



HOLDFAST

February 2019 - Number 33

www.tunnelrats.com.au

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION INC.

Join us on
our November
journey back
to Vietnam



"37 AND A WAKY AND I'M
OUT OF HERE, AND I SWEAR
TO GOD I'M NEVER COMING
BACK, NEVER, EVER!"

- We'll visit a former VC base in the mangroves near Vung Tau.
- Explore a tunnel system north of Binh Ba nobody knew existed.
- Meet with former enemy who lifted mines from our minefield.
- Honour our 36 fallen comrades with a memorial service at Nui Dat.
- Take a nostalgic walk in Vung Tau and have a beer at 'The Grand'
- Take a careful walk in the once mine-ridden Long Hai hills.
- Savour the incredible levels of comradeship these tours generate.

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

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October 2014 Number 33 www.tunnelrats.com.au
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- Explore a tunnel system north of Binh Ba nobody knew existed.
- Meet with former enemy who killed friends from our side.
- Honour our 38 fallen comrades with a memorial service at Nui Dat.
- Take a nostalgic walk in Vung Tau and have a beer at The Grand.
- Take a careful walk in the orange mine-fields and see the signs.
- Savour the incredible levels of comradeship these tours generate.

Cover photo by Mike Coleridge

Holdfast Magazine

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Shocking scenes at the Badcoe Club



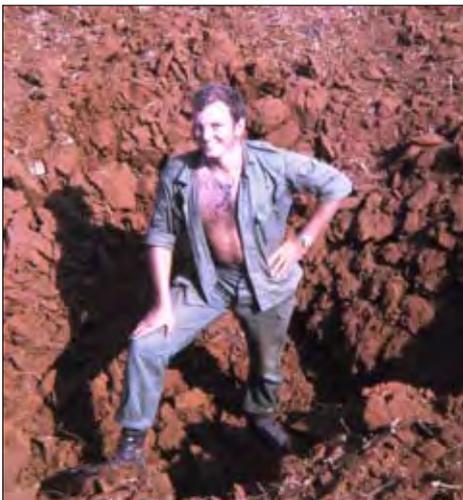
On the outdoor stage at the Badcoe Club in Vung Tau, decades before singer Janet Jackson discovered the publicity potential of a wardrobe malfunction, this Go Go dancer's top slipped just enough to give the audience a sight they hadn't expected. Strangely, nobody complained to management!

Dirty Rats



It's mid 1969 and these four bedraggled Tunnel Rats have just come back into Nui Dat base camp after a long operation out bush with 5RAR. Four to six weeks is a long time without a shower, so it's time to clean up before sinking a few cold beers at the boozier. Left to right: Rod Crane, Rick Martin, Terry O'Donnell and Jimmy Shugg. Legends, all four of them.

Fire in the hole - and Mike Dutton as well!



Tunnel Rats Mike Dutton and Les Shelley retrieved these mines and mortar rounds in early 1971 near Route 2 in Phuoc Tuy Province. Being good Sappers, they naturally blew them up! Mike is seen above in the crater after the explosion.

A mine clearing lesson that left you in the dark



We often felt our mine warfare training at SME was more relevant to the Second World War than to Vietnam. We also felt it was very British oriented - but we never got as weird as the above. This 1943 photo from the UK shows how British sappers were trained to defuse mines blindly so they could work in the dark. No doubt the training staff would have got up to all sorts of tricks, placing 'unusual items' into the hands of the unsuspecting Sappers!

A happy 'band of brothers' from 3 Field Troop



These six smiling Sappers look like they've just been issued with a beer ration, a leave pass and a pay rise, all at once. But we suspect they are simply damn happy to be back in Bien Hoa base camp in late 1965, safe and sound after their latest operation out bush. Left to right: Mick Lee, Jack Fairweather, John Peters, John Cotter, Meggsie Dennis and Dave Roper.

Both sides did their very best to look after their wounded



NVA field surgery unit



Australia's 3 Field Hospital Vung Tau

The last place you wanted to be during your tour in Vietnam was 3 Field Hospital in Vung Tau. But every soldier who was wounded was damn happy the place existed, along with its incredible facilities and level of care. No doubt our enemy felt the same about their own facilities, despite the obvious drawbacks of being outdoors and under constant threat of attack.

Sappers prepare for one of our biggest battles of the Vietnam War



In Bien Hoa Province in February 1968 Sappers Brian Hopkins (left) and Vic Underwood are hastily filling sandbags to ensure their protection against possible Viet Cong attacks during Operation Coburg. Brian and Vic were Tunnel Rats with 3 Troop and their preparations were well worth the effort because over the next few weeks they found themselves defending their position against the enemy's massive Tet Offensive.

Ingenious floating mines found in river inlet near Vung Tau?



Found in a shipping lane where the Saigon River meets the sea close to Vung Tau, these crude but clever explosive devices could have blown a small ship out of the water. Rubber bladders from volley balls kept the triggering device and the shrapnel element afloat. On impact, this charge would penetrate the hull of the ship and trigger the blocks of Chicom explosives suspended below. These charges would create a huge explosion, multiplied in its impact by the water pressure it generated. Allied Navy Clearance Divers were tasked with keeping these waterways safe for army, navy and merchant shipping.

“This is the end”



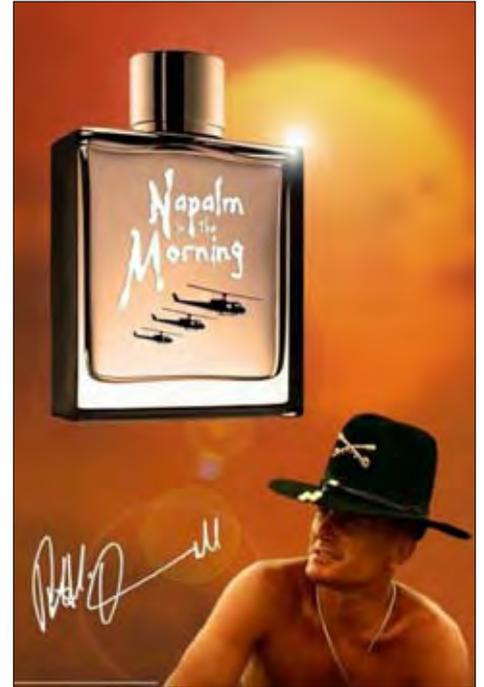
Taken on the highway between Baria and Saigon, this photo captures the fear and terror South Vietnamese troops must have experienced on 30th April 1975. The unthinkable had happened. The invasion by the communist troops from the north had reached into the southern capital, Saigon. It was all over. Knowing the reign of revenge that would result from this, thousands of ARVN soldiers discarded their army boots and socks, and anything else that could identify them as ‘fighting for the wrong side’. Sadly this didn’t save them from going into concentration camps for years of “re-education” by their new comrades from Hanoi. Many an Aussie Vietnam Veteran shed a silent tear on that day, feeling Australia and the US had let the people of South Vietnam down. Promises of support if the North invaded had been made in writing by the US - and that promise was not kept.

“If you’re not sure what it is - blow it up!”



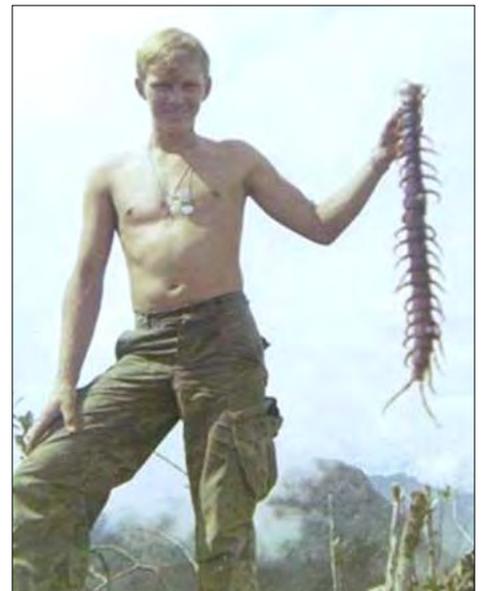
Tunnel Rat Bob Ottery (1969/70) was on operations with 7RAR when he came across this weird thing (above) sticking out of the ground. The base looked like an anti-tank mine and the crossed metal rods above it looked like an antenna. So his initial thought was it was some new type of radio controlled enemy mine, which would have been pretty revolutionary. But not actually knowing what it was he did the typical Sapper thing and blew it up. Fortunately he took a photo beforehand, and we now recognise it as a US ADSID sensor (Air-Delivered Seismic Intrusion Detector) which detected enemy troop movements and relayed them to a central point where data from thousands of sensors was analysed. Nice one Bob!

“I love the smell of...”



We haven’t been able to verify whether this product is available in Australia - or indeed whether the brand really exists. But we love the idea, and reckon it would sell like hotcakes among Vietnam Veterans. It might not pass the political correctness test though, when a woman innocently asks: “Wow, what’s that scent you’re wearing.” And your answer is: “That’s the sweet smell of ‘Napalm in the Morning.’”

WTF!



PhotoShop software wasn’t around in the sixties, so we reckon this pic of a giant centipede is the real thing. Coming across this monster while clearing a sleeping space in the bush would have you seriously considering the option of a desk job!

Beaucoup boom boom in the Long Hai hills



With the guiding aid of a parachute, an Australian Air Force Canberra Bomber dropped this 10,000 lb beast onto one of the enemy base camp areas in the Long Hai Hills. It was in 1970, several months after 8RAR's attempt to enter the VC and NVA enclave in February that year. We all knew the enemy were in there, protected by a deadly ring of mines and booby traps, and with huge caves and deep bunker systems to retreat into. The Tunnel Rats suffered many casualties in this area over the duration of the war. Despite regular B-52 raids, artillery barrages and napalm attacks, we never managed to remove the enemy from those hills. Locals in the area today joke that you can always recognise the VC and NVA Veterans who served in the Long Hai hills - they're the guys with hearing problems!

It's a dogs life at the Dat



Almost every soldier serving in Vietnam had pictures of beautiful and impossibly endowed Playboy Pets pasted up in their tents at Nui Dat. But, some guys actually had real pets, like monkeys, snakes, ducks or even everyday things, like dogs. The two Tunnel Rats above, Noddy Norris and Mike Weston are outside their tent grooming their new-found puppies, probably purchased in a drunken moment at Vung Tau market while on leave for a few days. It wasn't such a good idea because we were usually only in camp for short periods at a time before heading out on a four to six week operation. By the time you got back the puppy had found a new owner or gone bush himself.

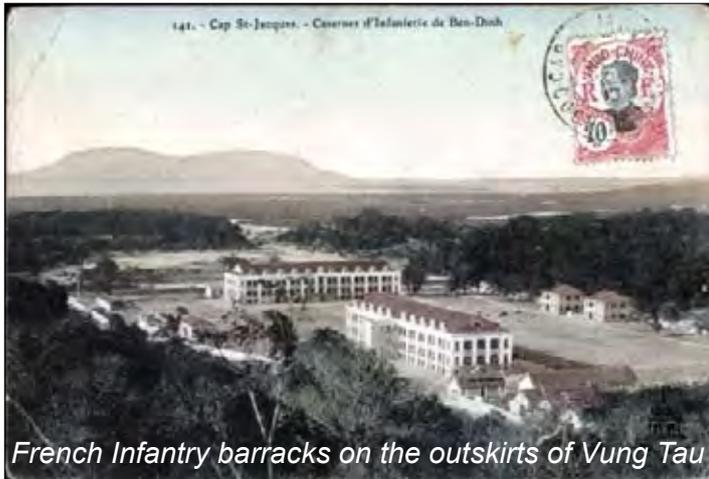
A short-lived message of thanks



Few Aussies who served in Vietnam would have ever seen this memorial in Baria, built by the locals in thanks for the contribution of Australian troops to their safety and freedom. Written in English and in Vietnamese, it was conceived by a local committee and erected shortly before the last Australian troops left Vietnam. When Saigon fell and the communist troops moved in to every city, town and village in South Vietnam they 'cleansed' them of 'objectionable' things like this memorial and dozens of remembrance memorials erected to honour the sacrifice of South Vietnamese soldiers.

For over a century Vung Tau was a prized posting for French troops

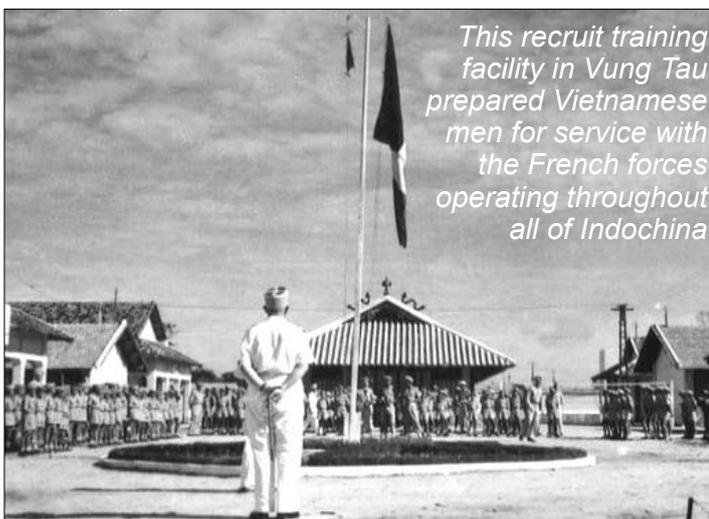
Long before Aussie troops arrived to bring class and style to Vung Tau, the French forces had a strong presence in the place for over 100 years up to their defeat and withdrawal in July 1954. Around ten years later Australian diggers started moving in, quickly discovering the delights of a town that had been entertaining troops for decades. It's fair to say the French deserve our heartfelt thanks for a few key features of Vung Tau - the good food, the charming colonial era buildings, the tree-shaded boulevards, and the legendary skills of the bar girls and massage girls. Viva la France!



French Infantry barracks on the outskirts of Vung Tau



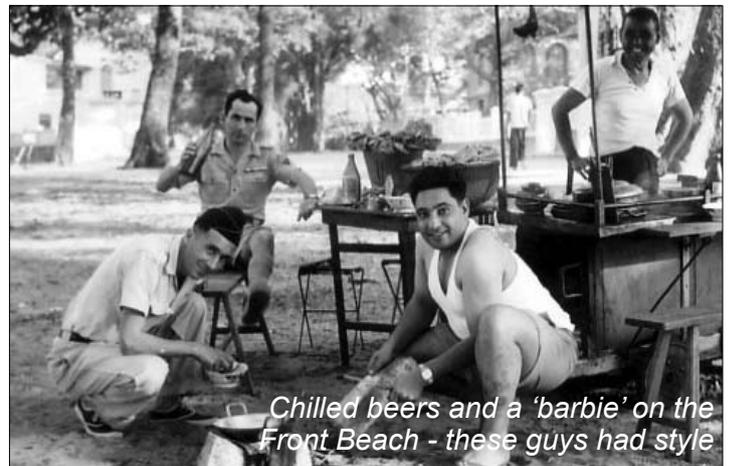
The French military cemetery was still there during our time but was desecrated by the communists after 1975 and is now a greyhound racing track



This recruit training facility in Vung Tau prepared Vietnamese men for service with the French forces operating throughout all of Indochina



It looks like inspections were pretty slack in the OR's barracks



Chilled beers and a 'barbie' on the Front Beach - these guys had style



The SOS Restaurant facing the beach was a favourite spot for French Army officers



Jacque and Pierre savour a little vino and fresh seafood before enjoying a well-earned siesta

OUR NEXT TUNNEL RATS TOUR BACK TO VIETNAM

Lots of new activities plus all the old favourites and the same incredible levels of comradeship. Plus, amazingly, we've been able to dramatically cut costs, making it even better value for us all.

"37 AND A WAKEY AND I'M OUT OF HERE, AND I SWEAR TO GOD I'M NEVER COMING BACK, NEVER, EVER!"



10 days
9 nights
\$1080^{PP}
Twin share

IT'S A UNIQUE TOUR PACKED WITH INCREDIBLE ACTIVITIES

Focused on Tunnel Rats, our tour will visit key operational areas. For the first time we'll visit a restored VC base camp in the mangrove swamps of the Rung Sat Secret Zone. And incredibly we'll visit a tunnel system none of us knew about, north of Binh Ba, and used by the NVA in the Battle of Binh Ba. We'll meet several former enemy who lifted mines from the barrier minefield, and visit mine incident sites with the Tunnel Rats involved in those incidents. We'll hold a service for our 36 fallen comrades at the memorial rock which still sits in our 1 Field Squadron area at Nui Dat - followed by a BBQ. Plus we visit the barrier minefield and the enemy caves in the Long Hai hills. And you'll get the chance to do a nostalgic tour of Vungers, visiting The Flags area, the old Badcoe Club area and the Grand Hotel where you can have a beer, just for old time's sake.

The trip is for ten days and nine nights in Vietnam, (two nights in Saigon, then five nights in Vung Tau followed by two more nights in Saigon). If you wish to stay extra nights in Saigon before the tour, we can extend your booking at the same low rate we negotiated at the hotel.

Getting there: Rather than adding to the costs and travel time by forcing everyone to depart from one city in Australia, each person will book and pay for their own return air ticket to Saigon, enabling them to find the



best air ticket deal from their city. The plan is for us all to meet in Saigon on Monday 4th November and from there the Tour begins.

The first event is on the 4th November – welcome drinks

and dinner at a nearby Sports Bar where we can buy food and drinks at incredibly low local prices. Book your air travel carefully to ensure you arrive in Saigon in time to get to the hotel, check-in and make it to the 6pm function. If the airline you choose arrives too late, book your flight to arrive the day prior and we'll book an extra night in the hotel for you.

Shop around for the best airfare. There are plenty of airlines flying into Saigon, so don't grab the first airfare you find. Direct, non-stop flights take less

time and there is no danger of missing a connecting flight, but it may be cheaper to fly on a non-direct flight via another city. There are regular flights out of Australia to Saigon via Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok or Brunei.

The return date for leaving Saigon to head home is 13 November. If you wish to stay extra nights in Saigon after the tour, let us know and we'll extend your booking at the same low rate we have negotiated at the hotel.

Current serving Combat Engineers (male and female) are again most welcome to join the tour, and several are already coming. Apart from this, it's a blokes only tour, with the Tunnel Rats welcome to have their sons and mates along on the trip to share the extraordinary experience.

When we return to our hotel each day there's always the opportunity to enjoy drinks together at the 'Designated Boozer' before people go their own way for the evening. The comradeship of these drink sessions are an absolute highlight of the tour.

The cost of the tour is detailed in the panel opposite. We've been able to cut \$400 off the tour cost, making it even better value than ever before.

HOW WE CUT THE COSTS

1: We changed hotels in Saigon, so on a Twin Share basis we save \$40 per night or \$160 per person over the four nights we're there.

2: We saved \$150 per person more by cutting out the Welcome and Farewell set price dinners (\$75 each dinner) at a flash hotel. Instead we'll go to a Sports Bar buying our food and drinks, at low local prices.

3: Our tour company in Vietnam also negotiated savings in several other areas.

The total of these savings enabled us to bring the price down from \$1,480 on the last tour, to just \$1,080 on this tour, saving us \$400 each.



NEW: We visit an enemy tunnel system north of Binh Ba none of us knew existed



NEW: We tour through a restored VC base camp in the mangrove swamps between Vung Tau and Saigon

TOTAL COST FOR THE TOUR

The full cost for the 10 day, 9 night tour is \$1,080 per person if you are sharing a room (twin share). If you prefer a room on your own, the extra cost is \$400 to cover the hotel room costs for the nine nights. We'd appreciate receiving your booking and deposit payment ASAP so we can lock down all the rooms and tours. If for any reason you need to pull out later, you'll receive a full refund.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Each guest will be met at the airport and transported to the hotel.
- Four nights in The Huong Sen hotel Saigon including buffet breakfast.
- Five nights in The Muong Thanh Hotel Vung Tau including buffet breakfast.
- Ferry tickets Saigon to Vung Tau and return to Saigon via Rung Sat zone.
- BBQ lunch at Nui Dat.

- All specified land tours.
- All permits to visit restricted zones.
- Entry to all scheduled tour venues.
- All wreaths for our ceremonies.
- All bus hire costs and driver costs.
- Cost of tour guides and interpreters.
- 2 tour shirts embroidered with your name and the Tunnel Rats tour logo.
- Each guest will be picked up at the hotel and transported to the airport at the end of the tour.

All other activities, meals and drinks will be at our own cost. The following items are optional, but you may want to plan your finances for them:

- Our dinner with the NVA musicians, around \$25.
- Donation to buy milk and rice for the orphanage, around \$12 each.
- Combined tip for the tour organiser, tour guides, bus driver etc: \$25
- Lunch on the Cu Chi tour, around \$5.

Our itinerary at a glance

DAY 1 - MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER

Australia to Saigon: People will be arriving at the airport at different times throughout the day. Every guest on the tour is met at the airport by our travel company and transferred to our hotel. After check-in you are free to roam, but be back in time for the 1800h start of our Welcome drinks and dinner gathering in a nearby Sports bar where we can order our own food and drinks at incredibly low local prices.

DAY 2 - TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER (Optional)

Cu Chi Tunnels tour: Our bus departs at 0900h to the Cu Chi Tunnels where we'll have a guided tour just for our group. You'll also have the chance to fire AK47, M60 and M16 Armalite weapons at their rifle range (cost US\$2 per bullet). We have lunch in a riverside restaurant, then head back to Saigon, where the rest of the afternoon and the evening are free. **Note: You can opt out of this tour if you prefer to have a free day in Saigon or want to book a separate tour or activity for the day. Mr. Ha our tour organiser has many options available.**

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER

Saigon to Vung Tau by ferry: A 0900h departure by bus to the Ferry Terminal on the Saigon River. The bus will continue on to Vung Tau with our luggage. On arrival in Vung Tau we will check in to the Muong Thanh Hotel, then have a briefing on our planned activities for the next five days. You then have the rest of the afternoon and the evening free for you to check out the town, including our nearby Designated Boozer.

DAY 4 – THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER

The orphanage at Baria, the Kim Long underground tunnel and the Binh Gia VC Memorial Cemetery: We depart by bus at 0900h to visit the orphanage where we donate rice and milk products for the children. The orphanage has been supported by Australian veterans for many years. We then visit the Kim Long underground tunnel north of Binh Ba, which none of us knew existed and was used by the NVA during the Battle of Binh Ba. We also visit a memorial cemetery for the NVA and VC killed in the area, before heading back to Vung Tau where the rest of the afternoon and evening is free.

DAY 5 – FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER

Long Tan and Nui Dat: A 0900h bus departure to Long Tan Cross memorial where we'll place a wreath in remembrance of all Australians killed in the Vietnam War. We'll then tour our old base camp at Nui Dat, including Luscombe Field and our old Troop Lines. We'll hold a memorial service for our fallen Tunnel Rat comrades at the site of our former Squadron HQ at Nui Dat. This will be followed by a traditional Troop BBQ amongst the rubber trees.

DAY 6 – SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER (Optional)

The Long Hai Hills, mine incident sites and meeting with former enemy mine lifters: Our bus departs at

0900h for the Long Hai Mountains, which was the VC's big base camp known as the "Minh Dam Secret Zone". We will walk the hills, look into the caves and visit their beautiful memorial temple to the fallen NVA and VC in the area. We then visit several mine incident sites where men involved in the incidents will talk of what took place. Then it's time to head back to the hotel in Vung Tau. **Note: You can opt out of this tour if you prefer to have a free day in Vung Tau or want to book a separate tour or activity for the day. Mr. Ha our tour organiser has many options available.** Once the tour group is back at the hotel we will meet with former VC involved in lifting mines from our Barrier minefield. The rest of the afternoon is free, then in the evening (1800h) we will enjoy a music concert performed for us by former NVA and VC veterans, followed by a dinner, with the musicians as our guests.

DAY 7 – SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER

Vung Tau free day: You'll have plenty of time to relax, explore Vung Tau, laze by the hotel pool, go shopping, walk along the beach, go for a nostalgic bar crawl with your mates, or simply stroll the streets and soak up the atmosphere. If there is a particular place out in the Province you wish to visit on this day, speak with our tour organiser Mr. Ha so he can arrange it for you.

DAY 8 - MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER

Ferry to Saigon via Can Gio and the former VC base in the Rung Sat zone: Our bus departs the hotel at 0900h to the ferry terminal for a 1000h ferry to Can Gio, while our bus takes our luggage to our hotel in Saigon. In Can Gio we tour through a restored VC camp in the mangrove swamp and meet with former VC there. We then return to the ferry terminal for the journey back to Saigon to check in to our hotel. The rest of the afternoon and evening are free.

DAY 9 - TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER (Optional)

Subterranean Saigon tour plus Saigon Highlights tour: 0900 bus departure for the 'Subterranean Saigon' tour visiting VC bunkers and tunnels under homes and shops. Used by the VC for weapons storage, print shops and hideouts, these venues are now preserved as historic sites. We return to the hotel in time for lunch. After lunch those who wish to can enjoy the Saigon Highlights tour visiting key attractions of the city. **Note: You can opt out of either or both of these tours if you prefer to have a free day in Saigon or want to book a separate tour or activity for the day. Mr. Ha our tour organiser has many options available.** At 1800h we have our Farewell drinks and dinner gathering in a nearby Sports bar where we can order our own food and drinks at incredibly low local prices.

DAY 10 - WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER

Time to head home: Time to head home: For those leaving today, pack, check out and be in the lobby at the time advised by our travel company for pickup and transport to the airport. Some of us will stay on for an extra day or so to chill out.

We have options now for you to tailor your own activities

We have quite a few regulars on our tours, including some who have been on all six tours so far. Others on our tours may have already visited Vietnam several times independently with family. We realise there is probably a limit on how many times you can visit the Cu Chi Tunnels or Long Hai Hills etc, when Vietnam has so much to offer.

Now, if you wish, you can opt out of any day's activities (except our remembrance service at Nui Dat) and arrange your own tour or activity.

Our tour operator in Vietnam (Asia Travel Service), has many options, including cooking classes, walking tours, fishing trips, a game of golf, day trips to the Mekong Delta, market tours, foodie experiences, exotic temple tours and much more.

Or you may prefer to enjoy a free day in Saigon or Vung Tau to wander the streets, eat some great food and visit some of the top bars for a cold beer or sip of wine. The choice is yours.

Once you have booked your Tunnel Rats Tour, we can put you in touch with Mr. Ha of Asia Travel Service to arrange any personal tours or activities before you arrive in Vietnam, or you can wait till you arrive in-country and have a chat with Mr. Ha.



Arrange a day of golf at Vung Tau



Visit the stunning Cao Dai Cathedral in Tay Ninh



Take a fishing charter and catch whoppers in Vietnam waters



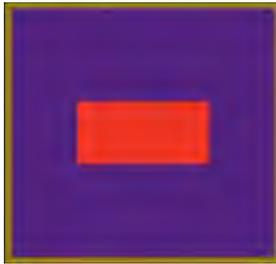
Or simply walk the streets of Vung Tau, stopping every now and then to enjoy a cold beer and the sea view



Learn how to bargain like a professional on a tour through Saigon's biggest market

Some people love our tours so much they sponsor others to come as well

1CER Sapper sponsored on the Tunnel Rats tour



Based in Darwin, 1 Combat Engineer Regiment (1CER) is home to our old unit in Vietnam, 1 Field Squadron. Each year 1CER holds a Combat Engineer skills competition, known as 'The Bowtell Prize'. The sapper who wins this contest is being sponsored to come on the Tunnel Rats tour in November this year. The sponsorship covers the cost of the tour plus the return airfare, Darwin/Saigon. The sponsor (who chooses to remain anonymous), was on our last tour and was inspired to make this great gesture for a lucky young Sapper. We look forward to welcoming the Sapper onto our tour and sharing our experiences.

Two SOER soldiers sponsored on the tour



Two Special Operations Engineer Regiment soldiers have been sponsored to join us on the tour. We can't publish their names or photos, but you can be assured we're going to enjoy the company of these extraordinary Sappers. We might just share a beer or two with them as well! Again, we look forward to mutually sharing our sapper related combat experiences.



Scottish conspiracy sees our Piper being sponsored on the tour

Alastair MacLeod was a Troop Commander in Vietnam (17 Construction SQN 1969/70) and was on our tour back to Vietnam in March last year. Alastair (right) and fellow Scot, Ross Brewer (left) our official Piper are pictured above in the rubber at the old 1FD SQN HQ at Nui Dat. Alastair was so impressed with how Ross's piping enhanced our ceremonies, and so equally impressed with Ross's demeanor and unique sense of humour, he has sponsored Ross to be on our tour in November. This is greatly appreciated by the Tunnel Rats Association, and will be likewise appreciated by all those who will enjoy Ross's company and piping on our tour in November.

Young Combat Engineers invited to join us on the tour

Current serving Sappers (male and female of all ranks) are invited and very welcome to join our tour - as long as they currently serve, or have served in a Combat Engineer unit.

On the tour they will get an understanding of how we operated in terms of combat engineer tasks, particularly when attached to Infantry and Armoured units.

They'll gain an insight into the casualties we suffered, and why, plus how we coped with it. They'll see first-hand the similarities between our tasks in Vietnam and theirs today, and how much better trained and equipped they are than we were.

Plus there will be the unique experience of melding together the incredible comradeship the old and the young Sappers enjoy as a result of our service. And of course it's a real treat



for us old Sappers to be around these brave and bright young soldiers. If you're a serving Sapper and you wish to join us on the tour, simply fill in the form and pay the deposit.

If you are a serving Sapper and have any questions about the tour, contact Jim Marett on: 0403 041 962 or by email on: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com

Just a few of the highlights you can expect on the tour



Beer at \$1 a stubby

In Saigon and in Vung Tau we nominate a designated boozier where we can gather after each day of touring. The humour, the conversations and the comradeship at these sessions are pure gold - and you can buy a stubby of beer for just US\$1 each.



Ceremony at The Rock

The original ceremonial rock that was in front of 1FD SQN HQ at Nui Dat is still there. We hold a remembrance ceremony at that rock for our 36 Tunnel Rat comrades killed in action in Vietnam.



Concert by former NVA & VC

We enjoy a concert performed for us by former NVA and VC soldiers. Several of them worked as entertainers in the field during the war, moving dangerously around the province to link up with their comrades. After the concert we join them for a great dinner, and a few beers.



We visit a restored VC base in the Rung Sat mangroves

Aussie Infantry together with Tunnel Rats entered these perilous swamps several times, but we never found their main base camp. Now we will visit it via a ferry ride from Vung Tau. Bring your mozzie repellent!



Saigon's underground secrets

We'll visit former enemy underground bunkers, storerooms and hideouts right in the heart of Saigon. These played key roles in the 1968 Tet offensive and are now considered historic sites.



Historic Long Tan Cross

We visit the Long Tan Cross, situated at the very site where the Battle of Long Tan took place. We hold a ceremony there in remembrance not only of those who fell at the battle, but all Australian soldiers who lost their lives in the Vietnam War.



Unknown tunnel system located north of Binh Ba

We visit these tunnels we didn't know existed during the war. They were built by local VC during the conflict with the French and were used by the NVA during the Battle of Binh Ba in June 1969.



Nui Dat BBQ

Following our ceremony at The Rock we hold a fully catered sit-down 'Troop BBQ' amongst the rubber trees. And you can tour our old troop lines after lunch.



Our Piper

Our Chief Piper of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association, Ross Brewer will be on the tour again, greatly enhancing our ceremonies and gatherings, and our Scotch whisky consumption.



You'll be met on arrival

Our travel company staff will pick you up from the airport and transport you to the hotel.

Perfect central Saigon location and great value for us

The Huong Sen Hotel Saigon

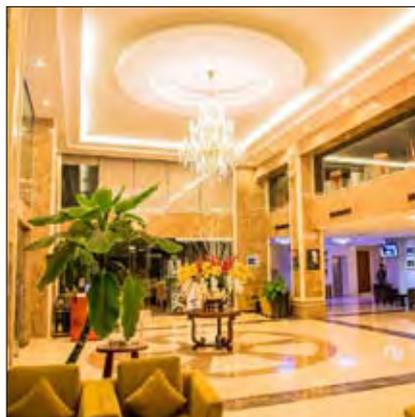
Our first two nights and last two nights of the tour are at the Huong Sen Hotel. It's in a great location, right on Dong Khoi Street in the heart of Saigon. There are lots of shops and restaurants nearby and plenty of taxis available out front. The hotel represents great value and provides a superb buffet breakfast which is included in our tour price. Conveniently, our now famous 'Designated Boozer' is just around the corner from the hotel.



Our hotel in Vung Tau is right in the heart of everything

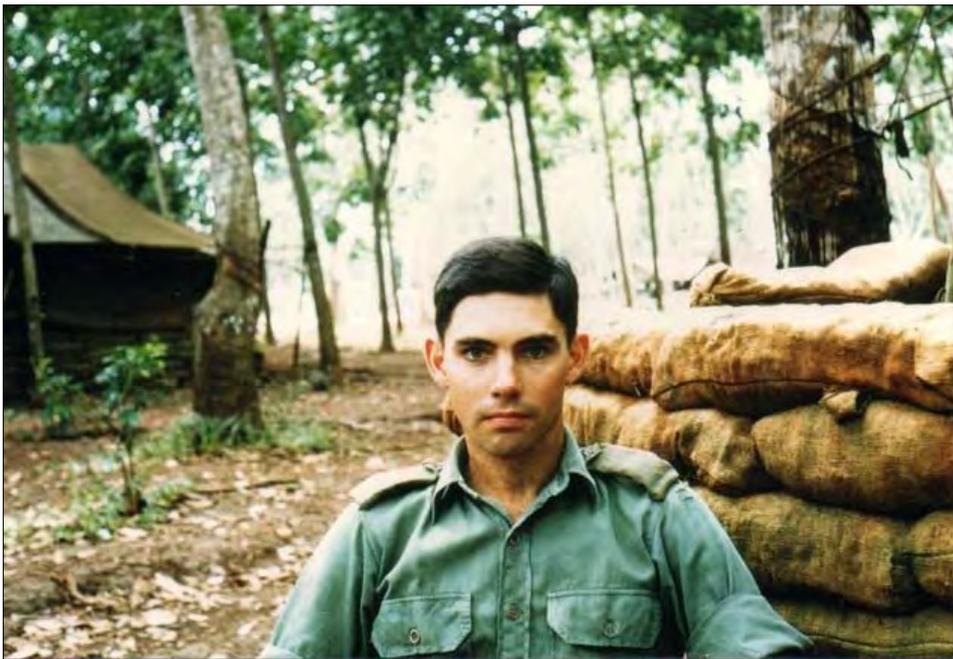
Muong Thanh Hotel Vung Tau

We'll be staying in the perfectly located Muong Thanh Hotel in the Front Beach area of Vung Tau. It's a great base for our tours to the old operational areas of Phuoc Tuy Province. The hotel is next to the famous Grand Hotel, and is close to popular bars and restaurants and just up the road from our 'Designated Boozer'. It has a pool and an excellent buffet breakfast which is included in the tour. For those with more money than sense, there is a casino nearby as well.



“The real gems were our section commanders”

Brigadier David Buring AM, (Retired) recalls his time as Troop Commander of 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron in Vietnam 1966-67



ABOVE: David Buring as a young Captain, in the 2 Troop lines area at Nui Dat. “I am still appalled at how inexperienced I was.”

2 Troop was part of the 1st Field Squadron of the Royal Australian Engineers. Our predecessors overseas were when 1 Fd Sqn sent its 2 Troop to Malaya in November 1963, and they came home from Borneo in November 1965. We were created to relieve the 3rd Field Troop RAE, who had gone to Vietnam late in September 1965. I had hardly joined the squadron in mid-1966 when they all packed up and went to Vietnam. We were then given three months to put together a brand-new troop and take it to a strange type of war. While the 3rd Field Troop was the first formed engineer element to go to Vietnam, we were really the last. After us, sapper rotations were on an individual basis, although our own immediate successors were nearly a complete group.

So what about some of our people? Although I was the troop commander and had done a lot of training, I am still appalled at how inexperienced I was. (Australian soldiers have always had some good descriptions for people like that, which I was fortunate not to hear). Going on through our team, things got better. Phil Wailes had a few years in sapper units under his belt, and Stan Shepherd and Bob Francis were really very experienced senior NCO's. But the real gems were our section commanders. With Graeme Leach, Charlie Rendalls, Dick Beck and Brian Cribbs, we had the first three placegetters from a sergeants' qualifying course as well as an experienced instructor from the

School of Military Engineering.

I have always felt that such a group was a godsend for a young troop commander, and it was certainly a strong basis for the other 60 or so who joined us. The talent certainly didn't stop there either but that is a longer story. As a group we had a fair spread of age, and if I remember rightly we were about half-and-half national service and regular soldiers - plenty of talent and plenty of characters.

Why we were there

I would just like to offer a couple of comments on this, given that there has been so much said and written. In country, I believe we could see quite quickly that there was a VC and NVA gun at the local people's heads. Our job was to help remove it, and I still will not accept that it was wrong to try.

I am also inclined towards the more recent big-picture argument that the economic success of the rest of South-East Asia would have been quite different if Vietnam had become a united commu-

nist power in 1955 or 1965 instead of 1975.

I think we were fortunate that most of the heavy anti-Vietnam noise did not really build up until after we came home and the 1968 Tet offensive was turned into a big issue, even though it was defeated. The only other comment I would offer is an answer to those who are inclined to criticise Vietnam veterans for their concerns and their problems. Vietnam service qualifies as the only overseas conflict involving Australian forces where the atmosphere of opposition at home was so high. Sure, there were arguments about conscription in both world wars, but what those times did not have was major disagreement about being in it. And for subsequent military deployments, I do not think opposition at home has occurred again since to anywhere near the same degree. That situation must have its after-effects.

What we did

There is a year's worth of effort involved here, so I'll just pick out a few personal impres-

sions. One description would be that we were combat engineers one week, and city council workers the next. We moved back and forth from mine warfare, demolitions, booby trap clearance and jungle bashing to carpentry, plumbing, building and plant work, just to mention a few of our tasks.

On the operations side I recall episodes such as sitting eating some lunch on the track up the Nui Thi Vai hills while a fire fight went on further up the hill. So long as the noise sounded like being in the butts at the range, that is over your head, it was OK.

Another time we were called to a rather nasty mine incident on Operation Remark. As we went to get into the chopper, the pilot decided he could not take us all. My instant decision was to leave the radio operator behind, as we would be joining a group who had communications. We had a pretty busy time helping the mini team who had been sitting very fortunately on the second APC. The incident was messy, but was somewhat upstaged when the squadron OC called me to the infantry radio to say what he thought of the decision about my radio operator.

The end of that operation provided my closest call. We had been tasked to clear up the unexploded ordnance around the area of the battalion HQ and fire support base - after they had left, mind you. Two or three of us went around the area putting charges on some projectiles we found. We were a little perplexed to pick them up again afterward, undented. Then it dawned on us that they were solid shot, for armour piercing.

We then found the main problem, an unexploded 500 pound bomb just behind a hedge with its tail sticking out of the ground, and certainly not to be left for Charlie. We had

next to no explosives left because of the earlier attempts, just a couple of unexploded mortar bombs and some of those quarter pound TNT blocks used to boost the long-range artillery propellants. The area was also flat and open, without much real shelter, but we found a shallow ditch beside a track about 50 metres away. We piled our scraps on the tail of the bomb, initiated the fuse, and retired to the ditch. There was a bang, but not quite so loud as I had expected. We waited ten minutes (the only part of the exercise which was nearly by the book). With some trepidation we then went up and looked over the hedge, to see the bomb looking like

a partly peeled banana, with its main filling quietly burning. We left. Two years later I was taught bomb disposal in the UK, and what we had achieved was a perfect low-order demolition. The high-order alternative does not bear thinking about, and goes to show that there is always a bit of luck in our game.

And of course, there was our work on laying the minefield. 1 Troop started the work, going south from Route 23. When they took a break, 2 Troop started at Route 23 and did the section from there to the Horseshoe. Then 1 Troop went on to the south until the task was called off. The fence went all the way to the coast.



TOP: Early days in 2 Troop lines. Concrete paths would eventually make navigation a little easier during the wet season. ABOVE: The Sappers had to perform the incredibly difficult and dangerous task of laying the M-16 mine, sitting on top of an M-26 grenade fitted with an anti-lift device. Multiple safety pins had to be removed in the process.

My own experience of that effort was our one and only fatal incident. I watched over our fellows starting their laying, to set up the echelon arrangement for safety. That took some time, and then I went back to the preparation area. Unfortunately, the last two sappers to start (Greg Brady and John O'Hara) died laying their fourth mine. The NCOs had done a magnificent job in steadying everyone and marking the boundaries of the mines already laid. When I arrived beside their bodies, a Vietnamese man called me to the fence on the north side of Route 23. He handed me the arm of one of my sappers to put with his remains. I had to walk through armed mines twice to do that. If the Vietnamese man involved had really been an enemy, he could well have thrown that limb into the armed mines!

Back in the base camp we usually reverted to our city council role while the infantry had a stand-down.

We took over running the quarry, and improved on our predecessors' method of lighting the fuse with a cigarette and dancing around to duck the falling rocks. We nevertheless had some close calls later on with helicopters and tip trucks. When a helicopter arrived while the fuse was burning, we changed to electrical initiation. At least the truck cut the firing cable as it drove into the quarry from a dead-end approach with no sentry. Making strong concrete from the quarry's crumbly, unsieved rock was also quite a challenge, with sand coming from the Vung Tau beach and the cement from Korea. Our solution was actually to leave out the sand, and use it for curing the set concrete.

The Nui Dat base progressed a long way during our time, gaining roads which could withstand the wet season, reticulated electricity, decent hot



Sapper Greg Brady



Sapper John O'Hara



TOP: 2782812 Sapper Gregory Vincent Brady, (left) and 2782779 Sapper John Laurence O'Hara (right) both of 2 Troop 1 Field Squadron were both killed in action on 20th May 1967 while laying mines in the Barrier minefield. ABOVE: September 1967 and it's time for 2 Troop to head home. From left: Ray Jacques, Harry Le Busque, Graeme Leach, with back to camera (each from 2 Troop), and Errol "Jacky" Lovegrove from 1 Troop. Taken at Luscombe airfield Nui Dat.

water systems for the showers, and plenty else. Once when we were working on power poles, we used a beehive charge to speed up the digging. We were a bit too close to the ASCO canteen stock yard, and managed to ventilate a few pallets of beer and goffers.

Another time we were building a dozen or so storehouses for the Ordnance Field Park. We tried out a 1967 version of an enterprise agree-

ment: the troop could knock off if they achieved a set number of sheds in the day. The target was reached at about 1400 hours! At about 1515 the squadron OC did his rounds, so another few hours of work were done that day.

We came home in September 1967, and we did other things for 30 years before our first reunion in 1996, and they have continued every two years since then.

March with the Tunnel Rats on ANZAC Day

Tunnel Rats in Adelaide to march under their own banner for the first time

RSL South Australia has granted permission for the Tunnel Rats to march under their own banner in Adelaide on ANZAC Day. The permission was negotiated by John Hoskin who served as a Tunnel Rat with 3 Troop in 1967/68.

John has acquired an impressive banner and communicated with as many of the Tunnel Rats he could find in SA, so they are ready to roll for ANZAC Day this year. All Tunnel Rats from SA or any state are welcome to join them for the march and the after-march gathering, which will be at the aptly named 'The Bunker' sports bar and grill at 21 pulteney Street Adelaide.

If you intend to be at The Bunker after the march, please advise John Hoskin so he can let them know approximate num-



ABOVE: Some of the Adelaide Tunnel Rats, proudly testing out their new banner (from left to right): John Hoskin 3 troop 67/68, Kevin Simper 3 troop 68/69, Don Shields 3 troop 68/69, John Douglas 2 troop 67/68, Peter Clayton 2 troop 1968, John Peters 3 field troop 65/66.

bers. Call John on 0417886100 or email to hosko@esc.net.au.

Details of the march-off location and time will be published

in newspapers closer to the date or you can contact John Hoskin as he expects to have these details sooner.

Or march with the Rats in Melbourne, voted the most liveable city in the world



In Melbourne the Tunnel Rats have been marching under their own banner since 2004. Key contact there is Jim Marett (2 Troop 1969-70). An early march-off time is expected again this year. The after-

march gathering will again be at the Prince Alfred pub in Port Melbourne. Contact Jim for details or if you have any questions: Mobile; 0403 041 962 or email Jim on: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com

Or head to Perth and step out with the sandgropers



The Tunnel Rats in Perth have been marching under their own banner since 2007. Key contact there is Peter MacDonald (3 Troop 1967-68). Contact Peter for details on where and when to meet up, plus where to gather after the march for a quiet ale or two. Peter's mobile number is 0419 090 273 or email him on: petermac@tubal.com.au

Painting a brighter picture - art as therapy

Those aware of the details of Dave Sturmer's Vietnam service would all agree he is a Tunnel Rat of that era whose courage went unrecognised, as did that of many other Sappers. This lack of recognition was a by-product of the unique way we operated. Working in teams of two, with nobody above the rank of Corporal in those teams, there was no senior Engineer Corps NCO or officer present to witness acts of courage and respond by recommending suitable recognition. The Infantry and Armour officers present could, and did occasionally recognise the courage of combat engineers, but government imposed quota systems created a bias where the few medals and awards available went 'naturally' to members of their own Corps.

Dave Sturmer's tour of duty in Vietnam was both dramatic and traumatic. He had been conscripted into military service as a part of the Australian Regular Army (National Service Supplement) and, after training at the School of Military Engineering, fate and circumstance found him posted as a combat engineer, with the rank of Sapper, to 1 Troop, 1st Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers, based at Nui Dat.

Dave arrived in Vietnam on 2 April 1969. A little over two months later he experienced an introduction to combat at a level few others did during the entire war. Attached to tanks in early June in support of 5RAR, he was at the Battle of Binh Ba where urban house to house fighting saw 107 enemy forces killed.

The following month however would become even more memorable for Dave. Most people remember exactly where they were on 21st July 1969, the day the Americans landed on the moon. For Dave that moon landing day became indelibly etched into his memory, not only for the



ABOVE: 'Reflecting' by Dave Sturmer

moon landing, but also for a brutal reminder the strategic folly of the barrier minefield laid by the Australian Army in Phouc Tuy Province in 1967. Our enemy lifted thousands of mines from that minefield and used them against us, to devastating effect. On the day of the moon landing, Dave found himself amongst the horror of one of those mine incidents.

Earlier in July Dave had checked the operations board in the 1 Troop orderly room to find he was to go 'out bush' again, outside of the barbed wire fence defining the perimeter of the Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat. He was to be the No 2

of a two-man Splinter Team attached to the 6RAR Infantry on Operation Mundingburra. His experienced No 1 was to be his Section Corporal and fellow conscript Phil Baxter, by this time an old hand in the role of Tunnel Rat in Vietnam.

Their job was to lead the infantry through the enemy's minefields and make safe any mines they found, most of which had been lifted from the barrier minefield by the Viet Cong. The old adage; Follow the Sapper rang as true in Vietnam as it had in previous wars. The whole of Phouc Tuy province had in effect become one whole low-density

minefield, so the skills of the 1 Field Squadron Tunnel Rats were in high demand, and they suffered massive casualties in carrying out their role. During the eight months of Dave Sturmer's tour for example (from 2 April 1969 until his second wounding sent him home on 15 December 1969), the Tunnel Rats of 1 Field Squadron suffered 43 casualties. These 43 casualties comprised eight killed in action and 35 wounded in action, and were spread across the three Troops of Tunnel Rats within the Squadron, 1, 2 and 3 Troop. Each of those Troops comprised around 40 men, making a total of 120 Tunnel Rats. So those 43 men killed and wounded represented a casualty rate over that eight month period of 35% - more than one in three of those brave Sappers were being killed or wounded during their tour of duty on their operations out bush with Infantry and Armour.

What took place on 21st July 1969 was a classic example of a landmine incident, and about what to do, and what not to do in response. The incident also demonstrated the training, capability and value of the Engineer Splinter Team system as a vital part of combat teams or battle groups.

On the day that 'mankind kicked the moon', Phil Baxter and Dave Sturmer were attached to 3 Platoon of 6RAR/NZ. They were patrolling through the 'Light Green' area near the deserted village of Hoi My. It was a hot, humid morning, and the soldiers of 3 Platoon knew they were approaching a suspected enemy mined area.

"The platoon commander, Lieutenant Peter Hines had been told the Yanks had landed on the Moon and he was passing the word around," recalls Dave. "We were told this as I swept the track with the mine detector."

LT Hines began to deploy his platoon into a harbour position to break for a brew. He turned



TOP: Mark Donaldson VC (left), and Dave Sturmer at the unveiling of Dave's Painting 'Silent Guardians' – a tribute to Australian war dogs. ABOVE: Dave Sturmer in 1969 at Nui Dat base camp during his service in Vietnam

back down the track, stepping off the cleared track and over Sturmer's gear, triggering an M16 Mine, about two metres from the track. Sapper Sturmer was scanning the track with a mine detector at that instant, and recalls the immediate aftermath: "The explosion instantly created mass devastation, leaving 19 men wounded in a maze of blood and torn flesh. Hines was virtually cut in half by the mine. Even with both legs gone he continued to calmly give orders and encouragement to the wounded, but he died just as I reached him."

Both Dave Sturmer and

Phil Baxter were among those wounded by the mine. They checked and treated each others wounds quickly, knowing they both had serious work to do.

"Phil was in poor shape," recalls Dave. "But despite suffering considerable pain and shock, he took control of the clearing operation, along with an Infantry Corporal, John Needs who was issuing instructions for everyone to resort to their Mine Drill procedures. At this point Phil Baxter radioed for a larger Engineer Combat Team to assist them due to their wounds and to the huge task in front of them. Phil and



ABOVE (left): Singer Brett Hunt, the son of Frank Hunt who served with 6RAR/NZ Vietnam 1969/70) - by Dave Sturmer. (Right) Rolling Stones member Keith Richards - by Dave Sturmer

Dave then began to clear and mark safe lanes to each of the injured soldiers while reassuring them help was on the way.

Phil, together with two infantry scouts, Mick Storen and Tony Muir, then cleared a landing zone for helicopters to bring in the reinforcements and take out the wounded, including himself and Sturmer.

On board one of those choppers was the 6RAR Battalion Commander, LT COL David Butler and the Battalion Doctor, Captain Robert Anderson.

Sadly, in moving about to tend to the rest of the wounded, Captain Andersen stepped on another M-16 mine. This mine killed one more Infantryman (Corporal John Needs, whose outstanding bravery and professionalism had been so vital in the earlier mine incident), and wounding six others including the Battalion Commander, and of course the Doctor. Also among the newly wounded were two of the Tunnel Rats who had just landed, Sappers John Fleming and Bill Wilcox.

For his actions on this day, Corporal Phil Baxter was

awarded the Military Medal and it was well deserved. Sapper Dave Sturmer received a simple 'job well done' from his leaders, and eternal respect from his Sapper comrades.

Dave's second wounding

When not attached to Infantry, the 1 Field Squadron Tunnel Rats would mostly be attached as Mini Teams' to Armour, either the 1 Armoured Regiment tanks or 3 Cavalry Regiment APCs. Their task was primarily seeking out enemy mines, and again they proved their worth, locating many enemy anti-vehicle mines, but the price was high in terms of casualties within their ranks.

By December 1969 Dave Sturmer had been promoted to Corporal and was commanding a mini team, with Sapper John Greene as his No 2. On 8th December Dave and John were riding as usual on the leading APC when it struck an anti-tank mine which lifted the vehicle sideways, detonating a second anti-tank mine laid nearby. SPR John

Greene was killed instantly along with the APC driver, Trooper Vivian French. Dave Sturmer and the Crew Commander Roger Locke were wounded. An RAAF rescue chopper piloted by Peter Bradford also detonated a third mine, disabling the chopper.

Dave Sturmer was wounded so badly he had to be medically evacuated back home to Australia. John Greene's mother was particularly devastated by her son's death and wanted nothing to do with any commemoration of his service and sacrifice. Dave says he wishes he could have talked to her to try to provide some comfort and reassurance that John was valued by his Sapper mates and will always be remembered.

To hear Dave talk about his war experiences online, simply Google "Dave Sturmer PTSD" and look for the "Stay in the loop with Lucy" link.

Combat Engineers today

It is interesting that Sappers of recent and current con-

flicts in the Middle East also operate in small teams, now called 'bricks', as part of combined arms combat forces. Today the enemy's weapon of choice is the improvised explosive device (IED), often detonated remotely by phone or other electronic means. So the skills of Combat Engineers are still crucial and still in high demand.

Dave's return to painting

Before his service in Vietnam, Dave had studied art at the Julian Ashton art school at The Rocks in Sydney. He says that today his art is therapy for his PTSD.

"There are many forms of art that you can add to your toolbox to help fight against issues that you might have," says Dave. "Art, including learning how to draw or paint can help you develop patience and discipline. Art has certainly helped me and I'd like art to help others, especially war veterans".

One of Dave's breathtaking original artworks is 'Silent Guardians', dedicated to the courageous four-legged diggers, the war dogs who have served throughout Australia's military history. Dave spent 18 months working on what is an amazing tribute to our forgotten heroes of war and said the painting had helped him work through some of the issues he faced as a result of his military service in Vietnam.

"It allowed me to understand patience, I was an angry old man," says Dave. "Anxiety was a problem, drinking was a problem, depression was a problem. And it was art that brought me back to the surface and helped me manage my issues. If it wasn't for my painting, my life would be very different."

'Silent Guardians' depicts six combat assault dogs and explosive detection dogs that were all sadly killed in action, including 'Devil', the dog which worked so closely with Victoria Cross recipient, Corporal Mark Donaldson.

Gold Coast local, Peter



Dr Newman Harris, Psychiatrist - Dave Sturmer's entry in the 2016 Archibald Prize Competition

Hayes purchased the original artwork, and the funds raised are used to support the Australian Defence Force Trackers and War Dogs Association (ADFTWDA). He and the Association sought to have the artwork displayed publicly as a fitting tribute to all war dogs, and Maroochy RSL willingly accepted the painting and has placed it on public display.

The painting was officially unveiled by Corporal Mark Donaldson VC who described what each of these animals did for our country. "What they did and what they gave was always unconditional. We understand what can happen but for the four legged soldiers it is unconditional, they do it because they love us, and it's really hard to put into words."

The bond that he and other soldiers shared with the dogs was something he will always cherish. "You'll give them a pat, sneak them some food and it takes you back home and reminds you why you are doing it; there is no price you can put on that" he said.

"They are one of the team and when they are injured or killed it hurts just as much if not more. They did it for us and

should be remembered for their unconditional commitment."

Dave was approached by George Hulse from ADFTWDA who asked him to paint a piece to assist in fundraising. "It scared me; I hadn't picked up a brush for 35 years but I couldn't let them down, I couldn't let my military family down, so I took it on," he said. "As I hadn't painted for a long while, I really had to sit back and think about how I was going to do it, and mapped it out. I got to know the dogs, feel their personality and love them."

"The hardest part was I never knew when to finish, every night I'd wash my brushes have one more look and then finally the last stroke. A friend had come over for a beer; he looked at the painting and said I can feel his fur. I thought that's it, it's done!"

Dave's other amazing work

Besides his particular interest in military subjects, Dave also paints on a diverse range of other topics. You can view his work on: www.davesturmer.com

With extracts from the Australian War Memorial's official history 'Fighting to the Finish' by Ekins and O'Neill.

Last Post Ceremony will commemorate our fallen comrades



The Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association has reserved the Australian War Memorial Last Post Ceremony for 18 February next year. We will use this occasion to honour our 36 comrades who lost their lives while serving as Tunnel Rats with 1 Troop, 2 Troop and 3 Troop of 1 Field Squadron (35 KIA) and with 3 Field Troop (1 KIA). Mark 18 February 2020 in your diary now as we aim to make this an important and memorable national commemoration of our fallen.

Our wives, sons and daughters are all welcome to the ceremony and our gathering afterwards. If you are in contact with family members of our fallen comrades, let them know of this occasion, and how honoured we would be if they attended.

The first Last Post Ceremony was held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 17 April 2013, and is now held at the Memorial each day at 4.55 pm. Each ceremony is presented as a tribute to one of the 102,700 Australians named on the Roll of Honour. It is a testament to the terrible cost of war that it will take nearly 300 years to commemorate every person on the Roll of Honour, and the Memorial is committed to ensuring that each story will eventually be told.

As the tradition is set that each ceremony is a tribute to one individual, we needed technically to follow that tradition, but (being Engineers) bend it a little to suit our needs. So we chose that in-

dividual from our 36 fallen comrades then wrote a commemorative script which talks of him and honours him, along with our 35 other fallen comrades. Individual wreaths will be laid at the ceremony for each of these 36 Tunnel Rats – some, we hope, by their family members.

The ceremony begins with the Australian national anthem followed by the piper's lament. Visitors are then invited to lay wreaths and floral tributes beside the Pool of Reflection. The individual's story is told, which in our case also covers the story of the Tunnel Rats and of all of the men we lost. The Ode is then recited by an Australian Defence Force member, and the ceremony ends with the sounding of the Last Post. After the ceremony we will meet up at a suitable venue for drinks and dinner.

How we chose the name

Circumstance actually helped us narrow down this task. There are few dates available,

with most of them already allocated to an individual. One of the few available dates was 18 February 2020. The Battle of Fire Support Base Andersen took place on February 18 (1968) and on that terrible night we had four of our Tunnel Rat comrades killed in action. One of those four killed was Sapper Allan Pattison, and the Tunnel Rats Association has had regular contact with Allan's family over the years. They have been very active in honouring Allan's memory in their local area, so we made contact again and they were thrilled at the opportunity and available for that date next year.

Full details of when we meet up at the Australian War Memorial for the ceremony and the venue for our drinks and dinner following the ceremony will be in the next issue of Holdfast. Meantime, clear your diary for 18th February 2020 and start contacting your troop mates about meeting up in Canberra.

Fifty years on from FSB Andersen we have not forgotten them

Colonel John Kemp AM, Officer Commanding 1st Field Squadron Group RAE, South Vietnam 1967-68 laid a wreath on behalf of us all at the Australian War Memorial Canberra on 18th February last year.

This was exactly 50 years after the Battle of Fire Support Base Andersen in 1968 when four Tunnel Rats from 3 Troop, 1 Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers were killed in action, together with two infantry soldiers from 3 RAR, one gunner from 131 Div Loc Bty and one US soldier from the United States 35th Field Artillery. The four Tunnel Rats killed in action that night were: Staff Sergeant Colin McLaughlin, Lance Corporal John Garrett, Sapper Alan Pattison, and Sapper Dave Steen.

The Australian War Memorial Last Post Ceremony for this day last year had long been allocated to honouring the death of Private Philip Wilkins, killed in action in France on 9 April 1917 while serving with the 3rd Australian Infantry Battalion during World War 1. However as this day was the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Fire Support Base Andersen in South Vietnam, approval was sought and obtained for a wreath to commemorate those who died at that battle to be laid after the Private Wilkins ceremony.

The commentator announced that Colonel John Kemp was present to lay the wreath to commemorate the soldiers who died at Fire Support Base Andersen on 18 February 1968. Our wreath was laid with due respect and solemnity in the centre of the pavement abutting the Pool of Remembrance.

"In all, we demonstrated that we had not forgotten those valuable lives that were lost on that day," said John Kemp after the ceremony.

We thank Colonel Kemp for representing us all on this day, and we thank him also for his support of the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association, support we have enjoyed and valued since the inception of our association.



TOP and ABOVE: Colonel John Kemp AM , Officer Commanding 1st Field Squadron Group RAE, South Vietnam 1967-68, at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 18th February 2018

Demining in Afghanistan

United Nations Mine Clearance Training Team (UNMCTT) 1989 to 1993

(With a little help from a former Vietnam Tunnel Rat - see top photo on opposite page)



By Marcus Fielding

We cautiously approach the area where the explosion had just occurred. Minutes earlier a thunderous crack had ruptured the peace of the morning. A thin dirty black plume of smoke and dirt curled up into a clear blue sky. We knew what had happened because the explosion hadn't been announced with the "Infegar! Infegar! Infegar!" (Explosion!) used to warn others of a planned detonation. A deminer had accidentally triggered a mine. Our task now was to determine what damage had been done.

We tread carefully down the pathway through the old Soviet minefield and locate one injured Afghan deminer. His hand is missing several fingers and his face was peppered with small cuts and grit embedded in his skin. His eyebrows and hair are singed. We stem the bleeding and evacuate him to the camp's first aid station. He was one of the lucky ones. Without a hand he will get some insurance mon-



ey and still be able to work at something other than demining. Losing a leg means a lifetime of misery. Three weeks earlier two other deminers had been killed by a trip-wired anti-tank mine. The tragic human cost of clearing landmines in Afghanistan.

Twenty years ago small groups of Australian soldiers grew beards and donned local design shalwar kameez to train Afghan civilians on how to rid their country of the scourge of land mines. We shared communal meals and learned words in Pashto and Dari. We identified potential Afghan leaders and worked hard to develop them to progressively take over the Demining Program. Senior Australian officers visiting the Australian contingents sometimes

ABOVE: MAJ (Retd) Julian Gregson (left) and (then) CAPT Marcus Fielding with one of the flail demining machines in the background.

LEFT: In February 1992, Marcus Fielding with a soldier of the Pakistan Khyber Rifles at the Khyber Pass near the Afghanistan border.

expressed shock at how 'integrated' we had become.

My opportunity to participate in the UNMCTT came in 1992. My tour of duty coincided with a major change in the way that Australians contributed to the Demining Program, but first it is worth reviewing how the mission came about.

The UNMCTT mission was a humanitarian activity mounted under the auspices of the Geneva based UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) under the codename of Operation Salaam (a salutation meaning 'peace').

The mission was initiated in anticipation of the scheduled withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in December 1989 and the expected return of sev-

eral million refugees to Afghanistan from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the subsequent fighting with the Afghan Mujahideen had resulted in several million mines and pieces of unexploded ordnance littering the country. This hazard was assessed to be a significant barrier to the repatriation of the displaced Afghan population.

In July 1989 Australia began providing Army Royal Australian Engineers, and later Royal Australian Infantry assault pioneers, on four month long tours with the UNMCTT. The UNMCTT originally consisted of contingents from nine countries. In addition to Australia, these were New Zealand, Turkey, France, Norway, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom and the USA.

Throughout the mission the Australian contingents were based in Peshawar in the harsh North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Peshawar is the city at the eastern end of the famous Khyber Pass – one of the few passageways between Afghanistan and the Indian plains. The labyrinth of alleyways in the Peshawar's old city provided a unique opportunity for a few fascinating hours of browsing and haggling. Many old British service medals and bayonets were for sale.

The original purpose of the Program was to train Pakistan-based Afghan refugees in mine and unexploded ordnance recognition and basic mine and unexploded ordnance clearance techniques. The plan was for these trained Afghans to voluntarily repatriate back to Afghanistan and undertake mine and unexploded ordnance clearance on their own initiative. The training was conducted in cooperation with Pakistan Army engineers at the Risalpur Training Camp - 40 km east of Peshawar.

Two major factors con-



TOP: An October 1989 group portrait of members of the second Australian contingent to UNMCTT. Left to right, back row: WO2 Graeme Toll, SSGT Ian Mahoney, WO2 Chris Reeves, SSGT Alan Mansell. Front row: WO1 Les Shelley (Les was a Tunnel Rat in Vietnam in 1969/70 and went on to be RSM SME), CAPT Bruce Murray, MAJ Bill van Ree, CO, CAP Andrew Smith, and WO1 Phil Palazzi. ABOVE: The then CAPT Mark O'Shannessy with a group of Afghan deminers.

tributed, however, to a major change the UN's approach to mine clearance operations in Afghanistan. The first was that the expectation that the Afghan refugees would return to Afghanistan en masse proved false - with the continuation of the fighting between the Soviet backed Afghan regime with the factious Afghan Mujahideen. The second was a realisation that the socio-economic impact of land mine contamination was simply too large and complex a problem to be left to individuals. As a consequence a decision was made that a large scale nationally coordinated ap-

proach was needed to assist the rehabilitation strategy for Afghanistan.

In November 1989 the Australian Army contingent to UNMCTT accepted responsibility for technical advice and training of Afghans in a trial of large scale and coordinated demining operations. The first organised 40 man Afghan demining teams deployed into Afghanistan in January 1990.

In another part of the Middle East, the pressures and demands of the 1990 Gulf War saw the contingents from all other countries other than Australia

and New Zealand to withdraw from the UNMCTT mission.

By 1991 it became clear that a large-scale centrally coordinated approach to mine clearance was feasible and security conditions in Afghanistan were sufficiently stable for UNOCHA to expand on the trial of an organised demining effort. This was achieved with the formation of a number of non-government organizations whose activities were coordinated through regional demining offices in Peshawar, Quetta and later Kabul – the Afghan capital.

With the formal establishment of this Demining Program, Australia extended its tours of duty from four to six months, and also began providing additional officers on 12 month long tours as Technical Advisors with the various non-government organisations involved in the Demining Program. Training for the Afghans was broadened to include the surveying, planning, conduct and supervision of mine clearance activities.

The long-term aim for the Demining Programme was for it to become completely run by Afghans with no requirement for foreign military assistance. Consequently, Afghans also became demining instructors in their own right and progressively took over the conduct of training and administration.

On 8 June 1991 the first Australian UNMCTT member – Major Graeme Membrey – was given permission by the Australian Government to cross the border into Afghanistan and monitor demining operations. Subsequently, all members of the Australian contingents regularly undertook missions into Afghanistan. In addition to supervising refresher training and doing quality control surveys of the demining operations, the Australians also undertook investigations on all demining accidents.

These important investigations served two valuable pur-



Gardez, Afghanistan in 1992, Marcus Fielding (centre) stopping for a break en route to Peshawar. Note the BTR-60 tank on the roadside.

poses. The first was to try and improve our demining procedures. The second was to satisfy the needs of the Pakistani based insurance agent with whom we had arranged for all the Afghan deminers to have insurance policies. Our investigation reports, and our assessment of the victim's negligence, made the difference between no payout and a figure that could sustain the deminer and his family for life.

The Australians too endured significant risks. While we were prevented to physically perform demining tasks ourselves, inspecting progress in Soviet minefields that had been developed over several years by bored and scared conscripts. And the civil war between the puppet Soviet regime of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the various Mujahideen factions continued to rage.

When we travelled in Afghanistan we were provided with a Mujahideen escort – usually a pick up truck with half a dozen heavily armed teenagers in the back. I distinctly recall being in Peshawar when the Mujahideen offensive finally recaptured Kabul on 25 April 1992. With several million Afghan refugees in and around Peshawar the celebrations were reminiscent of the scenes at the end of World War II. The regional tradition of shooting up in the air in celebration was marred by the news that

several people had been killed as a result of the bullets returning to earth.

By 1993, the Afghan Demining Program had achieved a high degree of momentum and the Australian Government assessed that the support from military contingents was no longer necessary.

Consequently, the last Australian contingent was withdrawn in June 1993. In all, just over 100 Australians participated in the UNMCTT between 1989 and 1993. Miraculously no Australians were injured by landmines, although we all suffered several bouts of severe diarrhoea.

The Afghan Demining Program continues to function nearly twenty years later - a testament to the skills imparted in those few short years. In that time, hundreds of thousands of mines and pieces of unexploded ordnance have been destroyed.

While the longevity of the Program is commendable, the sad part is that the Program has made only minor inroads into eliminating Afghanistan's land mine problem and hundreds of Afghans continue to be killed and injured by these insidious devices every year.

And for the last nine years the mines have also posed a significant risk to the coalition forces of the International Security Assistance Force.

SAPPER SNIPPETS

Aussies making improvised explosive devices in the Middle East - WTF!

It's 1915 in Gallipoli, Turkey, two soldiers sit beside a pile of empty tins cutting up barbed wire for jam tin bombs.

The bombs were made near the beach, at a spot popularly known as the 'bomb factory' near Anzac Cove. All the old jam tins and other suitable containers were to make bombs which were then filled with fragments of Turkish shells and enemy barbed wire which had been cut into small lengths.

The soldier on the right, working at the anvil is thought to be (regimental number) 1942 Private Harry Edward Feutrill, 11th Battalion of Kalgoorlie, WA.

An electrician prior to enlistment on 28 January 1915, Pte Feutrill landed at Gallipoli with the 5th reinforcements on 22 June. He was appointed Lance Corporal in February 1916, Cor-



poral in September that year, Sergeant in February 1917, 2nd Lieutenant in August and Lieutenant on 1 November 1918. He

then returned to Australia on the 1st of June 1919, having served with the 11th Battalion for his entire period of war service.

There's a shaky history behind the development of the mine detector

The Mine detector (Polish) Mark I was a metal detector for landmines developed during World War II by Polish lieutenant Józef Kosacki.

In the pre-war period the Polish Ministry of National Defence ordered the construction of a device that could be helpful in locating duds on artillery training grounds. The instrument was designed, but its implementation was prevented by the outbreak of the Polish Defensive War.

Following the fall of Poland and the transfer of Polish HQ to France, work restarted on the device, this time intended as a mine detector. This work was then stopped by the battle of France and the need to evacuate the Polish personnel to Great Britain.

There in late 1941 Lieut. Józef Kosacki devised a final project, based partially on the earlier designs. His discovery was not patented, instead he gifted it to the British Army, and was given an official "thank you" letter from the King for this act. His design was accepted and 500 mine detectors were immediately sent to El Alamein where they doubled the speed of the British 8th Army's advance.



British sappers using a MK1 mine detector in El Alamein, Egypt during World War II

During the war more than 100,000 of this type were produced, together with many later versions which were used during the Allied invasion of Sicily, the Allied invasion of Italy and the invasion of Normandy. These type of detectors were used by the British Army until 1995.

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 RIP Sapper

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 0408519500
 Ross Comben 08 9535 2273
 Jack Green 07 3278 8719
 Norm Hitchcock (Canada)
 1-250-2455137

Ray Kenny RIP Sapper

Harry Klopocic 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 RIP Sapper

Ivan Scully 03 9802 0977

Peter Sheehan 03 9390 2834

Carlton "CP" Smith 0448000334

Jim Trower 0418842744

1 Troop (1968-69)

Ray Bellinger 0407952670

Adrian Black 0417756729

Mike Bruggemann 0409441992

Peter Carrodus RIP Sapper

Albert Eyssens 0407875287

Ken Ford 0418669689

Max Goiser 04097117143

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 0467612342

Grahame Fletcher 0400203576

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 0419260463

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 RIP Sapper

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 0447295224

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 RIP Sapper

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 0418466859

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 0438933631

Carlton "CP" Smith 0448000334

John Tramyby 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 0487186840

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 0428492018
 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
 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 0434536435
 John Brady 02 6888 1192
 David Briggs 08 9537 6956
 Keith Burley 07 5543 0990
 Peter Cairns 0400039446
 Brian Christian 07 4778 6602
 Grahame Clark 0408533869
 Dennis Coghlan 0429938445
 "Sam" Collins 08 8262 6107
 Ron Cook 0414508686
 Jock Coultts 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 0450931112
 Tom Dodds 040672260
 Des Evans 07 4128 2390
 Bruce Fenwick 0408434529
 Ray Fulton 03 6288 1176
 Ziggy Gniot RIP Sapper
 Bob Hamblyn RIP Sapper

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 0419741239
 Gary McClintock 07 4788 0123
 Peter McCole 03 5155 9368
 Bob McGlenn 07 5426 1597
 Ian McLean 0412431297
 Jeff Maddock 0438069803
 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)
 Mick A'Hearn 0429327509
 Ken Arnold 02 6974 1181
 Dennis Baker 08 89527281
 Chuck Bonzas 0407866487
 Bruce Breddin 0418766759
 Norm Cairns 0498765425
 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 Pohlner 0427172900
 Peter Pont 07 4095 0150
 Tom Simons RIP
 Kevin Shugg 0411144500
 Mervyn Spear 0431212960
 Frank Sweeney RIP
 Brian Thomson 0428551368
 Vic Underwood 0429 907 989
 Murray Walker 08 9332 6410
 Glenn Weise 0488741174
 Mick Woodhams 08 9459 0130
 Bob Yewen 0435051475
 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 0437711348
 "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 0407505365
 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
 Greg Cullen 0427050208
 Richard Day 08 8088 4129
 Phil Devine 0439066012
 Bob Done RIP Sapper
 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 Lyall RIP Sapper
 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 RIP Sapper
 Vin Neale 03 9786 1549

Peter Phillips 0429362935
 G. Rentmeester 03 9735 5236
 Brian "BC" Scott 0400713994
 Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
 Kevin Simpler 0423524884
 Gordon Temby 0419954658
 Peter Thorp MID 02 6288 0008
 "Curly" Tuttleby 08 8953 2335
 Hank Veenhuizen 0407 487 167
 Jock Wallace 07 3882 6513
 "Wonzer" White 02 9833 0580
Three Troop (1970-71)
 Robert Allardice 0439076891
 Steve Armbrust 0407695247
 Errol Armitage 07 5598 8018
 Geoff Ansell 0434178696
 Bob Bament 02 6071 3527
 Mike Barnett 02 9869 7132
 John Beningfield 07 4778 4473
 Darryel Binns 0417170171
 Trevor Boaden 0448160944
 Mal Botfield 0434536435
 Ian Campbell 03 9870 0313
 Terry Cartlidge 0411252859
 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 0409299520
 Kevin Hodge 08 8322 2619
 John Jones 08 8357 5226
 Kenny Laughton 08 8297 4010
 Garry Lourigan 02 4844 5545
 Darcy McKenzie 0405499780
 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 0427350713
 David Wilson 0401726090
Three Troop (1971-72)
 Bradley Bauer 0749281152
 Trevor "Zip" Button 0434332789
 Ron Byron 0439910568
 Jim Dewing 0402433776
 Mike Dutton 0438627140
 Alan Gorman 0413 063 336
 John Jones 0417836538
 Brenton J Smith 0408806685
 Peter Weingott 0418870496
US Tunnel Rats
 Stephen "Shorty" Menendez
 menendez@toast.net
 John Thiel
 drjthiel@gmail.com
 Mark Morrison
 Imorrison18@cox.net

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