



HOLDFAST

August 2018 - Number 32

www.tunnelrats.com.au

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION INC.

"SEARCHING TUNNELS
AND BUNKERS, BLOWING STUFF
UP, DELOUSING BOOBY TRAPS, MINE
LAYING, MINE CLEARING, AND BLOODY
SIX-WEEK LONG INFANTRY PATROLS.
WHAT WILL THOSE BASTARDS
HAVE US DOING NEXT?"



**EVOLVEMENT OF
THE TUNNEL RAT
ROLE IN VIETNAM
FROM 1965 TO 1971**

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: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com



Holdfast Magazine

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“Don’t touch this bit mate - it can go bang!”



In late 1968, Tunnel Rats SPR. Bob Liard (left) and CPL. David Wright, both of 1 Troop 1968/69 inspect M16 anti-personnel mines and an old ‘Pineapple’ grenade they had removed from an enemy weapons cache. They were out on operations, working as a two-man Splinter Team attached to 6RAR. David was the ‘No.1’ of the team, and Bob was new in-country and learning the ropes. Later in Bob’s tour, on 22 May 1969 he was wounded in action when the APC he was travelling on (callsign 23B) hit an anti-vehicle mine. The incident took place on Route 328 about 7km south of Xuyen Moc.

“Make it a long fuse John, this will be big!”



In July 1967 Tunnel Rats Peter Wieden (left) and John Kiley prepare fuses and detonators for the explosive charges they’ve made up to demolish Viet Cong bunkers and tunnels on 7RAR’s Operation Cooperoo. The short, nine day operation involved some of the thickest and most tangled jungle growth encountered in Phuoc Tuy Province. They were the first Australian battalion to enter this area, north west of Nui Dat, and to add to their difficulties, they often had to ford creeks which had been swollen by monsoonal rains. They also had to carry five days rations, because of the lack of suitable helicopter landing zones in the area they were patrolling.

These boots aren't made for walking



The signature song of this Vung Tau trio was the big Nancy Sinatra hit; *"These boots are made for walking"* - but we don't think these particular boots did much walking at all.

Are they looking for that elusive needle?



A short tunnel under a haystack at Long Dien is checked out in February 1968 by Tunnel Rats, Sapper Eddie Josephs (left), Sapper Ashley Ryan (centre), and Corporal Ray Jacques during a 7RAR cordon and search.

"And that's the honest truth Guv"



In April 1971 Corporal Ken Young of 1 Field Squadron (right), discusses the day to day life of an Australian Army man serving in South Vietnam with Mr Justice J. R. Kerr (left) and Mr H. T. Rogers. Mr Justice Kerr, was Chairman of a committee examining conditions of service affecting men in the field when he called on Cpl Young for comment. Mr. Justice Kerr went on to be Sir John Kerr, AK, GCMG, GCVO, QC, the Governor General of Australia who famously dismissed the Whitlam government in 1975. Ken keeps good company for a Sapper!

Sapper from 3 Troop at work



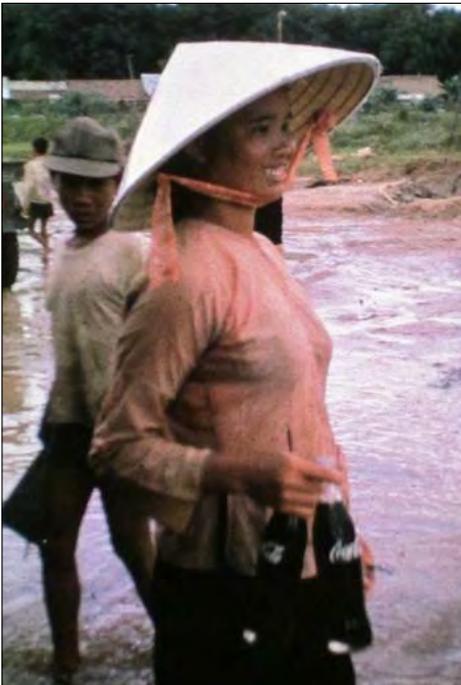
Can anyone help us identify this Tunnel Rat at the entrance to an enemy bunker? We believe it was taken on an 8RAR operation in 1970, so it would be a Sapper from 3 Troop, as they supported 8RAR.

“Silence is golden”



Tunnel Rat Bob Ottery of 2TP 1969/70 snapped this photo of a US Ranger patrol that dropped into an Aussie Fire Support Base in late 1969. The point of interest was the silencer on the M-16 rifle. Few would have thought such a beast existed - but here it is!

Miracle cola



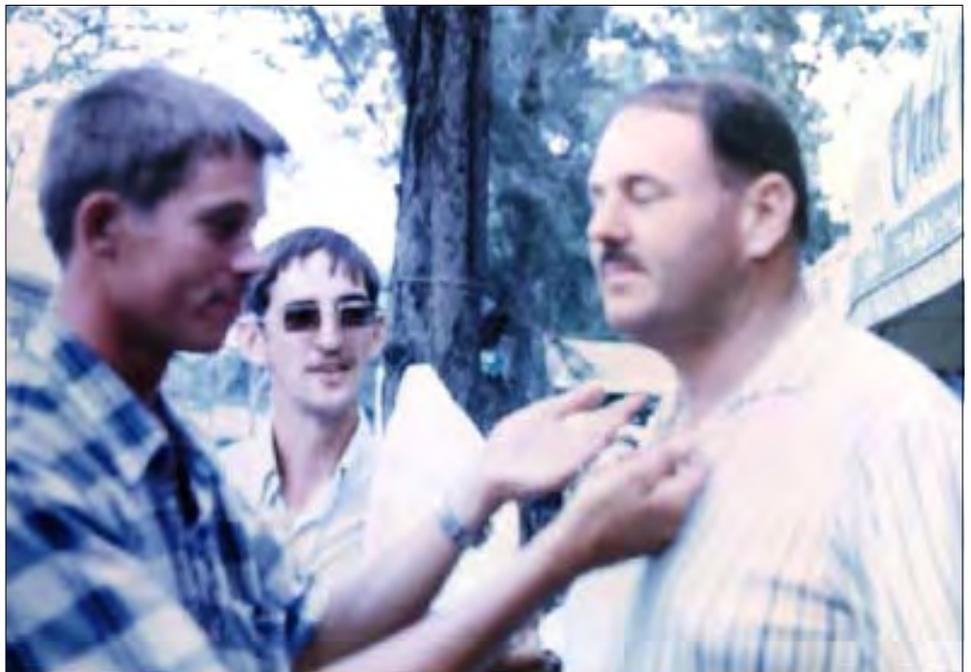
If you were out of the base camp and anywhere near a village or road, a ‘Coke Girl’ would magically appear. The coke was usually warm to hot rather than chilled, but it still tasted a treat compared to your canteen water tainted with purification pills.

Where did the fish come from?



During the wet season, at a certain time of year, fishermen would appear from nowhere and start casting into the rice fields. Surprisingly they caught plenty of fish. They were small, but highly prized on the dinner table. The big mystery is - where the hell did the fish come from? The rice fields were often many miles from the sea or even a river! And those rice fields in the dry season were bone dry and rock hard. There’s no way the fish had hibernated for the dry season to pop out of their slumber on arrival of the first rains. Any answers out there from the fishing fraternity?

OMG! Is that Padre Paul - in Vung Tau?



Of course we hesitate to say such a thing, but the gentleman on the right looks suspiciously like the 1 Field Squadron Chaplain, Padre Paul - in Sin City itself, Vung Tau! God forgive us. And on the left is Tunnel Rat Steve Wilson (1969/70) who is clearly saying to the Chaplain; “Padre, what on earth are you doing here? If the Padre was in town to save souls, he certainly had his work cut out for him. Padre Paul was extremely popular with the lads in the Squadron, enjoying a beer with them often, and always available for a chat. Apologies to the sapper in the middle wearing the cool ‘shades’, who at this stage we haven’t been able to identify.

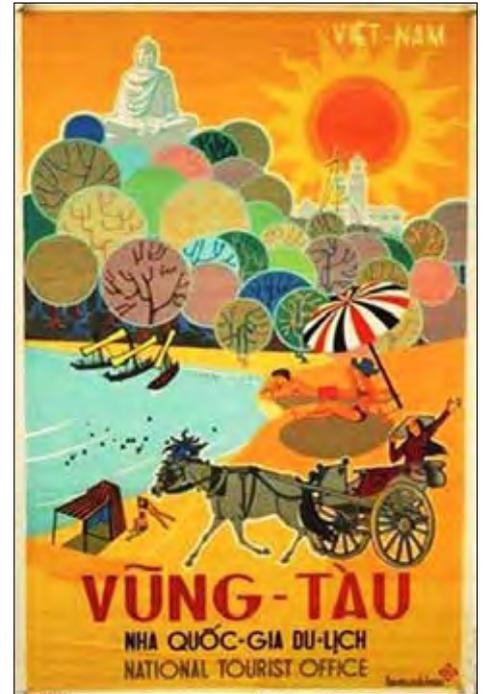
Back to base for a beer with your mates



Here's living proof of what Tunnel Rats missed most when out on four to six week patrols with the Infantry or Tankies. Safely back in base, Sappers Mike Weston (left) and Terry O'Donnell (both 1968/69) enjoy a cold beer surrounded by photos of scantily clad women and, most importantly, a photo of a civilian passenger plane. It's the "Silver Bird of Freedom" that will eventually take them out of there and back to the real world, where there will be real Aussie beer on tap and real women - not paper cutouts.

"We gotta get outa this place, if it's the last thing we ever do..."

The good old days



A long, long time ago, before the place was taken over by hucksters, hookers, black marketeers, crooked money changers, sleazy bars and other war-time delights, Vung Tau was actually a beautiful holiday resort. Frequented by wealthy Vietnamese and French plantation owners, the Vung Tau foreshore was lined with beautiful French colonial villas. Horse-drawn carriages took diners between some of the finest French and Vietnamese seafood restaurants in the country.

The black market was out in the open for all to see



It was said there was nothing you couldn't buy on the black market in Vung Tau during the war. Sadly, most of the goods had been stolen after being donated by good-hearted Americans, including these US canned goods.

“Did you bother to check the load limit of the bridge first?”



US Army Engineers flew in and built this bridge after the old one had been blown up by VC during the 1968 Tet offensive. Sadly the first tank to attempt a crossing was just a tad overweight and brought it all tumbling down. No doubt somebody received a rap across the knuckles before the Engineers were handed the task of rebuilding. “Bloody Tankies!”

Open for business



A ‘Lady of the night’ and her minder open for business on the back streets of Vung Tau. Ahead is another day of drinking Saigon Teas and breaking Aussie hearts. *“I love you long time - you Number One for sure!”*

Streetside dental surgery



Only for the brave. This dentist ran his business from the sidewalk on one of the main streets in Vung Tau. The rent would have been low, but perhaps not as low as the hygiene levels. Some of his instruments look positively torurous, and don't even think about the purity of the water used for mouthwash.

Rats on the rampage



Drinking in the lines at Nui Dat base camp was illegal, but when a bunch of Tunnel Rats come back to base open operations - well, regulations are just not ‘top of mind’. These characters making a night of it in some poor lad's tent are (left to right) Butch Marsden, Dave Brooks, Frank Denley, John Richardson and Jock McMullen. Don't be deceived by the Pepsi can held by Frank Denley, it would be 80% whisky at least. In the background would be a reel-to-reel tape connected to mega speakers pumping out Led Zeppelin, Cream and The Animals.

THIS IS A 'HEADS UP' FOR THE NEXT TUNNEL RATS TOUR BACK TO VIETNAM - NOV 2019



Start saving your pennies and working on your leave pass. Talk with your troop mates, your sons and close mates about coming with you to share the experience. Full details next issue. Any questions, call Jim Marett: 0403041962 or email: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com

Book now for our Annual reunion visiting SME and SOER

It's time to gather the clan again and let the Rats loose for our next reunion. We're planning another great get-together, again basing ourselves around Holsworthy - with an official visit to the School of Military Engineering (SME), an official visit to the Special Operations Engineer Regiment (SOER), and so much more.

The event is taking place over the period 31 OCT - 3 November, so mark the dates in your diary.

The preference is for us all to stay in the Holiday Inn Warwick Farm, which was such a great venue last year. If we're all in the one hotel it's convenient for Army bus transport to and from the base, plus it's great fun to all be together over breakfast and to enjoy a few ales in the afternoon. Adjoining the Holiday Inn is a great suburban pub, The Warwick Tavern.

We've negotiated a good room rate, but if you prefer to stay somewhere else, that's no problem but choose a place nearby as you may need to make your own way to the Holiday Inn for bus pick-ups.

The room rate for the Holiday Inn is the same as last year, \$179 per room per night including a full buffet breakfast each day for one or two guests in the room.

Here's what you need to do to attend the reunion:

- 1: Fill in the booking form and send it to us now.
- 2: Book your room at the Holiday Inn Warwick Farm by carefully following the instructions in the panel on this page.
- 3: Contact your troop mates and get them to come along to the reunion as well.

We will have a reunion dinner on the Thursday night, and as you will see, this is the only cost item (\$95) for us all on the booking form.



We'll spend a day with the Super Sappers at SOER

As our activities are centred around visits to Army base camps we've made this a blokes only reunion.

The itinerary for the four days will be as follows;

Wednesday 31 October

1600h Registration and welcome drinks at the Holiday Inn (drinks at our own cost).



Thursday 1 November

Bus pick-up at the Holiday Inn for our full day visit to SME at Holsworthy, including:

*A tour of the base to see the facilities the Sappers enjoy today, including demonstrations by the Sappers of their skills and their extraordinary equipment.

*A tour of the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering, a world class museum superbly presenting the rich history of the Corps.

*A remembrance ceremony at the RAE Vietnam Memorial at SME to honour our 35 Tunnel Rats killed in action.

*Plus a get-together with current serving Sappers to chat about being Sappers half a century apart!

Then we'll be dropped off back at the Holiday Inn in time to get ready for our reunion dinner that night.

The Reunion Dinner

At 1830h we will have our reunion dinner in a function room at the Holiday Inn. The dinner cost is \$95 for three

How to book your room at the Holiday Inn Warwick Farm

Email: reservations@holidayinnwarwickfarm.com.au

Or call 02 9726 1222 and ask for 'Reservations'

IMPORTANT: Only phone between 9am and 5pm weekdays as bookings made after hours are handled by a global service who will not know of the special deal for our reunion.

- 1: Mention your booking is part of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Reunion.
- 2: State whether you want a Single Room or a Twin Share Room.
- 3: Mention you are checking in on 31 October.
- 4: Let them know whether you are staying 3 nights or 4 nights.

courses. Any beers, wines or mixed drinks will be at our own cost from a cash bar in the function room. Dress is jacket and tie with medals (miniatures or full size).

Seating will be organised so we can all sit with our troop mates of our own era.

Friday 2 November

Bus pick-up at the Holiday Inn for our full day visit to the Special Operations Engineer Regiment at Holsworthy (SOER), including:

*A tour of the base plus demonstrations by SOER Sappers of their skills and their equipment, much of it highly classified.

*We will meet some of their amazing EDD dogs (bomb sniffing dogs) and their equally amazing handlers.

*A visit to the rifle range where we'll get the chance to fire some of the exotic SOER weaponry

*And (hopefully) a visit to the incredible Special Oper-



ations Training Facility, a place few people even know exists.

*Plus a get-together with the SOER Sappers to swap stories and get to know these exceptional soldiers.

Then we'll be dropped off back at the Holiday Inn to get ready for a very special night - Cocktails with the SOER soldiers at the spectacular North Bondi RSL. Army bus transport will be provided for us to and from the RSL. Dress details to be advised.

We'll enjoy cocktails and snacks with the SOER soldiers at their favourite watering hole, the North Bondi RSL overlooking iconic Bondi Beach

Saturday 3 November

Time to head home, though there will be a long lazy Sappers lunch at the Warwick Tavern for those who wish to extend. You may want to book an extra night at the Holiday Inn if you are partaking in the long lazy lunch.

BOOKING FORM FOR TUNNEL RATS REUNION – OCT 31 – NOV 3 2018

| | |
|--|---------------|
| First name: | Family name: |
| Address: | |
| Email Address: | |
| Mobile number: | Phone number: |
| <input type="radio"/> I am paying now for the Reunion Dinner at \$95 (Troop seating arrangements will be made later) | |
| PAYMENT DETAILS | |
| Tick method of payment: | |
| <input type="radio"/> Cheque or Postal Order (make payable to "Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association") Post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142 | |
| <input type="radio"/> Credit card (your card statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics") Tick which type of card you wish to use: <input type="radio"/> Visa <input type="radio"/> Master Card <input type="radio"/> American Express Card Number: Name on card: _____ Expiry date: _____ Security Pin: _____ Email form to: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com Or post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142 | |
| <input type="radio"/> Direct Bank Deposit (email us confirmation when you have made the deposit) Name of bank: Commonwealth Bank Account name: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association BSB number: 063165 Account number: 10494523 Email form to: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com Or post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142 | |

Evolution of the Tunnel Rat role in Vietnam

Aussie Tunnel Rats were in Vietnam for a little over six years, from September 1965 to December 1971, and their experiences varied greatly depending on when they were in-country.

In simple terms, the role of the Tunnel Rats was to work closely with Infantry and armoured units, supporting them with our unique skills in mine and booby trap detection, demolitions and tunnel and bunker searching.

The first Tunnel Rats to arrive in Vietnam were 3 Field Troop (3FD TP) a relatively large troop comprising around 70 men, serving from September 1965 to March/April 1966 when their 'parent unit' 1 Field Squadron arrived. There was just one Australian battalion in Vietnam during 3FD TP's era (1st Battalion RAR) and the troop supported them as Tunnel Rat's, but they also supported Australian forces with some of the more traditional Field Engineer skills such as bridging, water supply, road making, construction and base establishment.

In general terms Tunnel Rats in the very early days, particularly 3FD TP found and searched long, multi-level tunnel systems such as Cu Chi and Long Phuoc (though by the time Long Phuoc was searched in June 1966, 3FD TP had folded into the newly arrived 1 Field Squadron and was now known as "3 Troop"). Booby traps were a constant issue for the early Tunnel rats, along with anti-vehicular mines, but anti-personnel mines, the M-16 mine in particular were a relatively minor issue compared to later years.

Leading 3FD TP was CAPT Sandy MacGregor who, along with his Sappers, pioneered tunnel search techniques amongst Australian forces in Vietnam. Their highly successful search of a VC headquarters tunnel complex at Cu Chi reaped



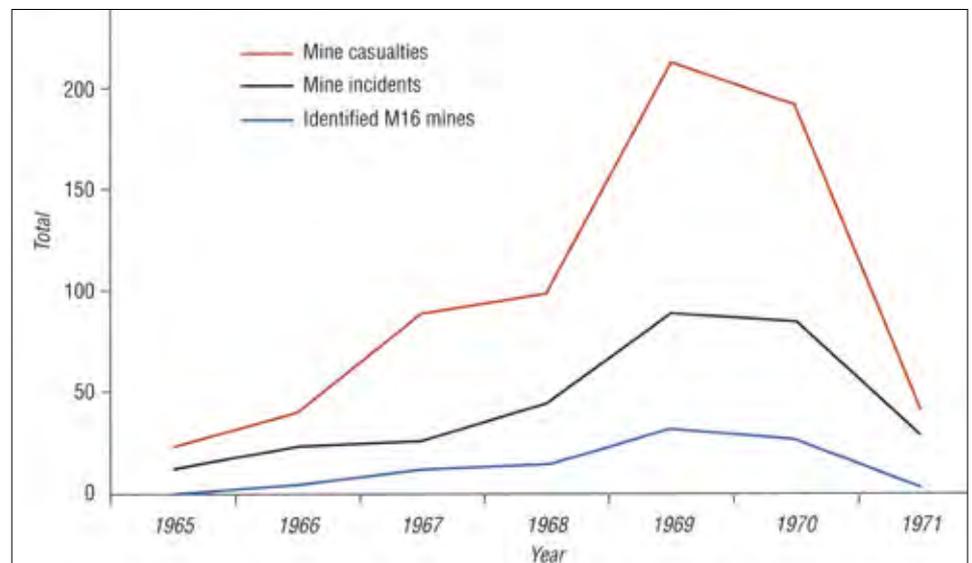
In January 1966 during Operation Crimp, Engineers of 3 Field Troop use a turbo jet blower to push diesel mist underground prior to igniting the mist to destroy a section of the Cu Chi tunnel system.

huge intelligence benefits, resulting in the US commander, General Westmoreland insisting all tunnels found from that point onwards must be searched rather than simply destroyed.

During its tour of duty in Vietnam, 3FD TP was blessed with relatively low casualty rates, suffering 12 wounded and one killed. Over half of those casualties were through ill effects caused by foul air or lack of oxygen while searching tunnels in the Ho Bo Woods. These asphyxiation incidents took place over just three days; January 10th, 11th and 12th 1966, and

included the loss of CPL Bob Bowtell, the first Australian Tunnel Rat to be killed in the Vietnam War.

By comparison, the Tunnel Rats who followed on from Sandy MacGregor's 3 Field Troop had a very different war to cope with. And this was reflected clearly in the casualty rates and the cause of those casualties. Over the subsequent five year period 35 Tunnel Rats were killed and some 200 wounded. A huge percentage of those casualties were from M-16 anti-personnel mines which had been lifted by the enemy from our own mine-



Australian Army identifiable M16 mine incidents in Vietnam 1965 -1971, revealing an incredible peak in casualties from late 1968 to late 1970.

During our six year involvement in the Vietnam War, Australia suffered 693 casualties from mine incidents. Almost 60% of those casualties took place during 1969/70.

| | Total mine casualties | Total mine incidents | Identified M16 mines | Identified other mines | Unknown mines |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1965 | 23 | 12 | Nil | 12 | Nil |
| 1966 | 40 | 23 | 3 | 15 | 5 |
| 1967 | 88 | 27 | 11 | 11 | 5 |
| 1968 | 98 | 45 | 14 | 6 | 25 |
| 1969 | 212 | 89 | 30 | 38 | 21 |
| 1970 | 191 | 84 | 26 | 48 | 10 |
| 1971 | 41 | 29 | 3 | 25 | 1 |
| Total | 693 | 309 | 87 | 155 | 67 |



ABOVE: Tunnel Rats were intimately involved in the dramatic peak in mine incident casualties during 1969-1970, both in a mine clearing role, and sadly, as casualties themselves. RIGHT: Clearing safe lanes to casualties in mine incidents became the most horrendous role by far for the Tunnel Rats. BELOW: Searching inter-connecting tunnels within enemy bunker systems was a regular activity for Tunnel Rats from 1967 to 1971. BOTTOM: Finding over 500 enemy bunkers (including tunnels) during a single operation was common from 1967 onwards.



SUMMARY OF EN CASUALTIES, WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT CAPTURED
OPERATION KINGS CROSS

6. Bunkers and Pits
- 532 Bunkers (approx)
 - 82 Pits
 - 21 Huts
 - 5 Tunnels
 - 250 Bunkers destroyed (approx)

From 5 RAR Combat After Action Report 14/69 - December 1969

field and used very effectively against us.

Again, speaking in general terms, the experience for the Tunnel Rats in these later years, perhaps from 1967 onwards was rarely about large tunnel systems, and more about enemy bunker systems, often with short tunnels interconnecting key bunkers or providing an escape route to a nearby creek or ravine. Tunnel Rats would search the bunkers and tunnels, pull out any enemy weapons and documents then set them up for demolition.

These systems were plentiful, and it was not uncommon for two Tunnel Rats attached to an infantry company to search and blow up over 100 bunkers and tunnels in a single four to six week operation.

Most of us who served as Tunnel Rats in this era quickly realized our role of crawling through enemy tunnels and bunker systems would be the least of our worries. Accepting this task as a normal part of our job was a surprisingly easy transition, partly because all of the men within our small unit were doing the same thing, and partly because we soon learnt it wasn't underground where the majority of our casualties were taking place. It was above ground where our men were losing life and limb while carrying out our other key task of finding and de-lousing mines and booby traps.

The Tunnel Rats gained notoriety from our underground activities, but as the frequency of mine incidents rapidly increased, the most harrowing aspect of our job became the clearing of safe lanes to casualties in a mine incident. The enemy would plant more than one mine, to also catch the men they knew would rush to the aid of the wounded. So in an atmosphere of wounded comrades in pain, a balance had to be found between rushing the mine clearing process - and ensuring any further enemy mines

were found. The experiences, the sights and the sounds of dealing with these devastating mine incidents are something embedded forever on the minds of the many Tunnel Rats involved.

So for the Tunnel Rats who operated in those years 1967 to 1971, it was all about long, four to six week operations with Infantry and Armoured, intense bunker system search and destroy operations, including the associated tunnel aspects, plus the horrendous mine incidents of the era.

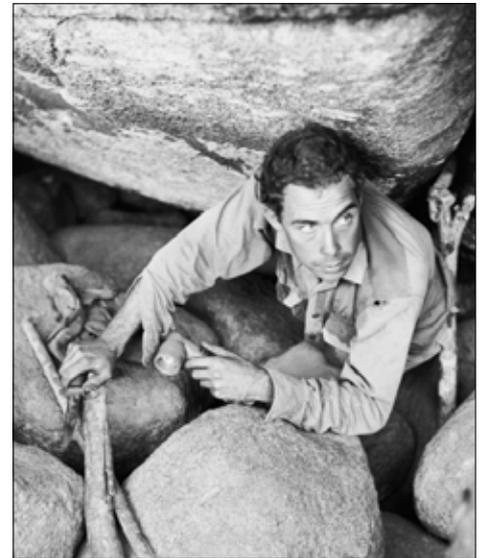
The Troop Commanders leading the Tunnel Rats during this time usually held the office for around six months before moving on to another role. There were three troops of Tunnel Rats in 1 Field Squadron for most of the five year period following on from Sandy MacGregor's 3 Field Troop, so about 30 Troop Commanders followed in Sandy's footsteps.

Each of those 30 Troop Commanders within 1 Field Squadron led a troop of around 40 Tunnel Rats. They did an extraordinary job, and deserve far more recognition than they have received. Some of them had to cope with horrendous casualties among the men they led. Of the 35 Tunnel Rats killed for instance, 18 came from 1 Troop alone, many taking place during a frightening peak of casualties in 1969. Peak periods of losses also hit 3 Troop during 1969, while 2 Troop's casualties seemed to be more evenly spread. There was no rhyme or reason to the timing or the disproportionate spread of casualties across the three troops. Sadly it was just the luck of the draw.

During this period from mid 1966 to late 1971 the three troops of Tunnel Rats within 1 Field Squadron comprised a small group, with at most 120 men in country at any one time, and a total of around 600 who served in the role over those five years. During that time we had

| AFTER ACTION REPORT OPERATION HAMMERSLEY | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|---|
| SUMMARY OF ENEMY INSTALLATIONS | | | |
| Serial | Location | Date/Time Found | Details |
| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) |
| 1. | 457548 | 161914 | 4 bunkers |
| 2. | 449555- 450554 | 171310 | 6 weapon pits, 1 cooking hut Area 1500 square metres. |
| 3. | 467556 | 171530 | Base camp, 2 bunkers, 3 sleeping areas, 2 weapon pits, 1 covered cooking area. Area 3600 square metres. |
| 4. | 455545 | 18 Feb 70 | 10 tunnel type bunkers |
| 5. | 454541 | 18 Feb 70 | 5 tunnel type bunkers |
| 6. | 474522 | 18 Feb 70 | Bunker system containing 40-50 en. |
| 7. | 474531 | 181650 | 6 hides dug under rocks. Interconnecting tunnels. Area 3000 square metres. Pl size |

ABOVE: This listing of bunkers and tunnels found over just a three day period on 8RAR's Operation Hammersley is a good example of the variety and frequency of Tunnel Rat tasks out on operations. RIGHT: Sapper Colin Heley emerges from a cave in the Long Hai mountains after finding a cache of rocket-propelled grenades during Operation Hammersley.



over 200 casualties, including 35 of us being killed, giving us an average casualty rate of over 33 percent. One in three of us, was being either killed or wounded during our tour. Somehow the mind coped with that, just as it coped with the string of horrendous and extraordinary sights and activities we each experienced during our tours.

We didn't realise it then, but when you look back on it now, you have to give high praise to the instructors and the process at the School of Military Engineering where we all did our Corps training. From raw recruits they produced hundreds of men who did extraordinary things in this job – things totally foreign to the civilian lives we had left behind.

The process of going through SME produced Sappers like Yogi Earl (see story next page) - wounded twice in

two mine incidents on the same night, yet continuing to perform his duty, helping ensure the survival of his comrades. We would all come to learn of many more Tunnel Rats just like Yogi, who performed equally bravely in equally trying circumstances. The school produced hundreds of Sappers who would become 'No.1' team leaders, men who took bewildered new arrivals under their wing, passing on the weird and wonderful knowledge and skills of the Tunnel Rats to them – skills that were essential to our survival.

And we all witnessed during this time, perhaps the ultimate product of the School of Military Engineering, and something we all treasure to this day – Sapper Spirit. It's gold.

The following is a typical example of just one of the many M-16 anti-personnel mine incidents dealt with by Tunnel Rats over the years 1967 to 1971.

During Operation Esso, at around 9pm on July 4th 1969 5RAR's 7 Platoon hit an M-16 mine near the base of the Long Hai mountains. Of the 24-man platoon, over half were casualties from the mine, including Sapper Robert 'Yogi' Earl (2 Troop 1969), who was the 'No. 1' of the Tunnel Rat team attached to 7 Platoon. His 'No. 2' on the team was a Sapper new in country and out on his first operation.

Within 30 minutes of that mine exploding, another mine was triggered at the same site, leaving just six men now unwounded. Tunnel Rats Geoff Handley and Rod Crane (2 Troop 1968/69) were in a nearby Fire Support Base that night and were urgently flown to the mine incident site by helicopter, along with medics plus infantry to enhance the strength of the dramatically depleted platoon.

On arrival at the site, Geoff and Rod immediately got to work. Sapper Yogi Earl had been wounded in the shoulder by the first mine, then severely in the legs by the second explosion. Despite his wounds, this brave young Sapper continued to perform his duty, helping ensure the survival of his 5RAR comrades.

Recently interviewed, Yogi recalled how he tried to keep everyone calm and still so they wouldn't set off another mine. "It was hard, with so many of the guys hurt, and many of them just screaming in pain," said Yogi. "I started clearing safe paths, first to the wounded, and then to a landing zone (LZ) where a chopper could land and take the casualties out.

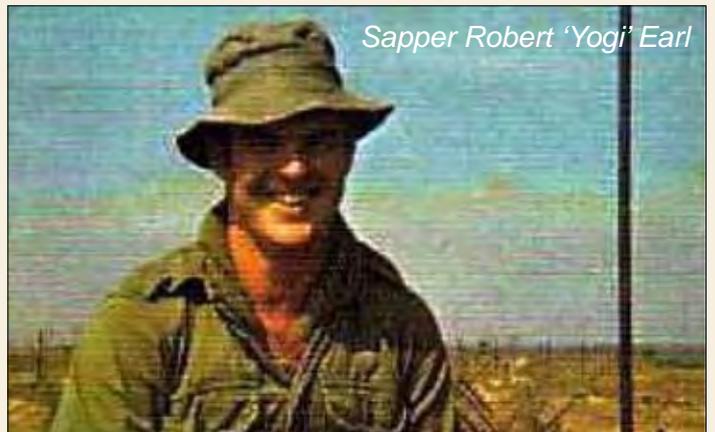
"After I'd finished clearing a safe lane to the LZ, we started moving the wounded close to the pad for when the choppers came in to take them out. Unfortunately, in this process, someone stepped outside the cleared zone and triggered another M-16 mine. I was hit severely myself by this second mine, shredding my lower legs and leaving a hot chunk of metal sticking out of my ankle."

"Yogi was just amazing," recalls Geoff Handley. "Bits were hanging everywhere off his legs, and he'd lost a lot of blood – a real lot of blood. He couldn't move, but as soon as he saw us he starts telling us which areas are cleared, which areas are unproven, and how the safe lanes were marked. This enabled us to safely direct the Infantry who'd arrived with us into positions where they could effectively protect the platoon while we got on with our job."

Geoff and Rod Crane prodded their way in with bayonets, using torches for light.

"Yogi and his 'No. 2' had done an amazing job clearing safe lanes to most areas," said Rod. "But in addition to Yogi being badly wounded, by this time his 'No. 2' was in shock. I think he'd only been in country a few weeks, the poor bastard. We prodded our way to the wounded so they could receive medical attention, and then cleared safe lanes to those not wounded and moved them to safe ground. Adding to the stress of this situation, we had artillery dropping rounds close to us, protecting us from possible assault by the enemy we knew were at the foot of the Long Hai Mountains nearby. Eventually we had all the wounded out and proper defensive positions were established. It was about 4am by the time we'd finished."

Geoff Handley remembers that though they'd done all they could by then, nobody could really relax. "Essentially we'd cleared a minefield in the dark under the incredibly stressful conditions of being surrounded by wounded comrades and having artillery bursting close by. We all knew the chances of there still being more mines amongst us were very high. And we were right, because in the morning another M16 mine was found in our midst. It was sheer luck none of us had stood on it during the night."



Sapper Robert 'Yogi' Earl

Yogi was evacuated by chopper to the Hospital in Vung Tau, and subsequently sent home to Australia because of his wounds. He was Mentioned in Dispatches for his role in the incident, an appallingly inadequate level of award for the bravery he showed that night.

There were 18 casualties out of the 24 man platoon, three men killed and 15 wounded, ten of them seriously enough to be evacuated to Australia.

Postscript: Sadly, Geoff Handley and Rod Crane both passed away recently. They were classic Tunnel Rats - always great company and loved a beer with their mates. Geoff and Rod faced horrendous situations multiple times during their tours and proved their mettle each time.

Operation Hammersley in the Long Hai Mountains 10 February 9 March 1970

One of the most horrendous M-16 mine incidents of the war took place on 28th February 1970, when two mines were hit in succession, resulting in 25 casualties including seven Tunnel Rats. The incident took place during 8RAR's Operation Hammersley which saw 11 Australians killed and 59 wounded, mostly by M-16 mines lifted by the enemy from our own minefield. The operation was supported by Tunnel Rats from 3 Troop, led at the time by LT Peter Thorp who was at the site of that terrible mine incident on 28th February. Knowing there were many lessons to be learnt from the entire operation, Peter wrote an After Action Report on Hammersley when he returned to Nui Dat. We've recovered Peter's report from the Australian War Memorial archives and publish it here as yet another example of the extraordinary roles played by the Tunnel Rats in Vietnam.

After Action Report Operation Hammersley 10 Feb to 9th Mar 1970

Intimate Engineer Support

1. The area of operations was known to be extensively mined and booby trapped and consequently the support provided was as extensive as it could be without prejudicing support to other battalions. Several times civil aid projects virtually came to a standstill through the withdrawal of manpower.

2. The ratio of engineers to other arms was basically as follows:

- (a) 1 Mini Team per tank troop.
- (b) 2 Mini Teams per APC troop.
- (c) 1 Splinter or Mini Team per platoon on foot.

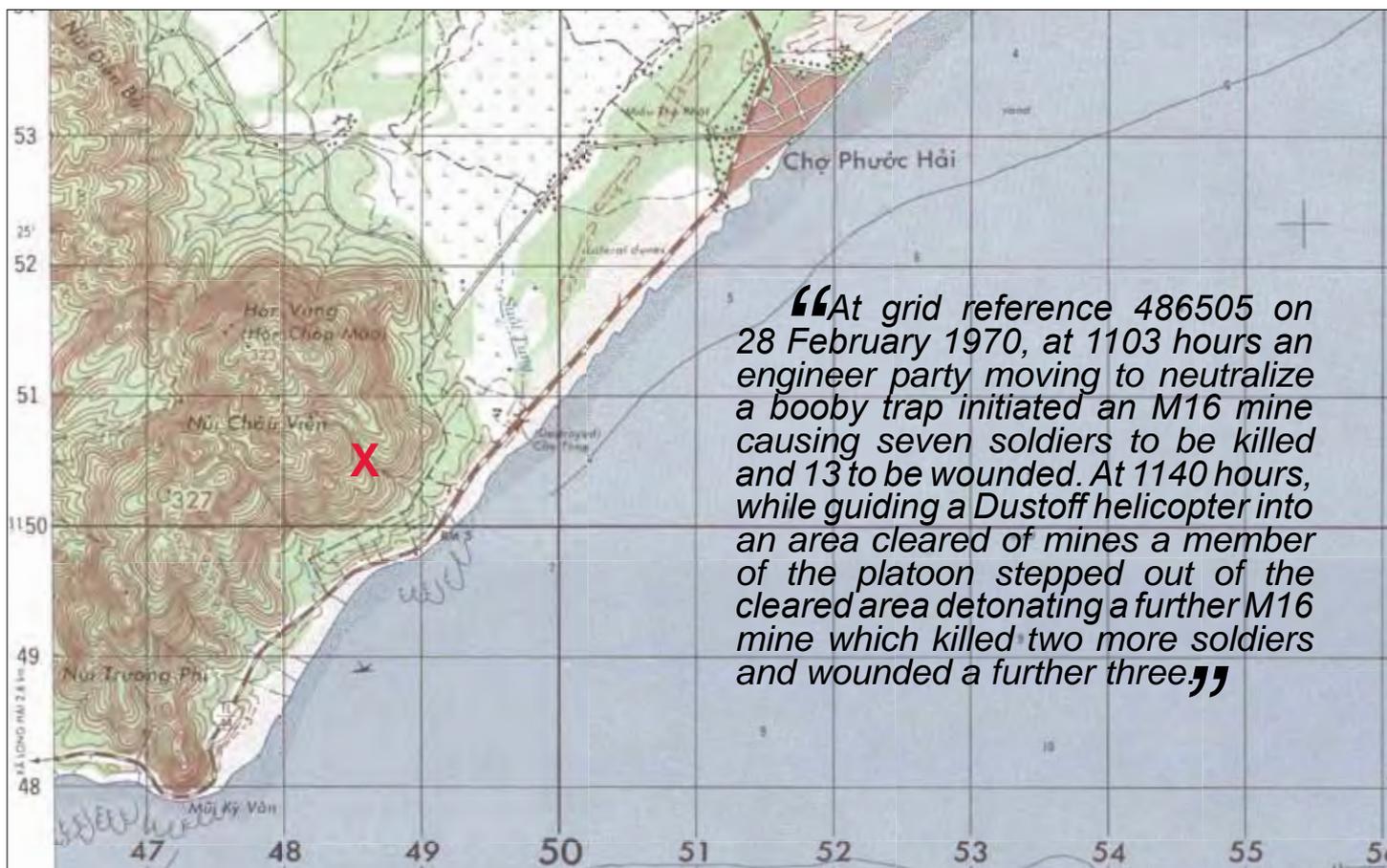
3. Where possible an engineer team was given to each Company on mounted operations, to supplement the mini teams and to give the Company Commander continuity of personnel. This was necessary as quite often APC troops were changed around for vehicle servicing.

4. Where armoured units were in a static defensive role, their attached Mini Teams were sometimes used by the infantry in operations in the close-by area. It is essential that when this is required by the Company Commander, that the Engineer Troop Commander is informed so he knows at any one time where all of his people are working.

Engineer Intelligence and early warning

5. Liaison between Engineers and other arms on the operation was very good and the benefits became apparent on two occasions. The first was in the bunker system at YS477522 where the information on the bunkers and the intentions of the Battalion were made known in time for 1 Field Squadron to organize, equip and arrange refresher training for two bunker and tunnel search and demolition teams.

This undoubtedly saved a great deal of time. On the waterborne operation, early warning enabled us to arrange boats



and motors and to give refresher training on boating operations to the crew. Obviously if information on future planning is made known to us, we can plan ahead and give much better support.

Bunker Search and Demolition Techniques.

6. Responsibilities of the Infantry and Engineers must be thoroughly understood, as regards clearances of enemy, occupation, search and protection of searching parties.

7. Enemy bunkers, whether occupied or not, are very often mined and great care must be taken until the area is known to be clear. Obviously if the system is occupied the enemy will have to be fought and either caught killed or beaten off, but once this is complete only essential movement must be permitted.

8. If the system is large or spread over a wide area it may be necessary to call for more Engineers to carry out a search and the Engineer team on the ground are the people whose advice should be sought. These teams should do the actual searching of bodies and bunkers in such areas, and the folly of untrained personnel doing this task must be stressed to all ranks.

9. While the search is being undertaken, the engineers must be told where the Infantry protection groups are, in relation to the area being searched. The close protection parties accompanying the engineers should be positioned and controlled by the engineers. If this does not occur people are likely to be wounded if anything explodes when the engineers are clearing.

10. Searching of bunkers, beyond an immediate examination of the entrance area, is an engineer task and must be treated as such at all times. Engineers hold specific tunnel search equipment such as air, gloves, etc. When bodies have been lying for several days the psychological effect of people touching them without the proper



ABOVE: In the actual area of the mine incidents, Peter Thorp describes the terrible events of 28th February 1970 for our tour group during the Tunnel Rats tour back to Vietnam in March this year

equipment is detrimental for morale, hence it is readily available for use.

VC Mines and Booby Traps

11. The enemy is not laying conventional minefields. He is using mines as booby traps. To combat this our forces must be continually reminded of all enemy booby trap techniques so that they can recognize potentially dangerous areas, and know what to look for.

12. Where there is one mine there will always be more. This is frequently stated and recently has been proven true several times. When a mine or booby trap is found we must learn to appreciate likely places where others may be and be careful in these areas. Sometimes a mine or booby trap may be very obvious. This may merely mean that the enemy is relying on relaxation which comes after such a find to inflict more casualties by other well hidden and cunningly sited mines or booby traps.

13. Below are listed likely places for booby traps to be found.

- (a) Crossings over streams.
- (b) Natural paths through heavily wooded or difficult terrain.
- (c) Gateways or gaps in fences or obstacles.

- (d) Track junctions.
- (e) Likely harbour or rest areas.
- (f) Enemy camps/installations.

Recommendations for Mine Incidents

14. In several mine incidents the use of winches for evacuation of casualties has proven successful. Winching can sometimes be undertaken with a minimum of preparation as opposed to an LZ which is costly in manpower and time. Another factor is that natural LZ's are often mined and booby trapped. With these points in mind it is essential that all arms appreciate the capabilities of aircraft and the variety of stretchers they carry.

15. Winching does have some problems however, several of which are mentioned below.

(a) Hovering aircraft make considerable noise, and commanders must ask pilots to winch from as great an altitude as is safely possible.

(b) If people are widespread on the ground it may be necessary to fly in extra radio equipment as voice communications on the ground with aircraft present is nigh impossible.

16. If a mine incident occurs the engineers on the ground will know in a very short time if the task is beyond their means, and will tell commanders how many extra people are required. To be effective these people must be reacted immediately to ensure no further casualties occur. There are always engineer teams available on very short notice and these are available on request.

Conclusion

17. The engineer aspects of this operation were interesting and comprehensive, and a great deal of experience was gained by all concerned.

18. Relations between engineers and other arms was very good at all levels resulting in an effective all-arms team.

A.P.THORP Lt
Tp Comd 3 Tp

Creation of the Barrier Minefield had a massive impact on the role of the Tunnel Rats for over four years

The Barrier Minefield is widely accepted as the biggest mistake made by Australian forces during the Vietnam War. The concept of the minefield was that it would form a barrier between enemy bases in the Long Hai mountains and the villages where the VC sought their food and recruits.

Construction of the Barrier Minefield began in early May 1967, and from that point onwards, right through to 1971 the mines from the minefield brought death and brutal injury to hundreds of Aussie diggers rather than to our enemy.

Australian troops were killed and wounded laying the minefield, and the enemy lifted thousands of mines from the minefield to use against us with deadly efficiency.

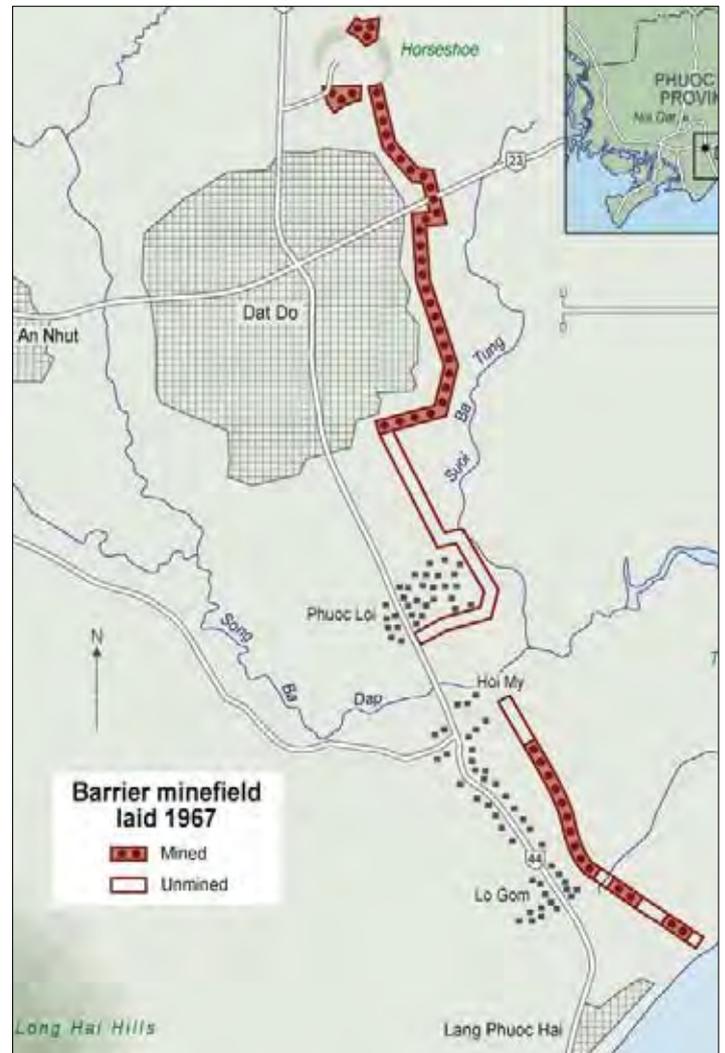
The Tunnel Rats of 1 Field Squadron featured highly in every aspect of the negative impact of the minefield on Australian troops. Five Tunnel Rats were killed and 10 were wounded laying the minefield. The Tunnel Rats then spent four years (1967 to 1971) dealing with the mine incidents involving the M-16 mines lifted from the minefield by our enemy – with many of the Tunnel Rats being casualties themselves in those incidents.



ABOVE: Devices ready for laying, the M-16 mine and the M26 grenade fitted with an anti-lift switch

The laying of the minefield was a perilous task. The majority of the mines laid were a combination of an M-16 'Jumping Jack' mine sitting on top of an M-26 grenade fitted with an anti-lift switch. Two men were needed to lay each mine because there was a point reached where the pin had to be pulled from the grenade, and if the mine and grenade combination wasn't held steady while the earth was being tamped around it and while the mine was being armed – the anti-lift switch could tilt and set off the grenade and then the mine.

To add to the peril, many of the Sappers laying the mines were grossly undertrained for the task. Jethro Thompson (1TP 1967) is just one example. Jethro had never seen an M-16 mine before turning up at the minefield to start work. An



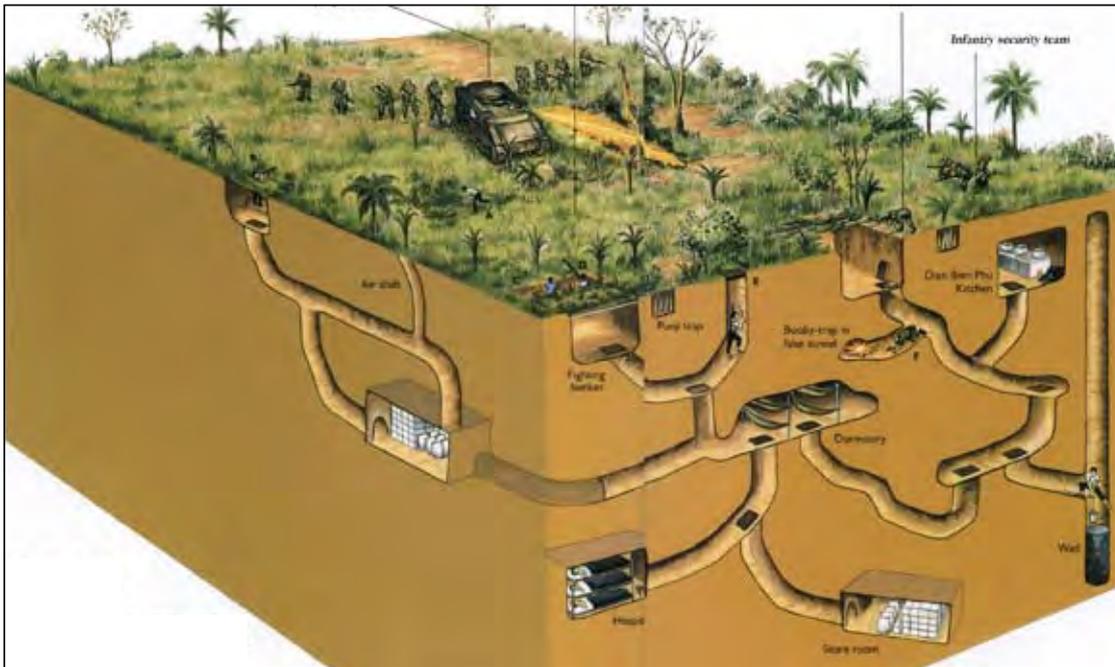
NCO demonstrated the M-16 mine and M26 grenade combo process once, then had Jethro carry out the process once. Training was complete and Jethro started laying the minefield that day! Six days later Jethro triggered one of the mines he had laid, killing two of his mates and wounding four including himself, losing an arm and a leg.



Jethro Thompson, despite his terrible wounds, is one of the most positive people you could ever meet.

The minefield was the brainchild of the then Task Force Commander Brigadier Stuart Graham. Major Brian Florence, the Officer Commanding 1 Field Squadron at that time, argued against the installation of the minefield but his objections were overruled by BRIG. Graham.

Unique US study reveals why VC tunnels were so resilient



In 1966 the US Advance Research Projects Agency, a division of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, sponsored and directed an unusual tunnel research program in Vietnam. The project was headed by civilian geologist, Jim Burns of the Research Analysis Corporation. Jim arrived in Vietnam for the project on 9th October 1966. His task was to determine the soil properties of the enemy tunnels in the hope this could help predict other tunnel locations, thus making the search for enemy bases more predictable.

Once Jim Burns got out in the field and began his research, he quickly identified that Old Alluvium soils were a common factor in the location of enemy tunnels. He also realised that the nature and properties of those Old Alluvium soils were key to the tunnels being so resilient.

Knowing the unique properties of these soils helps us understand how the tunnels and bunkers we came across were so hardy. They rarely collapsed or even broke down, despite obvious heavy use and the massive rainfalls each wet season.

Soils located in Old Alluvium terraces had high levels of clay and iron. Part of the iron content is converted during the wet season into a reduced form and migrates to other layers in the soil; while the dry season temporarily stops the migration and fixes the iron oxide.

This process, "ferrugination," is the result of thousands of years of weathering and is evidenced in soils with a reddish color or a hard pan of iron. When



Microscopic view of iron in the soil

these lateritic soils are fully air-dried, they take on concrete-like properties and are resistant to becoming soft and moist again.

It is this characteristic that makes these soils well suited to tunnel construction. The tunnels were dug in the monsoon season when the upper layers of soil were soft and moist but not in dry season.

The soils were highly stable without any lining or support,

and could withstand adjacent explosive blasts.

The study found that no central entity designed the tunnels or oversaw their construction. They evolved in response to local needs and were constructed under the supervision of local Viet Cong leaders. Teams of local residents performed the labor of digging by hand. In many cases, each team worked only in a sector near its home village, and was unaware of extensions into neighboring sectors.

The early tunnels were dug as hiding places for the Viet Minh, a nationalist guerilla force that fought the Japanese during World War II and the French afterward until 1954. More tunnels were built later as pressure increased from American and South Vietnamese troops.

"We learned of various examples of digging rates, which varied according to the soil, the weather, and the health and skills of the labor force," said Jim Burns. "Some of the rates cited were: one cubic meter per per-



son per day; 50 meters of tunnel length per day for a team of 100 workers. There were often major delays in progress, especially during the dry season, when soils became too hard to dig by hand. I learned of one tunnel, 1,700 meters long, that was started in 1958 and required two and one-half years for completion by a force of 100 workers."

"The greatest concentrations of tunnels were in the III Corps Tactical Zone, extending from the sea, through Saigon and Cu Chi, on to the Cambodian border," says Jim.

"Only a few of these even approached, let alone exceeded a length of one mile. These lengths should be kept in mind in view of statements, partly true but misleading, that suggest the tunnels were much longer and were intended for long-distance travel, connecting villages, districts, and provinces together so the fighters could move between areas undetected.

"Estimating the numbers of tunnels runs into a problem of definition: They ranged in size

from major headquarters facilities to 'holes in the ground' and by this definition the number could approach 5,000. By more conventional definitions, such as squad-size tunnels and larger, the count was about 500 in late 1966, and rising each month," says Jim Burns.

In the early 1960s, the US and its allies increased their military presence to support the Republic of Vietnam against the communist regime in the north. In response, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops expanded the tunnels and used them in conjunction with their guerrilla warfare tactics.

As the United States increased their aerial bombing, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers used the tunnels to survive. The soil tunnels at Cu Chi and the Iron Triangle were so extraordinarily stable and resilient they withstood three years of US military aerial bombing.

Extracts from:

Olson, K.R. and Morton, L.W. Open Journal of Soil Science, 7, 34-51.



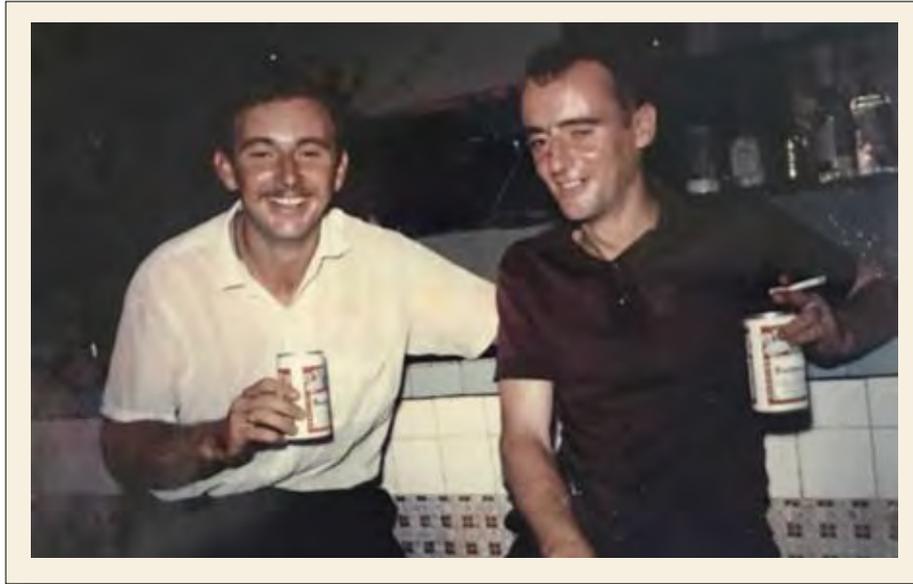
TOP LEFT: Sapper Bill "Ba Ba" Lamb (1969/70), in a red soil environment obviously packed with those iron elements mentioned by geologist Jim Burns. "Ba Ba" was blowing up a tunnel in early 1970, and is adding some extra punch to the demolition by throwing in a few unserviceable artillery rounds. "Beaucoup Boom Boom"!

TOP: Local villagers help dig out a new tunnel system and at the same time disperse the excess soil. The smooth clean face of the walls can clearly be seen, and these will harden like concrete during the next dry season.

ABOVE: During a US bombing raid, a Viet Cong squad takes refuge in an "A Frame" shelter within a tunnel system in the Iron Triangle region, northeast of Saigon.

Finding Sapper Quinn

By John "Ben" Beningfield



A fascinating and amusing account by Ben Beningfield, of his relentless search for his mate and comrade, Patrick "Jock" Quinn. Ben and Jock both served two tours of Vietnam as Tunnel Rats with 1 Field Squadron in 1967-68 and 1970-71.

Jock Quinn was a mate of mine. Anyone who met him couldn't forget him. He was a real character and a top bloke. I first ran across him in 1967 at Nui Dat. He was in 1 Troop, 1Fd Sqn and I was in 2 Troop. I bumped into him when we reported in to the duty officer at Sqn HQ after work. We were both on Field Punishment at the time. I don't know what Jock had been charged with but I suspect it had something to do with beer. My charge definitely had something to do with beer.

Jock was one of a small number of miscreants from 1 Troop that day who went back to the 1 Troop lines to burn off the "wait-a-while" growing through the dannet wire fencing around their troop area. They were using backpack sprayers filled with diesel fuel to achieve this. I went back to 2 Troop to cut grass with the "hockey stick" grass slasher. I cut a lot of grass that year.

Shortly after I started slashing there was a commotion from 1 Troop. A tent was on fire. It turned out that while the 1 Troop miscreants were carry-



TOP: Ben (left) and Jock enjoying a beer in a Vung Tau bar while on leave in 1970. ABOVE: An Army 'mug shot' of Jock.

ing out the burn-off, Jock identified the tent of the bloke who had charged him by pointing it out with the nozzle of his "flame thrower". No-one could prove it wasn't an accident and Jock escaped further retribution, although the burnt trail from the dannet wire to the remains of the tent was pretty hard not to see.

Although Jock had a gift for getting into strife, he must have had an overworked guardian angel to drag him out of it again.

Jock's Guardian Angel must have been on overtime in Vietnam to pull him out of the proverbial. I remember one occasion when he was sent down to Vung Tau to get a plaque engraved at the Yank base. Sending him there un-chaperoned was a monumental blunder. He finished this chore in double quick time then headed to the Zebra Club to quench his thirst. This took up the rest of the day.

He finally hitched a ride on a truck heading back to the Dat. As they were driving through the swampy area north of Cat Lo the truck was stopped by the Military Police and the driver booked for speeding. The MPs had set up a speed trap using some sort of mirror device and lay in ambush waiting for poor unsuspecting Aussie drivers. Jock took umbrage at such underhanded conduct, leapt out of the back of the truck and accused the MPs of being all sorts of gutless, cowardly, POGO bastards and challenged



them to fight. Jock and two MPs ended up in the swamp, the hapless truck driver was sent on his way and Jock was arrested.

On the way to the lock up in Vung Tau the MP's Landrover broke down and they radioed for assistance. By this stage it was starting to get dark and Jock was twice as angry, firstly by being ambushed in a speed trap set by gutless, cowardly POGO bastards and secondly for being arrested by said pack of cowardly, gutless POGO bastards.

Before the recovery team arrived it was getting darker and the MPs didn't want the responsibility of keeping an eye on a very irate sapper, so they waved down the next vehicle that went past, (the last vehicle of the day heading back to the Dat, actually) and threw a still seething Jock on board. By the time he got back to the troop lines it was night time and the staff were starting to worry whether he was ever coming home. No more was heard from the Military Police and Jock's Guardian Angel took a breather.

The next time we met up was in early 1970 at "Slack Jack's Finishing School" at SME, waiting to go back to 1 Fd Sqn again.

We flew out on the same plane in March '70 and both went to 3 Troop. We were both charged on our first morning there (along with 16 other troop members) for drinking in the lines the night before. We both ended up on Field Punishment again. Once again, something to do with beer. No tents burnt down this time though.

Over the next twelve months I got to know Jock well and he and I became great mates, getting into and out of quite a few scrapes together. Jock had a big heart and was the sort of bloke who would do anything for a mate.

I remember Christmas Eve 1970 vividly. I was out bush attached to the Cavalry who were providing protection for the Land Clearing Team. Fred Lourigan was my No. 2 at the time and Fred's 21st birthday was the next day, Christmas Day. Just on dusk on Christmas Eve a bag was delivered to me by the resupply helicopter. This puzzled me because I knew I hadn't asked for anything.

Back under our hootchie I opened the bag to find it was stuffed with dirty greens. Why would anybody send me out a

The evening Ben met Jock's family in Glasgow. From left: Ben Beningfield, Jim Quinn (nephew), Anne Miller (niece), sister Jean Donaghue and Daily Record journalist Sally Hind.

sand bag full of dirty greens? The question was answered when I discovered a 40 oz bottle of rum wrapped up inside, enclosed with a note that read: "Ben, Fred. Sorry, but this is the best I could do. Merry Christmas and Happy 21st - Jock."

Fred and I were on picquet at 10 o'clock that night for a two hour shift. Sunrise found us still on picquet and the rum bottle empty and I think I'll let that story finish there. Thanks Jock. What a man! What a mate!

When we came home in March '71, he was my Best Man when I got married. We met up again in 3FER in Townsville the next year and we sank many a beer over the odd game of Canasta over the following three years.

He got into quite a bit of strife in Townsville too, particularly with the local constabulary who took a dim view of his insisting on driving his car when he had no license. Eventually

his luck ran out and his next appointment in front of "The Beak" resulted in a six week holiday at Her Majesty's Correctional Motel at Stuart Creek in Townsville. Within days of taking up residence, he was holding numeracy and literacy classes for illiterate prisoners. Jock didn't waste time anywhere, even when he was "doing Time".

In 1979 he came up to visit me when I was with the Engineer Battalion in Port Moresby. Many more cold beers were consumed there. I lost track of him when he returned to Townsville, because he was never a great letter writer. I learnt later that he had taken discharge in Sydney. Monty Avotins told me a farewell had been organised for Jock at the Campbelltown RSL, but he never showed up for it. He went back to Scotland after discharge and died in Glasgow in 1992. He is buried in the Lamb Hill Cemetery in Glasgow.

When we were awarded the Army Combat Badge and the campaign initiated by "Roo Dog" Scott to track down our old mates' NOK started, I was inspired to find Jock. For two years I struggled with online sites on the computer, but had no success. I finally decided to go to Scotland personally and give it one last throw of the dice.

I arrived in Glasgow in late July 2016 with no particular plan in mind. I decided to contact a large newspaper in Glasgow with the vague idea they may help me out with some kind of "Missing Persons" advertisement, so I phoned the "Daily Record". The switch board operator put me through to a young journalist called Sally Hind. After I explained to her who I was and what I was trying to do, she asked me if I would like to meet her at the newspaper offices. She said she would see what she could do to help and I met up with her on Thursday the 28th of July.

We had a great meeting. She organised a photographer to



run a story in their paper and got their "Intelligence" people to try to track Jock's family. She rang me the next day and told me they had located one of Jock's sisters who said she would like to meet me. Sally organised the meeting at the newspaper office for Sunday evening. When I got there I discovered that not only did she have Jock's sister Jean there, but also his niece Ann and nephew Jim. It was quite an emotional meeting with many "Quinn" stories told.

When I explained that the only person who could apply for Jock's ADM and AASM was the person who was in possession of Jock's original campaign medals, there was a bit of a chuckle from his sister Jean as she said: "Oh, that will be his older sister, Cathie, in Bondi, Sydney".

I met up with the family again later on that week and they took me out to visit Jock's grave and the Daily Record ran a very nice story about how they had helped to track down Jock's family for me. I can't believe how helpful Sally and the staff of the Daily Record were. They couldn't have done any more for me if we were family and I can't thank them enough.

When I got home I contacted Jock's sister Cathie and arranged to meet her in Bondi later in the year. So towards the end of 2016 I fronted up at

ABOVE: On the day Jock's Army Combat Badge was presented to Jock's sister, Cathie. From left: Al Coleman, Ben Beningfield, Cathie, Jim Weston and Benito Passarelli at the rear, Fred Lourigan in front.

Cathie's place along with some of Jock's old sapper mates, Fred Lourigan, Mal Botfield, Alan Coleman, Benito Passarelli and Jim Weston.

We presented Cathie with Jock's Combat Badge, a framed photo of Jock taken in his Townsville days, his certificate of service and the necessary paperwork for Cathie to claim his extra medal. We also had a very old bottle of single malt with which we drank a toast to a great mate and a legend of the Corps.

Cathie was regaled with more Quinn stories and after a very pleasant couple of hours with her we left her with the rest of the single malt and made our way to the North Bondi RSL for just a couple more coldies.

As we were signing in at the RSL the young lady at reception said "Were you boys sappers in Vietnam? My father was a sapper in Vietnam. He was with 17 Const Sqn." It struck me that our motto "Ubique" is so true. There must be old sappers "everywhere".

As for the Mighty Quinn - vale old mate.

Rich history behind mansion ruins east of Nui Dat



Plantation villa of Mme De La Souchere on the Baria – Xuan Lôc road

The ruins of this mansion were still there during the war, sitting north of the ‘Horse-shoe’ feature, about midway between Baria and Xuan-Lôc. Two young Tunnel Rats spent a night there in 1969, searching for a treasure-filled wine cellar they knew had to be there - somewhere. The villa had belonged to a fascinating figure in the history of colonial Vietnam, Madame Janie-Marie Marguerite Bertin Rivière de la Souchère, a widow who defied the social conventions of her time to become an immensely rich rubber plantation owner – only to lose everything in the Great Depression.

In 1901, following a conventional upbringing in France, Janie-Marie Marguerite Bertin married a young merchant marine officer named Charles Rivière de la Souchère. Five years her senior, Charles was keen to pursue a career overseas, and in 1904 the 23-year-old Madame de la Souchère followed him to Cochinchina, where he had been offered employment with the Service du pilotage on the Saigon river.

Charles became a fully qualified pilot by 1905, based at the Messageries maritimes. However, Janie-Marie quickly became bored with the suffocating routine of colonial life in the city and in 1909 she persuaded her husband to purchase 300 hectares of land 85km northeast of Saigon (roughly midway between Baria and Xuan-lôc).

In the following year, supported by a small army of workers, she personally set to work carving a rubber plantation out of the virgin forest. These early ef-



Description of the plantation from a 1925 annual report:

Plantation de La Souchère.

Location: On the km. 13 of the road from Baria to Xuan-lôc.

Distance from Saigon: 86 km.

Owner: Mrs de la Souchere.

Soil Type: Extremely rich red soil.
Workforce: Annamese and Moï: 800 coolies.

Buildings and facilities: dwellings for supervisors and coolies.

Livestock: 80 oxen, 20 horses.

orts were not without problems – at the outset, wild tigers decimated her workforce and in 1913 a massive fire destroyed her entire crop of 50,000 rubber saplings. Undaunted, Janie-Marie simply started over. By 1915 she had replanted and the Plantation was back on track again.

Tragedy struck in 1916, when Charles died suddenly after a short illness. Despite her heartbreak, Janie-Marie became more determined than ever to make the plantation a success.

By 1917 Janie-Marie had become the first female member of the Syndicat des planteurs de Caoutchouc (Rubber Planters' Syndicate) and of the Chambre d'Agriculture de la Cochinchine.

Over the next decade, Janie-Marie's business prospered and by the early 1920s the “domaine de la Souchère” embraced more than 3,000 hectares of land south of Xuân Lộc.

With a European manager and a local workforce of more than 800, the plantation was “di-



vided by wide avenues" and contained more than 170,000 rubber trees, 25,000 coconut trees and 10,000 coffee plants.

A proficient Vietnamese speaker, Madame de la Souchère was said to have enjoyed the respect and loyalty of all her workers, whom she treated like an extended family. She built a health centre, a nursery, a primary school, a pagoda and a church on the plantation for their use, and also had a villa constructed in Cap Saint-Jacques (Vũng Tàu) where sick workers could be sent for rest and recuperation. In the 1920s, she adopted several local orphans who eventually went to live with her in France.

In 1922 she became Vice President of the Rubber Planters Association and in that same year she was awarded the Chevalier de la legion d'honneur for her contribution to the economy and her philanthropic work.

A noted beauty who loved to dress in men's tropical whites, Madame de la Souchère has often been cited as the model for the character of Éliane Devries, proprietor of the 6,000 hectare Lang-Sai plantation, who was

PHOTOS: Brian "BC" Scott (top) and Jim Marett (middle) both Tunnel Rats with 2Tp 1Fd Sqn 1969/70 came across the mansion ruins when they harboured up there for one night while in a Mini-Team attached to 3CAV. The Cav were transporting a platoon of South Vietnamese ARVN back to their base at Xuan-Loc after a period of training at 'The Horseshoe in early 1970. Large rooms, the remains of intricate tiled floors and a huge bathroom upstairs with it's own balcony and views across the plantation indicated just how luxurious the villa had been. Bottom photo: Mrs. de La Souchere out inspecting the rubber trees on her plantation.

played by Cathérine Deneuve in the 1992 film *Indochine*.

In 1926, after years of living in basic accommodation, Madame de la Souchère decided to build herself a comfortable villa on the plantation. However, she was given little time to enjoy the property – in 1930, the economic crisis hit Indochina, and as the price of rubber crashed, Madame de la Souchère became mired in debt.

Many advised her to sell up and leave, but she decided to stay, convinced that she could weather the storm. And in so doing she lost everything. On 28 September 1933 the entire Souchère plantation, valued in 1929 at around 2 million piastres, was sold to the bank for just 100,000 piastres.

With her plantation gone, Madame de la Souchère rented a modest apartment at 213 rue Catinat (now Dong Khoi Street) in Saigon and set to work finding gainful employment. Over the next few years she worked for various government and private firms, eventually becoming the Inspector of Women's Labour for the Cochinchina government.

Remarkably, by 1936 she had cleared her debts and later in that year she even had enough money to purchase a modest 200-hectare coffee and rubber plantation in Biên Hòa.

Madame de la Souchère returned to France in early 1938, spending her later years in the Côte d'Azur region. In 1952 she was promoted to the rank of Officier de la Légion d'honneur. After 1954 she arranged for the repatriation of her husband's remains, and she never returned to Indochina.

Janie-Marie Bertin Rivière de la Souchère died on 31 October 1963 and was buried in the Seyne sur Mer cemetery. Today most of the former Souchère plantation is still producing rubber, although few of the original buildings have survived.



TOP: Convinced there had to be an old wine cellar beneath the ruined French-owned mansion, "BC" Scott and Jim Marett spent hours searching for it - sadly, to no avail. MIDDLE: After Jim and "BC" cleared the house for mines and booby traps, "BC" briefs the ARVN on the tactical importance of finding the hidden cellar. ABOVE: Even in the temporary home, before the mansion was built, life was pretty good on the plantation.

On tour back to Vietnam with the Rats

By Alastair MacLeod - Troop Commander, 17 Construction Squadron Vietnam 1969-70

Background

Some years ago, it just happened by chance that I was put on the distribution list of the Tunnel Rats Association and copied in on their regular Newsletter, "Holdfast". I read they held trips back to Vietnam where Australian Sappers served during the Vietnam conflict. I joined their tour which ran from 14th to 24th March this year.

The Association runs tours every 18 months or so back to areas in Vietnam where the Australian Sappers served. The tours comprise Tunnel Rat Veterans, Sapper Veterans, close friends. Some Veterans also bring their sons along.

I served with 17 Construction Squadron from November 1969 to November 1970 and had a lot of mates in 1 Field Squadron which provided combat Engineering support mainly to the Infantry and Armoured Units, including tunnel and mine clearance operations.

Two Sappers in 1 Fd Sqn I knew well were SPR Tony Hollis and LT Peter Thorp.

Tony Hollis was my driver in 24 Construction Squadron at Enoggera and was posted to 1 Fd Sqn and sadly KIA in a mine incident in 1970.



A young Captain MacLeod in 1969, when serving as a Troop Commander in Vietnam

Peter Thorp and I played rugby together and were close friends when we were both at Enoggera. In Vietnam, while Peter was a Troop Officer in 1 Fd Sqn he was involved in a major mine incident in the Long Hai Hills and responsible for overseeing the extraction of many dead and wounded Australian soldiers.

Day 1: Ho Bo Woods and Cu Chi Tunnels

The Tunnel Rats played a key role in Operation Crimp in January, 1966 with the discovery and identification of major underground tunnel networks. Sadly the operation resulted in the first death of a Sapper in Vietnam – Corporal Robert "Bob" Bowtell who lost his life investigating the tunnel system. His two sons Peter and Michael were on the Tour (their second trip) which must have been difficult for them.

Day 2 – Fire Support Base (FSB) Andersen

A remembrance ceremony was held at "The Knoll" near FSB Andersen, honouring the four Sappers (SSGT Colin McLaughlin, LCPL John Garrett, SPR Allan Pattison and SPR David Steen) killed in action there 50 years ago in 1968. They were on a Standing Patrol outside the wire and comprised a full Section (No. 11 Section) of ten sappers from 3 Troop of the 1st Field Squadron Royal Australian Engineers, acting in the role of infantry. They were decimated by a direct mortar and RPG hit.

Day 3 – Baria Orphanage & Long Dien Mine Incident Site

The Tunnel Rats Asso-



LEFT: John Nulty ponders a grim day from the past when we visit the site of his 1969 mine incident. RIGHT: The bridge that 17 Construction built in 1970 along Route 23 between Long Dien and Dat Do.

ciation on each tour visits the orphanage to donate rice, milk powder and fresh milk plus make a donation. The orphanage has 31 staff and they look after abandoned babies through to teenage orphans including some with major disabilities. The facilities were spotless and the teachers and carers so devoted to these children. Some of the orphans go on to University and come back as teachers. It was opened in 1996 and funded by the Australian Government and Australian Veterans Vietnam Reconstruction Group.

We then went to the location of a mine incident 7km south west of Xuyen Moc, near Long Dien where one of our party, John Nulty was injured when the APC he was on detonated a mine. John was with his sons Michael and Timothy on the Tour and was able to give us a first-hand account of the incident.

On our way back to Vung Tau we visited the site of a highway bridge that 17 Construction built in 1970 along Route 23 between Long Dien and Dat Do. There was another one built on the other side of Dat Do heading to Xuen Moc. It was a composite steel girder and reinforced concrete deck. We had no proper bearing pads at the time so we used some conveyer belt off-cuts from the Nui Dat quarry.

Day 4 - Long Tan and Nui Dat

This was a long day and covered two significant places; the Long Tan battle area near Dat Do, and the old 1 Fd Sqn HQ and Troop Lines under the rubber trees in Nui Dat.

Long Tan: The battle of Long Tan took place in August 1966 and is probably the most famous battle of the Vietnam conflict for the Australian Army and much has been written about it. In 1969 a large cross was erected at the site by 6 RAR on the third anniversary of the battle. At some time after the Fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the Long Tan Cross was



Alastair with a wreath to place in remembrance of his friend Tony Hollis who was KIA in a mine incident in 1970. The ceremony took place during the tour, at the site of the old 1 Field Squadron HQ at Nui Dat.

removed from the battle site. It was subsequently used as a memorial for a Catholic priest until 1984, when it was located by the Đồng Nai Province Museum in Biên Hòa.

The original Long Tan Cross was loaned to the Australian War Memorial in mid-2012 and was returned to Vietnam in April 2013. In 2016 the Australian War Memorial unsuccessfully sought for the Cross to be loaned to it to mark the 50th anniversary of the battle. In November 2017 the Vietnamese Government gifted the original Long Tan Cross back to Australia. It was placed on permanent display at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra in December 2017.

Nui Dat (1 ATFV Base): The return to Nui Dat was a moving experience. Set in an old rubber plantation, the regrowth and some subsequent development initially made it hard to identify the original features. However it all became clear on seeing the old memorial rock at the 1 Fd Sqn camp area, now behind a farm house, plus the footings of several buildings including the officers mess and the squadron headquarters. We held a remembrance ceremony where 35 wreaths were laid, each marked

with the individual name of a Sapper lost in the Vietnam conflict.

Day 5 – The Long Hai Hills

FSB Isa at the foot of the Long Hai Hills was where 17 Const Sqn Plant Troop had a detachment tasked with upgrading Route 44. They were protected by 8 RAR, and it was from there that 9 Platoon, 8RAR under the command of 2Lt Peter Lauder and his Platoon went out to set up an ambush in the Long Hai Hills. Peter went to The Southport School and I played rugby against him in the 1st XV when I was at Brisbane Grammar. Small World!

It was this ambush which initiated Operation Hammersley after 9 Platoon (about 30 men) encountered an NVA Company size group of 120 men with VC porters. Outnumbered almost 5 to 1, Peter provided excellent leadership resulting in many enemy killed and, although some casualties, no loss of life in his Platoon.

Operation Hammersley was a major battle in 1970 and because of the number of casualties a “political” withdrawal was ordered. It was on 28th February 1970 that my close friend, Lt Peter Thorp was doing an aerial

recce in a Sioux helicopter when he was called in to oversee the casualty evacuation of Sappers from 1 Field Squadron and infantry from 1 Platoon Alpha Company 8RAR. Around ten men had been killed or injured in a mine incident, and during the extraction, another mine incident occurred resulting in a total of 9 dead and 15 wounded. Peter expedited the evacuation assisted by Medics and an RMO.

Day 6 – Long Son Island

As part of the Civil Aid Programme, 17 Const Sqn was engaged to build a small Maternity Hospital and a water supply scheme involving a windmill pump, pipeline, water tank and distribution mains to the Long Son Village which comprised about 5,000 people in 5-6 Hamlets. A feature of the village was the now 131 year old Buddhist Temple. The hospital site was on a reclaimed rice paddy field and the building and concrete materials were bought in by assault boats and sampans.

There was continuing works well into 1970. We had a detachment of around 12 men (carpenters, bricklayers and field engineers) under the command of Staff Sergeant Herb Taylor. The men lived in a compound on “duck boards” on the adjacent tidal flat and received a “hot box” dinner at night.

Day 7 – FSB Coral and FSB Balmoral

On our return from Vung Tau to Saigon we drove via Bien Hoa. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Battle of FSB Coral-Balmoral, which was the largest military operation undertaken by the Australian Defence Force since World War II. It was a unique operation also for the Royal Australian Engineers in that 1 Fd Sqn Group deployed as a complete RAE unit into an operational area where it fought as infantry on the fighting perimeter for the full 28 day duration of the Operation.

It was standard operating



TOP: Having tea with the Buddhist Monks at Long Son Island temple.
ABOVE: Scottish duo; Alastair MacLeod with Tour Piper Ross Brewer.

procedure for two-man Tunnel Rats to operate in this manner but this was the first time the entire 1 Fd Sqn Group deployed in this role.

I couldn't find a lot written about the Sapper's role at Coral-Balmoral so it was good that Norm Cairns and John “Ben” Beningfield were on the tour and able to say few words about their experiences and the important role played by Sappers in the two battles.

Day 8 – Saigon Underground Caches

In the lead up to the 1968 TET Offensive, the Vietcong built up caches of weapons and explosives hidden in basements and ceiling spaces of shops

around the city. They would then distribute them around the city wrapped up in bamboo matting. We visited several of these sites around Saigon.

On Friday 23rd March, we had a Farewell Dinner at the Caravelle Hotel in Saigon. It was a great evening and a chance to say our farewells. The background slide show brought back a lot of memories particularly for the 1 Fd Sqn Veterans.

And lastly, the Tour Piper Ross Brewer deserves special mention. He did a magnificent job, attending all formal memorial services in his McDuff tartan. The bagpipes really added to the atmosphere during these solemn and reflective moments.

SAPPER SNIPPETS

Super Sapper sponsored on the Tunnel Rats tour

Through his soldiering skills Sapper Michael Young won 2 Combat Engineer Regiment's Sapper of the Year Award last year. And through the generosity of Tunnel Rat Dave Wilson (3TP 1FD SQN Vietnam 1970/71), SPR Young joined the Tunnel Rats on their ten day tour back to Vietnam on March 15 to 24 this year. Dave Wilson donated the funds to 2CER to cover the cost of SPR Young's tour, including the return airfare to Saigon from Brisbane. Well done Dave, and well done SPR Young, who was presented with his award at 2CER Enoggera on 24 November last year. Seen (left to right) at the awards ceremony are: LT COL James Dugdell, CO of 2CER, SPR Michael Young, Sapper of



the Year 2CER, David Wilson, and WO1 Sean Chainey, RSM of 2CER. It was a great day all round, with SPR Young being promoted to Lance Corporal, and Dave Wilson being granted Honourary membership of 2CER (see certificate at right) - all on the same day



Tunnel Rats Association support for Afghanistan War Memorial Garden in Brisbane

During our Reunion in Sydney last year, members of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association raised \$700 to go towards a Memorial Garden in Brisbane commemorating the service and sacrifice of members of the Australian Defence Force during the War Against Terror in Afghanistan.

The project is well advanced and is to be established in the grounds of Christ Church Memorial Reserve, next to Suncorp Stadium.

The Project leader for the memorial gardens is a Sapper, Sean 'Mulley' Mulqueen, a Combat Engineer veteran of 1MTF, whose good mates Sapper 'Snowy' Moerland and Sapper Darren Smith, together with explosives detection dog Herbie, were killed in action in Uruzgan, Afghanistan in 2010.

Sean Mulqueen was himself wounded in action by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Sean has been working tirelessly for years through '42 for 42 Incorporated' (a nonprofit organization helping Afghanistan war veterans and families) not only to raise funds for the proposed Memorial, but also to assist wounded Afghanistan veterans during their recovery from injury, and difficult transition back into civilian life.

"Our guys struggle at times," says Sean. "And the Memorial Gardens will be a place for



Tunnel Rat, Peter 'Roo Dog' Scott (left) presents our donation to Sean Mulqueen of '42 for 42 Inc.'

some quiet contemplation and that demonstrates that their service is respected and valued.

"We are excited that approvals for the Memorial Garden are now coming together with the full support of the Christ Church Memorial Reserve and the managers of Suncorp Stadium," says Sean.

"We have appointed a Landscape Architect and the design will include interpretative signage telling the story of each of our fallen heroes."

SAPPER SNIPPETS

A bad day at the office

Though this is WWII era and we haven't been able to identify the unit, the photo is so good (and you just know that Sappers were involved), we had to share it with you.

From LIFE magazine 15th June 1942: "During night manoeuvres in NSW a few weeks ago, Australian soldiers were landing at the edge of a dam when a charge of gelnite, employed to lend realism to the operation exploded beneath their boat. Amid splinters and spray the Aussies were hurled into the night. As they fell a photographer 20 feet away snapped his shutter and caught the remarkable picture above. The soldiers suffered only bruises and shock."



Cover, LIFE magazine 15-6-1942



Australian soldiers, blown into the air by an accidental explosion, fall in the river amid the splinters of their wrecked boat.

Sappers included in Unit Citation for Gallantry

Sappers who were at the Battles of Coral and Balmoral or who served with 1 Field Squadron at the time of the battles (12 May to 6 June 1968) are among the veterans able to wear the recently awarded Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry covering those battles.

The Sappers who were at the Battles will be issued with the award, including the Federation Star, and are to wear it on



Tunnel Rat 'Bluey' Rantall (1TP 1967/68) wearing the new award

the right breast. Personnel who were members of the unit when an award was made wear a Fed-

eration Star in the centre of the ribbon and continue to wear the insignia after leaving the unit.

If you qualify, you can apply for the UCG at: www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Content/Applications

On completing the form you can send it electronically or print out the form and post it.

If you have any questions about the process or if you wish to speak with the personnel managing the awards you can contact them on 1800 333 362.

Tunnel Rats List

All list enquires to Graeme Gartside (contact details below)

This is our latest list of former Tunnel Rats. If you are not on the list and wish to be, please send your details (Troop, year, phone number and address) to Graeme Gartside at email: ggart@internode.on.net or by mail to Graeme Gartside, 9 Park Street Mt Gambier SA 5290

3 Field Troop (1965-66)

Ian Biddolph 02 4472 9434
 Alan Christie 07 5494 6628
 Brian Cleary 0438239387
 Allan S Coleman 07 4687 7975
 Bill Corby 07 5502 1193
 John "Tex" Cotter 07 4723 1244
 "Meggsie" Dennis 0413 193 584
 Des Evans 07 4128 2390
 Ray Forster 07 3409 1907
 Geoff Green 03 6272 8167
 Barry Harford 08 8088 4371
 Keith Kermode 0427233063
 Sandy MacGregor 02 9457 7133
 Frank Mallard 0408183325
 Keith Mills 07 4770 7267
 Bill Murray 0497 385 732

Warren Murray - RIP Sapper

John Opie 0427280703

Bernie Pollard 08 9248 3178

Bill Unmeopa - RIP Sapper

Snow Wilson Jnr 02 6649 3998

Chief Engineer Vietnam

John Hutcheson MC 0417224850

OC 1 Field Squadron

John Kemp 02 6288 3428

Rex Rowe 0419 251 420

1 Troop (1966-67)

Ray Burton 08 8268 4575
 Ron Carroll 0408884327
 Joe Cazey 07 3710 8102
 Allan S Coleman 07 4661 1924
 Grahame Cook 02 4390 5159
 Alan Hammond 0423491091
 Cul Hart 0439536631
 Ken Jolley 02 6624 4066
 Barry Kelly 07 4661 2898
 Axel Kraft 08 9572 9597
 Peter McTiernan 02 6557 5211
 David Martin RIP Sapper
 Gavin Menzies 02 6584 7257
 John Olsen RIP Sapper
 Ron Rockliffe 02 9789 4302
 Trevor Shelley 0419784954
 "Jethro" Thompson 0732168906
 Ross Tulloh 0418223345
 Graham Zalewska-Moon
 (Poland phone: 48-815177391)

1 Troop (1967-68)

Billy Adams 03 5974 2916
 Henry Bagdaley 0419902268
 Reg Bament 02 6948 2524
 Bruce Bevan 0402334614
 Neville Bartels 07 4055 9871
 Col Campbell 0417658770
 Dave Campbell 07 4225 6310
 Bob Coleman 03 5332 0975
 Ross Comben 08 9535 2273
 Jack Green 07 3278 8719
 Norm Hitchcock (Canada)
 1-250-2455137

Ray Kenny 07 3881 3648
 Harry Kloplic 84-096397531
 (Living in Nha Trang Vietnam)
 Peter Koch 0413 222 046
 Brian Lewis 07 3880 0376
 "Paddy" Maddigan 07 5485 1918
 Mike McCallum 02 6288 5113
 John Neal 02 9982 6694
 Barry O'Rourke 0409546717
 Clive Pearsall 03 9459 4470
 Terry Perkins 0413343168
 Alan Rantall 03 9434 2031
 Ivan Scully 03 9802 0977
 Peter Sheehan 03 9390 2834
 Carlton "CP" Smith 0448000334
 Jim Trooper 0418842744

1 Troop (1968-69)

Ray Bellinger 0407952670
 Adrian Black 0417756729
 Mike Bruggemann 0409441992
 Peter Carrodus 02 9759 6383
 Albert Eyssens 03 9769 9715
 Ken Ford 0418669689
 Peter Hollis 02 6581 5401
 George Hulse 07 3399 7659
 Robert Laird 0408561748
 Brian Lamb 02 6059 6947
 Kent Luttrell 0408387641
 Kerry McCormick 03 6344 5291
 Keith Murley 0429729764
 Alan Paynter 03 5975 7130
 Richard Reilly 02 6262 7374
 Colin Spies 07 4743 4676
 Garry Von Stanke 08 8725 5648
 Cliff Truelove 02 6495 7844
 Ken Wheatley RIP Sapper
 Bob Wooley 03 6264 1485
 David Wright 03 9435 4814

1 Troop (1969-70)

Kevin Atkinson 0488 411 571
 Larry Batze 07 4033 2025
 Mervyn Chesson 0419806323
 Allan S Coleman 07 4687 7975
 Phil Cooper 0439 955 207
 Gary Degering - RIP Sapper
 John Felton 07 4661 8679
 Grahame Fletcher 0408822489
 Brian Forbes 0412047937
 Jon Fuller 02 4774 1674
 P. "Guts" Geisel 07 4092 1735
 Terry Gleeson 0458 232 886
 Graham Harvey 0418889739
 Trevor Kelly 08 9538 1184
 Des McKenzie 07 5448 3400
 Anthony Marriott 03 6257 0279
 Doug Myers 0421904562
 Paul Ryan 0429165974
 Les Slater 08 9361 0603
 Max Slater 0412 772 849
 Vic Smith 0432916485
 Dave Sturmer 0422664942

1 Troop (1970-71)

Mick Augustus 07 3205 7401
 Dan Brindley 02 6643 1693
 Ian Cambell 03 9870 0313
 Ray "Brute" Carroll 08 9342 3596
 Phil Duffy 0406020382
 Harry Ednie 0408391371
 Robin Farrell 0409265470
 Bruce Fraser 07 5499 0508
 Garth Griffiths 0435902386
 "Paddy" Healy 02 4930 7541
 Peter Krause 02 6723 2835
 John Lewis 07 3425 1524
 R Loxton 0419944755
 Barry Meldrum 03 5427 1162
 Roger Newman 07 5450 6054
 Peter North 08 9279 5905
 Dennis Pegg 03 6224 9090
 Bob Pfeiffer 0497 501 960
 John Pritchard 02 9837 7482
 John Severyn 0407008610
 Garry Shoemark 02 6546 6778
 Garry Sutcliffe 07 4684 3229
 Donald Stringer 07 41559 515
 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
 Alan Hammond 0423491091
 Peter Hegarty 07 4168 5644
 Graeme Leach 07 4777 8627
 Ken McCann 0409938830
 Rod McClennan 07 3267 6907
 Noel McDuffie 0427051678
 Bob McKinnon 07 3267 0310
 Peter Matthews 03 6250 3686
 Warren Morrow 0418427947
 Mick Shannon 08 8552 1746
 Bob Sweeney 08 9248 4432

2 Troop (1967-1968)

William Adams 0400405751
 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
 Geoff Craven 03 5629 5224
 Peter Fontanini 0438 881 940
 Roland Gloss 02 6367 5324
 John Goldfinch 02 6674 0855
 Paul Grills 07 4162 5235
 John Jasinski 0435799426
 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
 Bernard Ladyman 08 9795 7900
 Warren McBurnie 02 6687 7030
 Stephen McHenry 08 9344 6939
 Eric McKerrow (Silent number)

Dave McNair 08 9725 2821
 Kevin Moon 0423005756
 Tony Parmenter 0417856877
 Gary Phillips 07 5474 0614
 Brian Rankin 07 4775 5095
 Hans Rehorn 03 5623 5572
 Andrew Rogers 08 8087 5671
 Mick Robotham 0439144876
 Geoff Russell 02 6342 1292
 Robert Russell 03 5975 5329
 Brian Sheehan 03 9336 3137
 Carlton "CP" Smith 0448000334
 John Tramby 0428659048
 John Willis 03 9363 7878
 "Snow" Wilson 08 9752 2935

2 Troop (1968-1969)

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
 John Coe 07 4776 5585

Rod Crane RIP Sapper

John Douglas 0433747401
 Robert Earl 02 4990 3601
 Brian Forbes 0412047937
 John Gilmore 08 9795 6847
 Stan Golubenko 03 9361 2721
 Paul Grills 07 4162 5235

Geoff Handley RIP Sapper

Ross Hansen 0409225721
 Wayne Hynson 0425720696
 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 0400012255
 Rick Martin 02 6928 4253
 Bill Matheson 0428959044
 Bill Morris 08 9384 2686
 Don Nicholls 0407919993
 Colin Norris 02 4627 1180
 Bob O'Connor 0418742219
 Terry O'Donnell 0417371632
 Rod Palmer 0417672643
 David Pannach (Hong Kong)
 852-2892 2714

Allan Pearson 07 3812 0943

Gary Phillips 07-5474 0164
 Ted Podlich 07 3862 9002
 Daryl Porteous 07 4973 7663
 Mick Weston 07 5444 3307
 Ray White 03 9740 7141

2 Troop (1969-1970)

John Ash 03 5243 0268

"Arab" Avotins 07 4129 8012
 Bruce Bofinger 02 4872 3175
 Frank Brady 02 6555 5200
 David Brook 03 9546 2868
 Jim Burrough 0400884633
 Ron Coman 07 3355 7279
 Kevin Connor 0408 748 172
 Garry Cosgrove 02 4845 5153
 Arthur Davies 0412823112



Grumpy Foster 07 4041 2321
 Graeme Gartside 08 8725 6900
 Doug George 0419475246
 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 5573 6925
 Pedro Piromanski 08 9306 8169
 Ian Pitt 03 5349 2018
 Jack Power 07 4955 3761
 Colin Redacliff 02 9673 0597
 Rolf Schaefer 08 8962 1391
 Brian "BC" Scott 07 3204 5691
 Peter Scott (219) 02 4341 3782
 "Roo Dog" Scott 0400799577
 Les Shelley 07 3264 4041
 Jimmy Shugg 08 9776 1471
 Bob Smith 07 5456 1194
 Mick Van Poeteren 0425 749 576
 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 0427742175
 Graham Besford 03 9439 2661
 Mal Botfield 02 9872 2594
 John Brady 02 6888 1192
 David Briggs 08 9537 6956
 Keith Burley 07 5543 0990
 Peter Cairns 03 6267 4646
 Brian Christian 07 4778 6602
 Grahame Clark 0408533869
 Dennis Coghlan 0429938445
 "Sam" Collins 08 8262 6107
 Ron Cook 0414508686
 Jock Coutts 08 9279 1946
 Bill Craig 08 9530 1008
 Denis Crawford 03 9497 3256
 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 2917
 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 0488972139
 Kevin Lappin 07 3273 8614
 Gary McClintock 07 4788 0123
 Peter McCole 03 5155 9368
 Bob McGlenn 07 5426 1597
 Ian McLean 0412431297
 Jeff Maddock 03 5987 3850
 Leon Madeley 07 5497 1038
 Bill Marshall 0415 688 788
 Rod O'Regan 0419431779
 Graeme Pengelly 0407 138 124
 Des Polden 03 6223 3830
 Keith Ramsay 0439856933
 Mick Rasmussen 0428 790 645
 Ron Reid 0427 461 297
 Gary Sangster 0427224099
 John Scanlan 0488 132 903
 Peter Schreiber 02 6569 3390
 Garry Shoemark 02 6546 6778
 Alex Skowronski RIP Sapper
 John Smith 0400032502
 Roy Sojan 08 9926 1235
 John Stonehouse 08 9653 1895
 Peter Swanson 0401392617
 John Tick 04 3898 7262
 Harry Eustace 0408515270
 Steve Walton 07 3205 9494
 Terry Wake 07 4786 2625
 Dave Young 0418425429

2 Troop (1971-72)

Warren Pantall 0417 096 802

3 Troop (1967-68)

Ken Arnold 02 6974 1181
 Dennis Baker 08 89527281
 Chuck Bonzas 0407866487
 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
 Bob Embrey 07 3351 1222
 Peter Fontanini 0438881940

Barry Gilbert 03 5023 6657
 Brian Hopkins 08 9751 4946
 John Hoskin 0417886100
 Jack Lawson 0429 798 673
 Peter MacDonald 0419 909 273
 Barrie Morgan 0437861945
 Michael O'Hearn 0429327509
 Alan Pascoe 07 5463 2152
 Gary Pohliner 0427172900
 Peter Pont 07 4095 0150
 Tom Simons 03 6344 6058
 Kevin Shugg 0411144500
 Mervyn Spear 0431212960
 Frank Sweeney 07 3882 6025
 Brian Thomson 0428551368
 Vic Underwood 0429 907 989
 Murray Walker 08 9332 6410
 Glenn Weise 0488741174
 Mick Woodhams 08 9459 0130
 Bob Yewen 07 5532 4560
 Ken Young 0409124096

3 Troop (1968-69)

Geoff Box 08 9731 2757
 Col Campbell 0417658770
 Barry Chambers 0401119999
 Neil Garrett 03 5798 1522
 Brian Glyde 02 4455 7404
 Peter Graham 0428325182
 Peter Gray 02 4285 8877
 Derwyn Hage 0408802038
 John Hollis 02 6662 6660
 "Sam" Houston 07 5495 5480
 Phil Lamb 08 8564 2001
 Ian Lauder 08 9419 5375
 Kent Luttrell 0408387641
 John Murphy 08 9493 3771
 John Nulty 02 6927 3535
 Ted O'Malley 0428243351
 Barry Parnell 07 4947 1976
 Bob Pritchard RIP Sapper
 Art Richardson 03 9314 8216
 Greg Roberts 03 5941 2269
 Walter Schwartz 0439512322
 Don Shields 08 8297 8619
 Tony Toussaint 0417249235.
 Ray Vanderheiden 0410 312 807
 Wal Warby 0418240394
 Ray White 03 9740 7141

Three Troop (1969-70)

Chris Brooks 0407186207
 Jim Burrough 0400884633
 Terry Cartlidge 0411252859
 Bruce Crawford 02 6628 0846
 Richard Day 08 8088 4129
 Phil Devine 0439066012
 Bob Done 0407485888
 Ray Fulton 03 6288 1176
 Graham Fromm 0429322561
 Doug George 0419475246
 Graham Harvey 07 5445 2636
 Robert Hewett 0422165003
 Trevor Hughes 0419883281
 Darrel Jensen 0428387203
 Rod Kirby 07 4973 7726
 Peter Knight 02 6247 6272
 Gerry Lyaill 07 3343 4725
 Phil McCann 0417423450
 Chris MacGregor 02 4472 3250
 Norm Martin 02 4953 1331
 Jock Meldrum MID 0456 002 701

Roelof Methorst 0416834846
 Gary Miller MM 0407586241
 "Jacko" Miller 03 6267 4411
 Chris Muller 0458650113
 Danny Mulvany 08 9356 6890
 Vin Neale 03 9786 1549
 Peter Phillips 0429362935
 G. Rentmeester 03 9735 5236
 Brian "BC" Scott 07 3204 5691
 Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
 Gordon Temby 0419954658
 Peter Thorp MID 02 6288 0008
 "Curly" Tuttleby 08 8953 2335
 Hank Veenhuizen 0407 487 167
 "Wonzer" White 02 9833 0580

Three Troop (1970-71)

Robert Allardice 0439076891
 Steve Armbrust 0407695247
 Errol Armitage 07 5598 8018
 Geoff Ansell 0448013712
 Bob Bament 02 6071 3527
 Mike Barnett 02 9869 7132
 John Beningfield 07 4778 4473
 Darryel Binns 0417170171
 Trevor Boaden 0448160944
 Mal Botfield 02 9872 2594
 Ian Campbell 03 9870 0313
 Brian Christian 07 4778 6602
 Bob Clare 03 5439 5532
 Graeme Clarke 07 4128 4660
 Ted Clarke 0438225844
 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
 John Jones 08 8357 5226
 Kenny Laughton 08 8297 4010
 Garry Lourigan 02 4844 5545
 R. McKenzie-Clark 08 9729 1162
 Robert McLeay 0429861122
 Jock Meldrum MID 0456 002 701
 Roelof Methorst 0416834846
 Carlo Mikkelsen

(New Zealand) 0064 9 3776322
 Ben Passarelli 0411340236

Robert Reed RIP Sapper
 Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
 Les Shelley 07 3264 4041
 John Steen 0419772375
 John Tatler - RIP Sapper
 Gordon Temby 08 9757 2016
 Peter Vandenberg 03 9798 3947
 Brian Wakefield 08 8537 0293
 Peter Weingott 07 3378 2770
 David Wilson 0401726090

Three Troop (1971-72)

Bradley Bauer 0749281152
 Trevor "Zip" Button 0434332789
 Ron Byron 0439910568
 Mike Dutton 0438627140
 Alan Gorman 0413 063 336
 Brenton J Smith 0408806685

US Tunnel Rats

Stephen "Shorty" Menendez
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 John Thiel
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**SPECIAL
OPERATIONS
ENGINEER
REGIMENT**

**ADMIRATION AWE AND RESPECT
(Heaps of it)**

VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION