualty rate amongst these men was high, with 36 Killed in action during the war. In one 12 month period alone (June 1969 to June 1970) 12 were killed and 36 wounded, a total of 48 casualties from just 120 men operating as Tunnel Rats - a casualty rate of close to 40%

OUR
TASKS

Display at the National Vietnam Veteran's Museum

The Committee of the National Vietnam Veteran's Museum at Phillip Island, Victoria contacted us and asked if we'd be interested in providing material on the Tunnel Rats for display.

Jim Marett visited the museum and in discussions with their Committee, a wall area 8ft x 12ft was allocated to us.

We prepared and provided the above material on self-adhesive vinyl for application to the wall.

The display comprises, on the left, an Honour Roll of our men killed in action, and on the right, a brief description of our tasks and how we operated. In the centre is a selection of photos covering a good cross-section of



typical Tunnel Rats on the job. And below that are three badges close to our hearts - our Corps Badge, our Army Combat Badge, and our Corps Cypher (the red and

blue thing on the right!).

The display is very prominent in the Museum and has drawn a lot of positive comment from visitors.

Hitting the streets

Anzac Day 2004 in Melbourne was the first time the Tunnel Rats marched under their own banner. Colonel John Hopman (former Troop Officer 2 Troop 69/70) led our group, and over 30 lads attended from all points of Australia. We now also march in Perth and Sydney, with Townsville following soon. Where next?



Reunion with 5RAR

In February 2005 we were invited by Colonel Colin "Genghis" Khan to their big reunion in Canberra. We were allocated prime tables and "Genghis" spoke fondly of us to the more than 600 attending. It was fun, it was emotional, and it was a great experience to revive the exceptional bond between the Tunnel Rats and the Grunts.



Visit to 1CER and 1 Fld Sqn

It can't get any better than this was. 60 of us (including 15 wives) headed north to Darwin, to re-find our roots with our old unit, 1 Field Squadron. The serving Sappers at all levels treated us like kings. They allocated three whole days to showing us their stuff and making us welcome. God bless them, and our thanks to them all.



Army Combat Badge

On hearing that the Army Combat Badge had been created for the non-Infantry combat troops currently serving in various hot spots around the world, we lobbied directly with the Chief of Army to have the Badge made retrospective and granted to the Tunnel Rats. This Anzac Day we proudly wore it for the first time.



"Holdfast" hits the magic 500

Lauded (correctly of course) as the best unit association newsletter in Australia, "Holdfast" has grown from a circulation of 40 for issue number one, to a circulation now of 500, including our 400 Tunnel Rats plus copies to the committees of other unit associations and to Sappers and senior officers currently serving with the Corp.



Spreading the word

Jim Marett (who hates public speaking) has his 20-minute talk on the Tunnel Rats down pat now, and is busily spreading the word. So far Jim has given his talk at: the Naval & Military Club (Vietnam Veterans's Luncheon), Legacy, Rotary, Riversdale Golf Club, Puckapunyal, 1 CER Darwin, and 1st Commando Regiment Assoc.



Coming attractions - Vietnam

In the biggest swan of the century, we're heading back to Vietnam on September 15th for a 10-day nostalgia-fest. There are 40 of us so far, but this could well grow to 50 by the time we board the big silver bird of freedom to take us back to a place we never thought we'd look forward to seeing again. Relax lads. Don't peak too soon.



Another report from the battlefield

Last issue we reported on a mini email war conducted against the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association by two disgruntled Vets (non members). No sooner had we put them to rest with our response and some great support from several senior members, when another one pops out of the woodwork. That's three complainants. Where will all this end? We report this just to show you what sort of nonsense is going on in the background, and to assure you we are looking after your interests by defending the cause.

The following email was sent to the 1 Field Squadron Group RAE Queensland Inc. It was sent by John Martin, who served as 2IC of 1 Field Squadron in Vietnam in 66/67. It was addressed to General Frank Hickling (Patron), and Barry Kelly Secretary of that Association). Barry circulated it to their Committee

Dear Frank and Barry,

I am writing to you because of my concern for the integrity of our association and the attitude of some past members of the unit.

Last Anzac Day I attended the march in Sydney as usual. Traditionally we march behind a 1 Fd Sqn Vietnam banner, originally donated by a 3 Fd Tp member.

The Banner carries a logo "TUNNEL RATS". As we formed up, a second group appeared with a banner labelled 'Tunnel Rats' with 3 Fd Tp, 1,2,3, Tp depicted around the logo. This group marched behind the Sqn group. Sydney and National TV audiences and spectators were therefore presented with two groups, ostensibly the same organisation, marching separately.

The two groups were approx same size, about 40 each. No attempt was made by the second group to associate with the Sqn group.

Later discussions at the re-union with people from the second group indicate that a very concerted effort is being made by Jim Marett of the Victorian Tunnel Rats organisation to divide our Sqn association into "Fd Tp's" and the rest. I find this attitude to be misguided.

I am an 'old-fashioned' sapper who was taught, and still believes in, Sqn unity and that all parts contribute to the whole. Sqns produce team effort! I am not aware of any of the individual Tp associations that differentiate in

their membership between FE's and other trades.

The seeds of potential to destroy our Sqn organisation have been sown by the "Tunnel Rats" splinter group. I do not know whether it has been formed because of misunderstanding from sappers who served later in the deployment and/or maybe has something to do with the Army Combat Badge issue. I support our HOC in awarding the ACB to all personnel on strength of 1 Fd Sqn, in line with the Inf Bn award of the ICB.

My experience, 1966/67, and a study of the Corps history, show that tunnel search & destruction was an element of Sqn/3 Fd Tp operations on "CRIMP", "ENNOGERA" and "HOA LONG" cordon & Search, and that later ops involved caves and bunkers. The lack of personnel in the Sqn in 66/67 resulted in all available sappers etc from Fd Tps, 21 Spt Tp, Wksps and HQ Tp being used on ops. In fact 21 Spt Tp were major contributors to "ENNOGERA".

I am sure no-one would suggest that Land Clearing ops and establishment of FSBs were 'risk free' ops. I believe an analysis of time spent on ops throughout the 6 year deployment of the Sqn would show the major portion of time was on mine clearance, demolition and fighting as Infantry. Tunnel search in man-days would probably be insignificant. All this leads me to a conclusion that any attempt to divide the Sqn into tunnel ops and others is ill-founded. The same analysis is applicable to FEs and other trades. I don't know of any records that were kept [long term] of personnel on any op, so again any differentiation between trades is pointless and impossible to prove.

I have discussed the situation with Brian Florence and Rex Rowe who both oppose the concept of the splinter group. John Kemp, I know from discussions,

objects to the term 'Tunnel Rats'. Warren Lennon and Ray Johnson are unfortunately no longer with us and I have had no contact with John Morphett or Phil Kudnig.

I believe our 1 Fd Sqn Gp RAE Qld Inc is the "national" association for personnel who served in SVN with the Sqn and therefore I am asking you, Frank as Patron, and Barry as Secretary to consider this matter and propose a solution, maybe for consideration at the re-union in Aug, so that 1 Fd Sqn Gp remains intact. The solution should not malign or isolate any of the existing sub-unit organisations which do a great job, but hopefully not at the expense of the Sqn Gp.

Best Regards
Paddy Martin

Jim Marett Responds on behalf of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Associaton:

Mr. Martin,

You don't know me (and I don't know you), but you've taken the effort to write about me and the Association I represent (the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association.).

There are several errors and many misunderstandings in your email. I guess the most obvious error is to suggest that Rex Rowe "does not support the splinter group".

Firstly, we don't consider ourselves a "splinter group" and we have no agenda at all to break up any existing Association. Secondly, you might have had the courtesy to check with Rex Rowe before you put words in his mouth because in our last issue of "Holdfast" (our official newsletter), Rex wrote a two page piece in support of our Association and, (perhaps embarrassingly) of me and the role I play in that Association.

It is quite amusing to see

from time to time people like yourself who pop up and pontificate about how terrible it is of the Tunnel Rats to “break away” and how this is a smite against the Engineers and the Squadron. These are observations from afar, and are again without substance.

If you came to one of our reunions you would experience a level of comradeship that would be difficult to match in any other unit or Association. That comradeship is extremely valuable and it's just a plain matter of fact that it is directed to and evolves from the experiences we all had in the Field Troops.

Whenever people like yourself pop out of the woodwork, it is very telling to me that you never utter a word of complaint about other Associations, such as 17 Construction or 55 Engineer Workshops or any of the many other groups who “break away”.

The Tunnel Rats were absolutely and very clearly involved in a combat role in Vietnam, and this is graphically expressed in the casualty list where some 95% of the casualties came from the Field troops.

This is a simple fact and the only conclusion we can come to is that perhaps some of the men (those making these types of complaints) who didn't serve in the Field Troops don't like being a part of what's left behind when we separate ourselves. That's a bit sad. But it's really their problem and not ours – they should be very proud of what they did, just as we are.

You might be shocked to learn that within RAR Battalion Associations they have separate Company Associations and separate reunions. In fact the Companies usually meet annually and the Battalion every four years. Perhaps you can complain about these “breakaways” too.

Criteria for membership of our Association is simple – you need to have served in one of the Field Troops in Vietnam, either 3 Field Troop or 1, 2 or 3 Troop of 1 Fld Sqn. With our role of being attached to Infantry and Armoured units, our mine detection and booby trap roles plus the searching of enemy



In Jan 69 Cpl Graham, a Tunnel Rat with 1 Fld Sqn on Ops with 9RAR heads into an enemy bunker and tunnel system

bunkers (many interconnected with tunnels) and with our roles in Cordon and Search operations where many houses had escape tunnels beneath them, we have no doubt that the title “Tunnel Rat” belongs to the men of the Field Troops. But, we don't make judgements and we don't exclude men from within the Field Troops who had other roles such as running the store or the office.

I have a fat file of support from many of our members and their wives (many of whom say they have never seen their husband express such pride in his Vietnam experience as he has since the inception of our Association).

Regarding the march in Sydney, the problem isn't that we as an Association have begun to march. The problem is that for years men who had nothing to do with the Field troops have marched behind a banner headed “Tunnel Rats”, and bathed in the reflected glory of others (including the more than 140 of our men on the casualty list). John Tramby who served with 3 Field Troop and who initiated that banner I'm sure had his heart in the right place, but by not controlling who marches behind it has created a problem of identity which needs to be addressed.

Once again, by separating ourselves to march we get screams from those left exposed. Our concern for our members (those who served in the Field troops) is far greater than our concerns for those who might be feeling insecure now about something they've been doing without justification for many years.

And again, from people like yourself we don't hear a mumble about all the other Engineer Associations marching – just the Tunnel Rats.

We believe there were about 700 men who served with the Field troops in Vietnam. We have over 400 of those men on our mailing list – an incredible growth from 12 men on our first Anzac Day march in Melbourne three years ago.

The level of support we get by phone, email, letters and face to face is extraordinary. There was, and is a need for this Association for these men. They have embraced the concept and it is having a very positive effect on their lives. It is restoring pride that had been faded by the blur created over the years by people like yourself who kept insisting “we're all Engineers, we're all the same”. Our Association has given our members the confidence and the words to express clearly and proudly to their kids and their grandkids, exactly what they did.

These men performed an extraordinary job in Vietnam, they have every right to be proud of it, and every right to express that pride through their own Association.

If you can't see anything positive in this, and want to suppress it, then I am bewildered. I suggest you turn your negative thoughts elsewhere, rather than against a group of fellow Engineers who sacrificed so much more than any other Engineer unit in Vietnam.

Jim Marett
President
Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association

New book on a subject close to our hearts

This book is naturally of great interest to everyone who served in Vietnam, and of particular interest to the men who served there with 1 Field Squadron, but to the men who served in the Field Troops of 1 Field Squadron (the Tunnel Rats) it's a record of something they were so deeply, heroically and often tragically involved in.

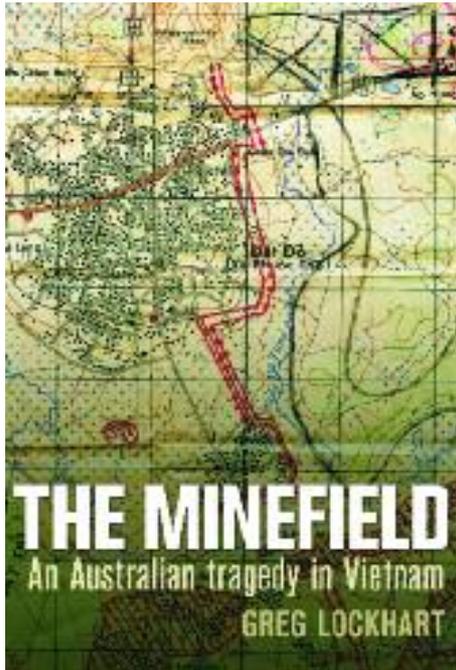
It was these men essentially who laid the mines and then took them out again some years later. And it was these same men who in the years in between, on operations with Infantry and Armoured units had the task of searching for the mines when they had been lifted from the minefield and used against us.

And when the inevitable mine incidents occurred, again it was the Tunnel Rats who had to agonisingly clear safe lanes to their wounded comrades.

With an ample supply of mines at their disposal, the enemy would lay several mines, one to initially kill and maim and the others to do likewise to the men who would understandably rush to the aid of their mates. The drill was for everyone to remain motionless while the Tunnel Rats cleared and marked safe paths to the casualties.

So in an atmosphere of wounded comrades in pain, a balance had to be found between rushing the process - and ensuring any further enemy mines were found. With the Infantry understandably desperate to help their mates, it was a situation charged with seemingly conflicting emotions, but all in fact aimed at the same goal.

Incidents such as these were sadly too common, but they did help create a strong and a very special bond between the



Author: Greg Lockhart
 Publisher: Allen & Unwin
 ISBN 978 1 74114 106 1

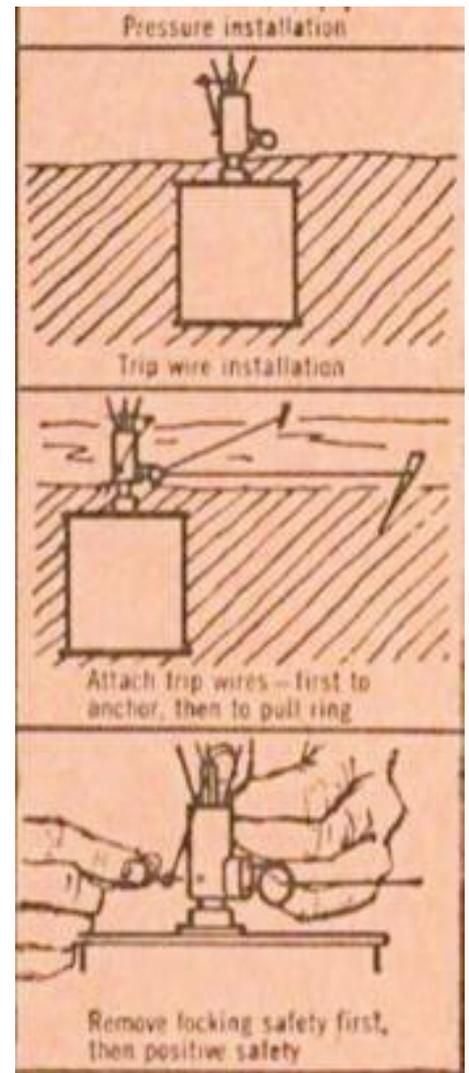
Infantry and the Sappers.

So the subject matter of this book is at the very heart of what the Tunnel Rats did in Vietnam. The book is obviously well-researched, and within the pages there are many great quotes from Sappers most of us will know personally or certainly know of. There is a harrowing account of John "Jethro" Thompson's mine incident when he was horrifically wounded while laying the minefield.

And appropriately two of the "greats" from the era, former

CO's of 1 Field Squadron get due mention - (then Majors) Florence who was tasked with installing the minefield, and Rex Rowe who had the unenviable task of dismantling the thing.

A good addition to the bookshelf for any studious Sapper.



Latest list of Tunnel Rats

Here's our updated list of former Tunnel Rats from 3 Field Troop and 1 Field Squadron RAE, Vietnam 1965-71. This is not a complete list, it is simply a list of all the men we have been able to find and make contact with. If you can help with names and numbers, please contact our "Master of The List", Graeme Gartside on 08 8725 2845, or by mail to Graeme Gartside, 9 Park Street Mt Gambier SA 5290 or by email: hawthorn@anson.com.au

LISTS ARE NOW ALPHABETICAL

3 FIELD TROOP (1965-66)

PETER ASH 02 6771 4623
IAN BIDDOLPH 02 4472 9434
ALAN CHRISTIE 07 5494 6628
ALLAN S COLEMAN 07 3204 7401
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
ALAN TUGWELL 08 8552 5229
BILL UNNEOPA 08 9300 5561
SNOW WILSON JNR 02 6649 3998

OC's 1 FIELD SQUADRON

JOHN KEMP 02 6288 3428
REX ROWE 02 4861 6324

1 TROOP (1966-67)

DICK BENTLEY 08 8386 2334
NICK BURGERHOF 07 3271 1592
RAY BURTON 08 8268 4575
JOE CAZEY 07 3710 8102
ALLAN S COLEMAN 07 3204 7401
GRAHAME COOK 02 4390 5159
MICK GEORGE 02 6882 8574
ALAN HAMMOND 0423491091
CUL HART 02 4392 0912
NEIL INNES 02 9875 2962
KEN JOLLEY 02 6624 4066
BARRY KELLY 07 4661 2898
PETER McTIERNAN 02 6557 5211
GAVIN MENZIES 02 6584 7257
JOHN OLSEN 0414433341
RON ROCKLIFFE 02 9789 4302
TREVOR SHELLEY 0419784954
KEVIN SMITH 03 9787 1506
JOHN THOMPSON 0732168906
ROSS TULLOH 0418223345

1 TROOP (1967-68)

HENRY BAGGALEY 07 5433 0482
REG BAMENT 02 6948 2524
BRUCE BEVAN 02 9580 3327
BOB COLEMAN 03 5342 0941
ROSS COMBEN 08 9535 2273
JACK GREEN 07 3278 8719
PHIL (JONAH) JONES 07 3390 1130
RAY KENNY 07 3881 3648
PETER KOCH 04 3822 3100
JOHN NEAL 02 9982 6694
BRETT NOLEN 03 5278 9969
CLIVE PEARSALL 03 9459 4470
ALAN RANTALL 03 9434 2031
PETER SHEEHAN 03 9390 2834
JIM TROWER 0418842744

1 TROOP (1968-69)

PHIL BAXTER 02 4625 6213
PETER CARRODUS 02 9759 6383
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
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 3204 7401
PAUL COOK 02 4946 5321
GARRY DEGERING 03 9763 0510
JOHN FELTON 07 4661 8679
GRAHAME FLETCHER 0408822489
P. "GUTS" GEISEL 07 4092 1735
TERRY GLEESON 03 5623 2886
TREVOR KELLY 08 9538 1184
DES MCKENZIE 07 5448 3400
LES SLATER 08 9361 0603
VIC SMITH 07 4124 5943

1 TROOP (1970-71)

MICK AUGUSTUS 07 3205 7401
ERIC BANFALVI 07 3201 8234
DAN BRINDLEY 02 6643 1693
IAN CAMBELL 03 9870 0313
BRUCE FRASER 07 5499 0508
GORDON GREEN 02 9878 2111
PETER KRAUSE 02 6723 2835
R LOXTON 0419944759
BARRY MELDRUM 03 5427 1162
ROGER NEWMAN 07 5450 6054
DENNIS PEGG 03 6229 9294
JOHN PRITCHARD 02 9626 3376
GARRY SHOEMARK 02 6546 6778
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

2 TROOP (1966-1967)

RICHARD BECK 07 3208 5808
DAVID BURING 02 6254 6689
RON CAIN 02 6586 1412
GRAEME CAREY 02 6056 0997
TERRY GRIBBIN 03 9727 1839
ALAN HAMMOND 0423491091
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 07 5523 2157
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 08 9307 5349
HARRY COOLING 07 4778 2013
GARRY COSGROVE 02 4845 5153
PETER FONTANINI 08 9301 0805
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)
DAVID MATULIK 07 4055 1915
TONY PARMENTER 0417856877
BRIAN RANKIN 07 4775 5095
HANS REHORN 03 5623 5572
ANDREW ROGERS 08 8087 5671
MICK ROWBOTHAM 03 9439 7566
GEOFF RUSSELL 02 6342 1292
BRIAN SHEEHAN 03 9336 3137
JAMES SMITH 0413 669 807
"SNOW" WILSON 08 9752 2935

2 TROOP (1968-1969)

BOB AUSTIN 02 6644 9237
ROSS BACHMANN 07 5495 1443
DON BEALE 02 6236 8267
RICHARD BRANCH 07 4947 1044
HAROLD BROMLEY 03 9726 8625
PETER BRUNTON 03 5156 5531
JIM CASTLES 02 9639 2941
HARRY CLAASSEN 07 3273 6701
PETER CLAYTON 0418 823 266
ROD CRANE 08 9530 3083
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
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
TERRY O'DONNELL 03 5334 3443
DAVID PANNACH OVERSEAS
(HONG KONG 0011 852 9646 4131)
TED PODLICH 07 3862 9002
DARYL PORTEOUS 07 4973 7663
RAY VANDERHEIDEN 02 4776 1373
MICK WESTON 07 5444 3307
RAY (PHILLIP) WHITE 03 9740 7141

2 TROOP (1969-1970)

JANIS ATRENS 02 6292 3071
"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 07 4032 2208
GARRY COSGROVE 02 4845 5153
ARTHUR DAVIES 07 3408 1556
FRANK DENLEY 02 6571 2056
ROY ELBOURNE 02 4868 1493
GRUMPY FOSTER 07 4041 2321
GRAEME GARTSIDE 08 8725 2845
DOUG GEORGE 03 9889 2116
GREG GOUGH 0417 911 173
BRAD HANNAFORD 08 8389 2217
JOHN HOPMAN 02 9398 5258
PHIL "JONAH" JONES 07 3390 1130
CHRIS KOULOURIS 02 4952 6341
BILL LAMB 0418 424 208
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 3721
COLIN REDACLIFF 02 9673 0597
JOHN RONALDSON NEW ZEALAND
BRIAN SCOTT 07 3204 5691
PETER SCOTT (219) 02 4341 3782
"ROO DOG" SCOTT 07 5576 0232
LES SHELLEY 07 3264 4041
JIMMY SHUGG 08 9776 1471
BOB SMITH 07 5442 9322
MICK VAN POETEREN 03 9435 0383
GERRY WALLBRIDGE 03 9803 4223
DENNIS WILSON 08 8892 2671
STEPHEN WILSON 07 5538 2179

2 TROOP (1970-1971)

BRUCE ARROW 02 6288 3872
MICK BERGIN 03 5974 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
TOM DODDS 040672260
DES EVANS 07 4128 2390
BRUCE FENWICK 02 4977 3530
RAY FULTON 03 6288 1176
DAVID GAMMIE 02 4365 2696
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
CHRIS KOOLEN 03 5237 7368
KEVIN LAPPIN 07 3273 8614
GARY McCLINTOCK 07 4788 0123
PETER MCCOLE 03 5155 9368
BOB McGLINN 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 03 5345 2397
DES POLDEN 03 6223 3830
KEITH RAMSAY 02 6585 6503
MICK RASMUSSEN 0428 790 645
GARY SANGSTER 0409 522 099
PETER SCHREIBER 02 6569 3390
JOHN SMITH 0400032502
ROY SOJAN 08 9926 1235
JOHN STONEHOUSE LOST CONTACT
JOHN TICK 04 3898 7262
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 07 5591 3202
NORM CAIRNS 03 6267 4629
KERRY CAUGHEY 03 5971 4188
DAVID CLARK 08 8388 7728
BOB COLEMAN 03 5342 0941
BARRY GILBERT 03 5023 6657
"JONAH" JONES 07 3390 1130
JACK LAWSON 0429 798 673
PETER MACDONALD 08 9448 5418
BARRIE MORGAN 0419 820 290
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 3205 4161
BRIAN THOMSON 0428551368
ALAN TUGWELL 08 8552 5229
MURRAY WALKER 08 9332 6410
MICK WOODHAMS 08 9459 0130
BOB YEWEN 07 5532 4560
KEN YOUNG 02 9602 5204

3 TROOP (1968-69)

GEOFF BOX 08 9731 2757
ERIC BANFALVI 07 3201 8234
BRIAN GLYDE 02 4457 2200
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
GEOFF NEENAN 08 9362 4079
JOHN NULTY 02 6931 1884
TED O'MALLEY 07 4091 3561
BOB PRITCHARD 07 4779 0608
GREG ROBERTS 03 5941 2269
RAY (PHILLIP) 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
CHIS MACGREGOR 02 4472 3250
NORM MARTIN 0422 508 336
ROELOF METHORST (SILENT NO.)
GARY MILLER MM 07 5495 5647
"JACKO" MILLER 03 6267 4411
CHRIS MULLER 07 4653 4057
VIN NEALE 03 9786 1549
G. RENTMEESTER 03 9735 5236
BRENTON SMITH 08 8388 5501
GORDON TEMBY 08 9757 2016
LEON TUTTLEBY 08 8952 6598
HANK VEENHUIZEN 0407 487 167
"WONZER" WHITE 02 9833 0580

THREE TROOP (1970-71)

STEVE ARMBURST 07 5545 1073
GEOFF ANSELL 03 5762 1215
MIKE BARNETT 02 9869 7132
JOHN BENINGFIELD 07 4778 4473
DARRYL BINNS 08 8988 5827
MAL BOTFIELD 02 9872 2594
IAN CAMPBELL 03 9870 0313
BOB 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 5525
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
ROD SCOTT 07 4096 5372
PAUL SCOTT 02 6656 0730
LES SHELLEY 07 3264 4041
GORDON TEMBY 08 9757 2016
DAVID WILSON 07 3855 1370



Getting the newsletter free is no longer an option

In the past we've had a policy of sending the newsletter to every former Tunnel Rat we've found. It was worth it just to pull us together again and get some communicating going. Unfortunately the cost of doing this became too much and we now need all former Field Troop members to cough up in order to keep receiving the newsletter.

We have a list of about 400 former Tunnel Rats and we have been sending "Holdfast" to each of them. At this stage most have now signed up, which now means the costs are spread evenly rather than being carried by a few. But there are still some stragglers.

We think you'll agree the newsletter is great. It is often described as the best unit newsletter in Australia. So

if you want to keep receiving it, you need to join up, using the form on this page. The superb personalised "Tunnel Rats" membership card below is provided for those who join:



Who can join?

The Association was formed for all who served with one of the Field Troops. Membership is exclusively for men who served in Vietnam with either 3 Field Troop or 1 Troop, 2 Troop or 3 Troop of 1 Field Sqn. This is not an attempt to exclude, but to bring together the Field Engineers. Other units are free to form their own Associations.

Why we formed the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association

Our status seemed to be getting a bit blurred. It had reached the point where any Engineer who served in Vietnam was calling himself a Tunnel Rat. The members of the Field Troops fought alongside the

Infantry plus they performed their additional tasks of mine and booby trap detection and clearing, plus bunker and tunnel searching and demolition.

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

Holdfast Newsletter
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If you're not a member, you need to join to keep getting the newsletter - it's only \$38

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EMAIL:		
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
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<input type="checkbox"/> 3 TROOP 1 FLD SQN	FROM	TILL
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If you don't want to cut into this fantastic newsletter - simply photocopy the form