



HOLDFAST

May 2020 - Number 36

www.tunnelrats.com.au

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION INC.

WHAT KIND OF MADMEN WOULD INVENT AN ANTIPERSONNEL MINE THAT LEAPT OUT OF THE GROUND AND EXPLODED AT HIP HEIGHT TO MAXIMISE CASUALTIES?



Das deutsche Antipersonen Schrapnellmin 35 (S.Mi.35)

THE SURPRISING NAZI ORIGINS OF THE M-16 ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE THAT CAUSED SO MANY AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES IN THE VIETNAM WAR



HOC Message #7

Seeking Your Support

Last year, I directed we change the name of the RAE Corps Fund to the RAE Sappers' Fund. This name better represents what this fund supports – a source of income that can be utilised for the benefit of all Sappers – regardless of rank.

The RAE Sappers' Fund income is generated from fortnightly or annual subscriptions from serving (both Full-Time and Part-Time) and ex-serving members of the RAE, as well as various donations. The recommended contribution and how to subscribe is shown opposite.

There are currently 132 active subscribers; an increase from 92 at the start of 2019. I listed these members in Australian Sapper magazine and I once again thank them for their contribution.

The Sappers' Fund is used to foster our Corps spirit, not only by ensuring our past is captured, but also by making sure we continue to build our identity into the future.

The Fund exists to provide support to prizes, awards, incentives and initiatives. Ideally, this encompasses recognition of individual and team achievements, written articles, memorial and museum projects, as well as special projects requested by individual members or sub-units/units of the Royal Australian Engineers and affiliated Associations.

During the last twelve months, Unit COs/RSMs have been highlighting to all Sappers how to seek funding support

from the Corps Committee. The SO2 HOC/Corps Secretary Major Dave Spriggs recently re-released an update on Corps Policy Statements for greater transparency and understanding. The Corps also has a list of projects supported by the Fund in 2019/20, and this will be included in the end of year Australian Sapper.

I appreciate this has been a challenging year – bushfires, pandemics and a troubled economy. The Sappers' Fund not only belongs to past and present Sappers, but also to our successors. We must leave them a strong and vibrant 'Family.' This is only possible with support from individual subscribers. Your contribution, along with all the other serving and retired members of the Royal Australian Engineers making a similar commitment, is extremely important.

This ensures your Corps Committee can support the fostering of our esprit-de-corps and the unique 'Sapper identity' remains a fundamental part of Army's culture and traditions.

Ubique

JOHN CAREY, CSC

Brigadier

Chief of Staff

Headquarters Joint Operations
Command

Head of Corps,

Royal Australian Engineers



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS SAPPERS' FUND



Why subscribe?

Subscriptions to Sappers' Funds provide the income that allows us to care for our heritage and foster Esprit-de-Corps.

The Corps of Royal Australian Engineers has a collective responsibility to our predecessors and ourselves to ensure we preserve, protect and develop our heritage as well as continue to build our identity into the future.

Your contribution, along with all the other serving and retired members of the Royal Australian Engineers making a similar commitment, is extremely important. This ensures your Corps Committee can support the fostering of our esprit-de-corps and the unique 'Sapper identity' remains a fundamental part of Army's culture and traditions

What is the cost?

The annual cost of subscriptions is as follows:

- (1) ARA Officers -Sergeant: \$52 per annum (\$2 per fortnight)
- (2) ARA Corporal -Sapper: \$26 per annum (\$1 per fortnight)
- (3) ARes Officers: \$30 per annum
- (4) ARes ORs: \$20 per annum
- (5) Ex-Service Officers: \$30 per annum
- (6) Ex-Service ORs: \$20 per annum
- (7) RAE ex-service Association: Annual Donation

For further information or to request support from the Fund, contact the RAE Head of Corps Cell via email at: rae.hoc@defence.gov.au

What is the benefit?

Individuals may benefit from Sappers' Funds, either directly or indirectly. The Sappers' Fund provides financial support to:

- * Corps sporting events, teams and tours
- Corps adventure training activities
- individual and team engineer awards and prizes including Battle Field Tour
- publication of Corps and unit histories
- RAE Association Victoria heritage and history trail plaques
- establishment and upgrade of RAE 'Memorials
- purchase of wreaths for funerals and remembrance of serving members
- assistance to Army History Unit to manage historical items relevant to the RAE
- * RMC graduation prize

Individuals, groups and sub-units/units of the Royal Australian Engineers and affiliated Associations can apply for support from the fund at any time.

How do I subscribe?

Subscriptions can be made by electronic transfer / direct debit to the following account:

- Australian Military Bank BSB No:642-170
- Account Number: 100001677
- Name of Account: RAE Sappers' Funds

When making the transfer, in the 'Description on recipients statement' window, type your first and last name only (current serving members enter your PMKeys number). Tunnel Rats Association members and other Ex-service veterans pay either option 5 or 6 in the left hand column. Your name will be published in a list of subscribers in Sapper magazine to acknowledge your payment.

Nostalgia Pages



"Heppo Rolls"

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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A grim day at Long Phuoc Hai



This photo was taken shortly after the mine incident when SPR Ian Scott, a Tunnel Rat with 2TP 1FD SQN was killed in action on 14 June 1970. The APC on which Ian was riding (c/s 21A) hit a mine near Long Phuoc Hai. Wounded in the incident were: CPL Ray Piper and TPR Roy Davies, both of 3CAV, and PVT Bruce Flockhart of 7RAR. We are trying to identify the Sapper holding the mine detector (second from right) as we feel he may have been on the Mini-Team with Ian Scott. Others in the photo are (L to R): CPL Martin Cameron (7RAR), PVT Trevor Wehma (7RAR), unnamed Sapper and unknown Vietnamese Bush Scout. Can anyone help with the name of the Sapper?

"It's perfectly safe lads, just breath normally"



The Q Store at 1FD SQN in Vietnam contained some wonderous equipment useful to Tunnel Rats, but it mostly stayed there gathering dust and being counted religiously each day by the clerks. Tunnel Rat CPL Frank Brady managed to get in there one day and emerged hours later with some Rebreathing Units he assured us were ideal for searching flooded tunnels and bunkers during the wet season! A rebreather absorbs the carbon dioxide of a user's exhaled breath to permit the recycling of the substantially unused oxygen content present in each breath. From left to right are: SPR Arthur Davies, SPR Bruce Bofinger and then CPL Frank Brady, seen fitting the water-tight facemask to SPR Jim Marett. We all thought the safety aspects of it were a bit dodgy and felt the commitment of actually dipping underwater in a bunker or tunnel was a bridge too far. We much preferred our old method of dealing with flooded tunnels and bunkers, which was to forget searching them for documents and weapons, drop boxes of explosives in and let the massive water pressure created by the explosion demolish them.

French remnant of the Indochine era



These French-style road signs giving distances to various towns and cities were a common sight in Phuoc Tuy Province where Australian troops operated in Vietnam. Many of us thought they would have made a great souvenir to take home as a garden decoration, but none of us could come up with the solution to getting it home. It would have been a little bulky to try to check it in as baggage on the flight home. And even if you succeeded, the excess baggage charges would be a deal-breaker!

When evil 'troopmates' try getting you so pissed you'll miss the big flight home next day



It's party time in the 3 Troop lines. Tunnel Rat Gary Lourigan (hugging the Bacardi bottle) has finished his tour in Vietnam and is heading home next morning on an 0730h flight out of Nui Dat. His mates have gone into full-on 'urger' mode, trying to make sure he misses the flight on board the Big Silver Bird of Freedom - or at least spends the long flight with the world's worst hangover. SPR Kenny Laughton (with cigar) is offering a giant bottle of whisky, while Jock Quinn (with the VB can) is proffering a Polaroid photo of questionable morality. It's good to have friends like this!

These two toffs have been entered into our Shame File



The neatness, luxury fittings and sheer grandeur of this tent interior at Nui Dat are an absolute disgrace. Gun racks, bookshelves, their own personal broom (housed neatly in an artillery shell casing), and backpacks neatly stored on shelves (what's wrong with the floor?). These things are unheard of. Sapper tradition demands that your tent be in a constant state of turmoil, with key items barely visible under stacks of empty beer cans. And there should be at least three spoiled food items in sight, each growing their own mould culture. The Tunnel Rats responsible for this neatness breakout are SPR Bob Hewett (left) and SPR Col Cuthbert of 3TP 1FD SQN. Hopefully they were new in-country at the time of this photo and they later learned the 'Way of the Sapper'.

“It was a hairy ride crashing through the scrub”



Whenever our Centurion Tanks were deployed on operations in Vietnam two-man teams of Tunnel Rats were attached to them. In this role we were known as a ‘Mini-Team’ and carried a mine detector and flack jackets (items too heavy to carry while attached to Infantry). While being on the tanks was at times better than walking with the Infantry, sitting on top of tanks did have its own challenges, particularly when you were ‘scrub bashing’ through the jungle. In a 52 tonne tank this is a far from delicate operation. It is all about brute force and as the vehicle breaks its way through the scrub the branches, vines and associated wildlife all come crashing down onto the body of the tank where the Mini-Team are perilously perched. Experience soon taught us to arm ourselves with spray cans of insect repellent to fend off the red ants and spiders dislodged by the home invasions. Sometimes a snake would drop onto the tank as well, sending the two Sappers and the snake into blind panic, with all three wondering which way to head. No doubt in today’s modern army, work practice regulations would not allow such ludicrous situations to take place, but this was a different era and you were just expected to suck it up.

The importance of the perfect Bush Hat



The Bush Hat was an important part of a Tunnel Rat’s wardrobe. It had to be adorned with a variety of disarming pins to show that the wearer had dealt with every mine or booby trap known to man! It had to be faded by the sun and frayed at the edges to show you weren’t a ‘new guy’ who’d just arrived in country. If you lost your perfectly seasoned Bush Hat it was a matter of eternal shame to be seen in shiny brand new one, so an ‘old one’ had to be quickly recreated with bleaching, creative scissor work for the frayed look, and the installing of a complete new set of disarming pins.

A secret ‘Greenie’ exposed in our ranks

This photo shamefully reveals Tunnel Rat Mick Lee (1969/70) as an early member of the Greens. The “Save the Barrier Reef” sign on his locker is proof positive of Mick being a tree-hugging Greenie decades before the party even existed in Australia. Mick always was a bit of a trendsetter and was the first of us to wear the newly released ‘slant pocket’ shirts. When called up for National Service Mick lived in Cunungra QLD where the Jungle Training Centre was located. Stories abound of Mick often nipping home for tea and a decent shower while on the Jungle Warfare course at Canungra just prior to his Vietnam tour. It was sort of the ultimate ‘home town advantage’. Mick still lives in Canungra and suffered several close calls when the bushfires recently ripped through there.

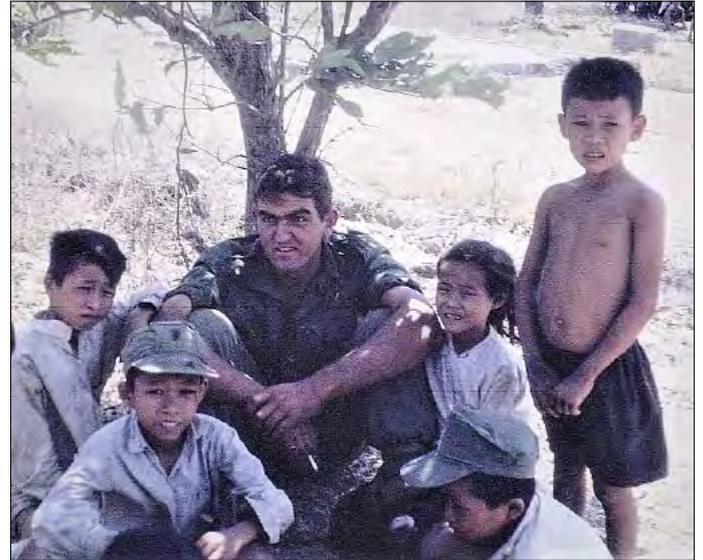


Living dangerously



No doubt these school girls were regularly warned by their parents and teachers never to walk down Vung Tau's infamous 'street of bars' - so naturally they just had to do it. They are dressed in the traditional Vietnamese ao dai which was available in many colours but students only wore the white version.

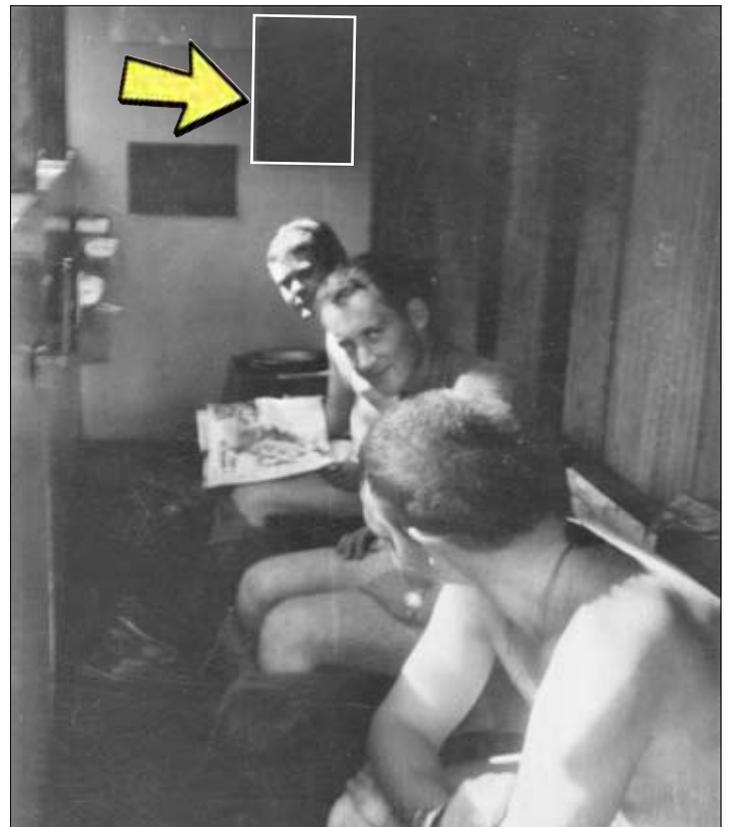
Getting to know the locals



Tunnel Rat SPR Greg Roberts (3TP 1968/69) takes a 'Smoko break' under what little shade he could find. He was soon joined by a bunch of the village kids who always hung around out of curiosity and in the hope of scoring some free food or cigarettes - and they usually succeeded!

Global search for highly important historic document

The arrow in the photo at right points to the infamous 'Drip Board' on the interior wall of 2 Troop's Dunny. It displayed the names of those in the Troop who had acquired a 'social disease' while on leave in Vung Tau. A gold star was added to a name for every subsequent infection. There were several Four Star Sappers. The names were added in permanent enamel paint for posterity and to stop individuals from making deletions or corrections. The board showed no regard to rank, and depending on your attitude, it was a shameful or a proud moment when your name was listed. It was generally agreed by the Diggers that the risk of infection was no greater than the possibility of being wounded on the next operation against the Viet Cong. This attitude had our commanders and medicos throwing their hands up in exasperation at the cavalier way the men sought out short time female company while on leave in Vung Tau. If someone could send us a clear photo of the board, we figure we can raise considerable funds by threatening to run the photo as the next cover for Holdfast. Start searching lads! In the photo, seen sitting from L to R are: Sappers Mick Van Poeteren, Marty McGrath and Bob Ottery (and we make no claim as to whether or not they appear on the Drip Board). The poetic song below was written about the board by one of 2 Troop's more creative members some years after the war. The tune and words are based loosely on Monty Python's "Medical Love Song".



THE DRIP BOARD SONG
*Inflammation of my private parts
 reminds me of her smile
 my name's been on the dripboard
 for quite a little while
 I met her in the Rani bar*

*that lovely night in June
 she said I love you beaucoup
 and I hope I get well soon*

*My penile warts, her herpes
 Those interstitial sores*

*Her moenelial infection
 How I love her more and more
 Some blokes are winning MIDs
 for skirmishes in bars
 But the only gong I'll ever get
 is VD and two stars!*

U.S. Sappers living the good life



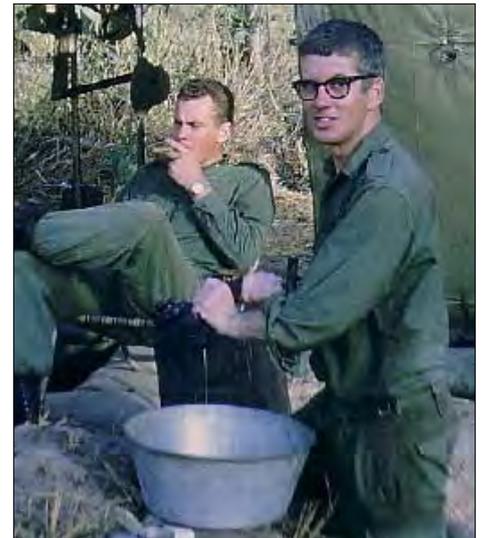
With so many Americans in Vung Tau it was common to see big bold and ostentatious US cars from the sixties and late fifties on the streets. Today they would be highly collectible and worth big bucks at auction. If only we'd had the insight (and the connections) to ship a few home and store them for sale a few decades later! We are not sure what make the blue and white car is, possibly a Buick, but there were regular sightings of more exotic models, including a pink 1959 Cadillac Eldorado Convertible - the model with the most insane fins at the rear (inset photo shows the fins on a red show car in the U.S.). Many of these car owners were American 'Sappers'. They were members of the US Corps of Engineers who had served a tour in Vietnam and returned soon after making big bucks as civilian contractors. Many were plant operators but there were others skills required too in massive road and infrastructure projects carried out and financed by the U.S. government.

Tunnel Rat wimps out and joins the SAS!

Being a country boy, Tunnel Rat Brad Hannaford always had a healthy interest in guns. His attitude was basically - the bigger the better, which is why he is looking so comfortable nestling up to the massive main gun of the Centurion Tank. Brad preferred carrying the Australian issued SLR 7.62 'Elephant Gun' rather than the U.S. issued Armalite which was much lighter and easier to lug around. According to Brad, it just didn't have the firepower of the SLR. Brad did a tour in Vietnam as a Tunnel rat in 1969/70 then joined the SAS, doing a tour in Vietnam with them in 1971. Naturally his Tunnel Rat mates ribbed him about this, letting him know they felt he had 'wimped out' in swapping from the Tunnel Rats to SAS!



"Get me out of here!"



Tunnel Rat John Nulty 3TP 1968/69 thought a few weeks at a FSB instead of walking with the Grunts would be a nice change - until the day he found himself washing up the dishes for the TP Commander, CAPT Brian Glyde as a 'special treat' on the captain's birthday. This was quite unsettling for a Tunnel Rat used to duties of a more adventurous nature. So John quickly went bush again, which was fine until three months later when John was wounded in action in a mine incident and evacuated to Australia. These days John is a regular on our Tunnel Rats tours back to Vietnam (along with his sons Matt and Tim). On those tours we visit the site of John's mine incident, where John gives a 'living history' account for us of what happened that fateful day.

The Third Reich origins of the U.S. M16 mines that caused such huge losses of life and limb among Australian troops in Vietnam



World War II German S-35
Anti-Personnel Mine



Vietnam War American M16
Anti-Personnel Mine

In early 1967 Australian Sappers were ordered to construct an 11 kilometre barrier minefield in Phuoc Tuy Province containing over 20,000 American M16 landmines. Our enemy then lifted thousands of those mines and used them against us, causing close to 50 per cent of Australia's casualties. For over four years those mines confronted us everywhere we went. A final irony is to now learn of the Nazi origins of the M16 mines that brought so much death, injury and fear into our lives.

Invented by the German Third Reich the S-mine (Schrappnellmine) was an anti-personnel mine used extensively by German forces during World War II. It became known as the "Bouncing Betty" on the Western Front and "frogmine" on the Eastern Front. It was a bounding mine which launched into the air when triggered and then detonated at about one meter from the ground spreading a lethal spray of shrapnel in all directions (sound familiar?).

The S-mine entered production in 1935 and served as a key part of the defensive strategy of the Third Reich until production ceased in 1945. Over 1.93 million S-mines were deployed, inflicting



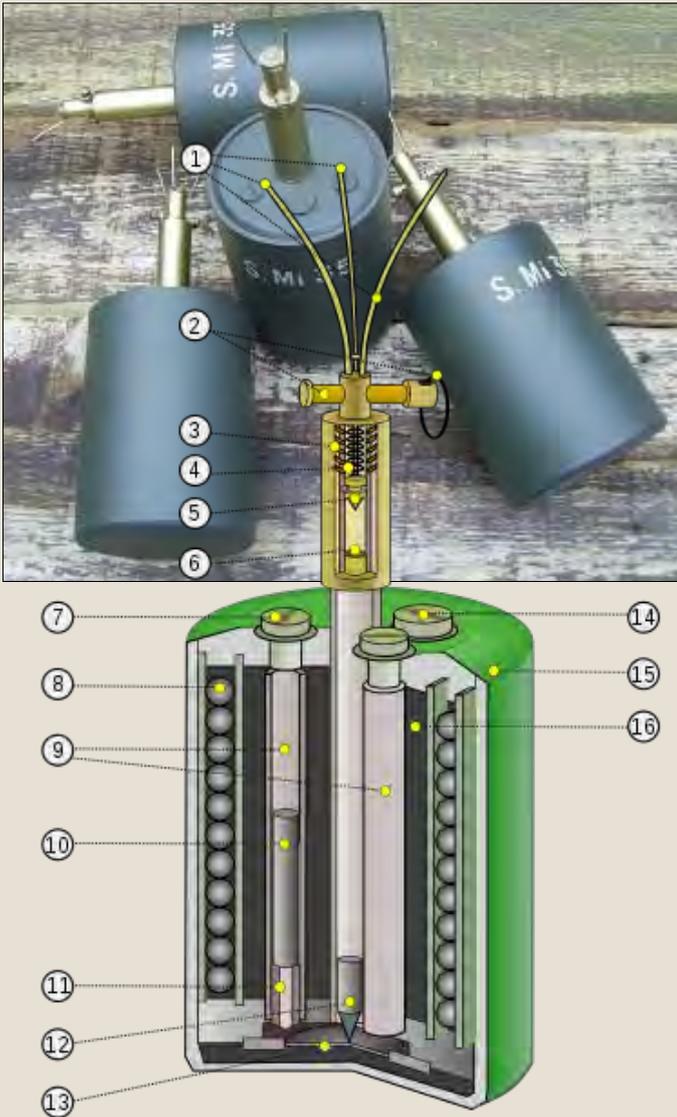
heavy casualties and slowing or even repelling drives into German-held territory throughout the war. The S-mine remains one of the definitive weapons of World War II.

French soldiers were the first to encounter the S-mine while

making minor probes into the German Saar region in September 1939. The S-mine contributed to the withdrawal of these French incursions. After their experience, the French nicknamed the mine "the silent soldier".

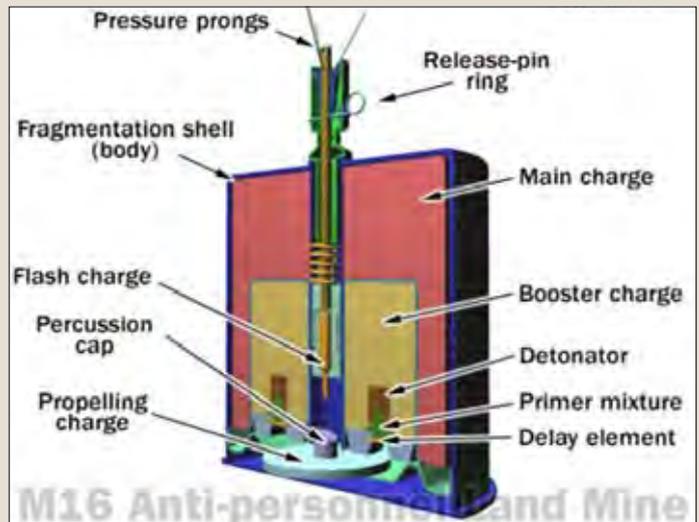
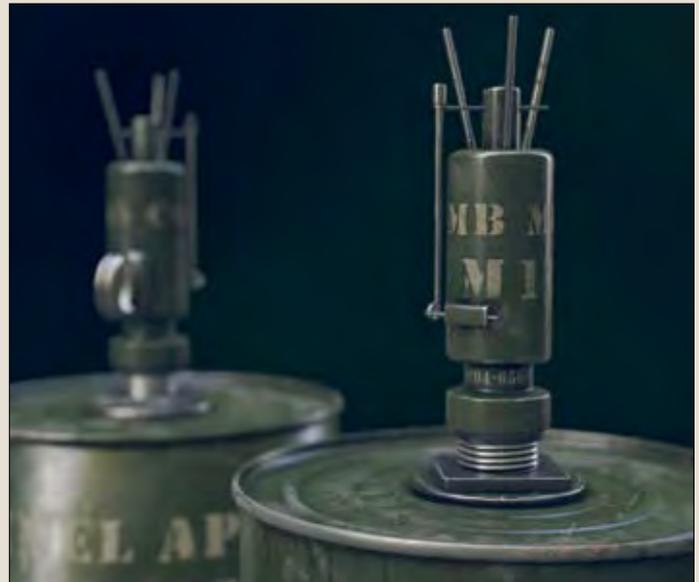
The Third Reich used the S-mine heavily during the defence of its occupied territories and the German homeland during the Allied invasions of Europe and North Africa. S-mines were deployed on the beaches of Normandy in preparation for the anticipated invasion as part of a general program of heavy mining and fortification. On the Îles-St.-Marcouf, just off Utah Beach, where the Allied planners feared the Ger-

Characteristics of the German S-Mine



The characteristics of the German S-mine reveal how closely they were copied when the Americans created the M16 mine. The S-Mine was a steel cylinder 15cm tall without its sensor and 10cm in diameter. A steel rod protruding from the top held the main fuze, where its sensor was attached. Its main explosive charge was TNT and its propelling charge was black powder. The pressure sensor used a percussion cap to ignite it. The main fuze was designed to delay the firing of the propelling charge for approximately four seconds after the mine was triggered. The explosion of the propelling charge sent the mine upwards into the air and activated three short-delay pellets between the propellant charge and the three detonators. This delayed the mine's detonation long enough for it to reach hip height before exploding. The pressure sensor was designed to activate if depressed by a weight of roughly 7 kilograms or greater. The time between triggering and ignition of the propelling charge varied between 3.9 and 4.5 seconds, depending on the age and condition of the mine. According to German documentation, the S-mine had an expected casualty radius of 20 meters.

Evolution of the US version - the M16



During the allied occupation of Germany the United States 'captured' the plans for the manufacture of the S-Mine. In 1957 they created the M16 mine based on those captured plans. The U.S. M16 anti-personnel mine consists of a cast iron body in a thin steel sleeve. A central fuze on the top of the mine is fitted with a pronged M605 pressure fuze. Sufficient pressure on the prongs causes the release of a striker. The freed striker is forced into a percussion cap which ignites a short pyrotechnic delay. As with the German S-Mine, the purpose of this delay is to allow the victim to move off the top of the mine rather than stopping its upward movement, to a height where it will cause maximum casualties. Once the delay has burned through, a 4.5-gram black powder charge is ignited, which launches the inner iron body of the mine up into the air (leaving behind the steel outer sleeve). This charge also ignites a second pair of pyrotechnic delays. The mine rises to around hip height before one or both of the pyrotechnic delays detonates the main charge of the mine, which sprays high-velocity steel fragments 360° creating an expected casualty radius of 30 meters.

A troopmate and a mystery friend meet in the pursuit of honouring Sapper Jock Quinn



Jock's pewter mug and the refurbished marble slab

A few years ago Ben Beningfield wrote a hilarious and fascinating piece for Holdfast magazine about his troop mate Jock Quinn. Ben's intrepid efforts to remember and honour his mate, combined with a string of incredible coincidences which have taken place since then, have led to another great tale encompassing these two classic Sappers.



216932 Patrick David Quinn - "He was an officer's bloody nightmare"

Back in our Viet Nam days Jock Quinn was a well-known character in our Corps. I first met him in Nui Dat in 1967 when he was in 1 Troop and I was in 2 Troop. Our paths crossed again in March 1970 when we were both posted back to Nui Dat, this time the pair of us ended up in 3 Troop. (We were both put on a charge on our first morning there, but that, as they say, is another story.) Jock returned to Scotland in the late '70's where he passed

away at the tender age of 53.

During our Tunnel Rat campaign to hand over the newly instituted Army Combat Badge to the next of kin of our departed mates, I headed off to Scotland in 2016 and managed to trace Jock's family in Glasgow. I was also taken by his family to visit his

grave. As far as Jock's NOK was concerned, it turned out to be his elder sister Cathie who lived in the sunny climes of Bondi. Subsequently a group of us old sappers visited her at her unit in Bondi and presented her with the ACB.

In April 2017 a notice appeared in the DVA newspaper enquiring about Jock's whereabouts. The notice had been inserted by a lady who knew Jock from his time in Brisbane. They met up when Jock returned from his second tour to Viet Nam and they became firm friends. Her name was Toni but when Jock was posted to Townsville in 1972 they lost touch. Jock was a notorious non-letter writer. It turned out that Toni had in her possession the pewter mug that was presented to him when he left 3 Troop and she wanted it to go to his family. I contacted her and the mug was duly forwarded to Cathie. I didn't know it at the time but my path

and Toni's would cross again.

It was some time later while my old mate Fred Lourigan and I were discussing Jock's grave in Glasgow. Fred and I felt that Jock was deserving of some official marker on his grave and so I embarked on the bureaucratic train to get an official cast bronze plaque for Jock. The subject of the wording to go on the plaque was raised.

Fred's suggestion was, "He was an officer's bloody nightmare". That may well have been true but we decided on something a little less confronting.

The Office of War Graves people were very helpful. They do not provide these plaques, but private citizens can have them manufactured at their own expense. However official permission must be obtained from OWG to have the "Rising Sun" badge included on the plaque. I got the official "OK" then set about finding a foundry near Townsville who could do the job. I finally located a supplier on the northern outskirts of Townsville and spoke to him on the phone describing what I wanted.

"I want a plaque for an old tunnel rat mate by the name of Jock Quinn", I said. "And what's your name mate?" I asked. "Barry Quinn", he replied. This was pretty eerie, but then he said, "My next-door neighbour is an old Viet Nam tunnel rat. His name's Gary McClintock". I knew 'Macca' from both Viet Nam and 18 Field Squadron. "Yeah" continued Barry. "We have a beer together every afternoon. In fact, he should be over here shortly."

Anyway, the plaque was duly manufactured and in late May 2019 I set off to Glasgow again. Of course, it was raining in Scotland when I got there. It always is. But I met up with Jock's nephew Jim and niece Ann and headed off to the stone mason at the cemetery to arrange mounting of the plaque. After finalising all the details, Ann, Jim and I made our way to Jock's grave to say "G'day". When we got



ABOVE: Jock and Ben out bush: In the foreground (from left to right): SPR Brian Wakefield, SPR Darryel Binns (with hat), SPR Jock Quinn (in front with shirt open), and CPL "Ben" Beningfield (with mine detector), all of 3 TP 1FD SQN. They had just finished clearing safe lanes to 14 casualties from a mine incident on Operation Massey Harris in August 1970. BELOW: At the gravesite, Jock's niece Ann and nephew Jim from Glasgow.



there, we discovered that someone else had been there and left their own personal tribute to him. There was a lovely little memorial in white marble with Jock's photo and some tunnel rat memorabilia from a lady named Toni. Ann and Jim were totally unaware of this but were moved to think that their

"Uncle Pat" was remembered so fondly all these years after his passing. They would loved to have met Toni but that wasn't be.

The plaque was mounted before I left the UK and I had time to get back to Glasgow to get a few photos. Incredibly, the sun came out when we got



there. Quite ironic, the sun rising over the "Rising Sun". We then headed back to Jock's favourite pub where we drank his health many times and had Ann and Jim laughing over many "Jock" stories. And Jock left many stories behind him. When I got back to Australia, I felt that I had to write down Jock's story and part of Jock's story is a lady called Toni, so I had to track her down again. We eventually made contact and Toni told me her story.

Toni's story

Toni took Jock's pewter to Sydney and visited Cathie a few times while she was there. They both agreed that Toni should keep the pewter and take it to Scotland with her on her next trip and perhaps drink a toast from it should she manage to trace any of Jock's mates. Toni flew into Glasgow on the 18th of July 2018 and spent five nights there. On the first day she caught the train out to the cemetery and visited Jocks' grave. A marble slab with Jock's name had been installed there when Jock was buried in 1993, but twenty-five years of the Glaswegian environment had left its mark on the marble and was now green and almost illegible, so Toni decided to clean it.

She returned the next day armed with cleaning gear, turps, bottles of water (no taps at the cemetery) cleaning cloths etc and when it was spotless, she left it there to dry. The next day she was back again, this time

with a tin of black paint, turps and brushes. And there she sat by Jock's grave with the marble slab on her knees, trying to paint the carved words through the tears that were streaming down her face. An elderly couple pulled up in a car and began tending a nearby grave. The man came over and started a conversation with Toni and she told him her story about Jock and showed him a photo of Jock and one of "The Spotted Elk", one of Jocks' mates from his time in the Australian Army. They chatted for a while and eventually the man and woman left, waving good-bye as Toni continued her restoration work.

The next day was Toni's last day in Glasgow so when she arrived at the cemetery for her last visit, she drank a toast from the pewter, left a poppy for Jock and some remaining poppies that she had with her, in a bottle at the grave of the elderly couple she had befriended. She also left her email address and a note with some money asking them if they would get a poppy for Jock on Remembrance Day. The man answered her email (his name is John and his wife's name is Rose) and he and his wife have kept in touch ever since. They spent the money Toni left them on the little poppy plaque beside the grave. Toni sends them a poppy each year for Jock.

Toni's story got me thinking

ABOVE (L to R): Ben at his mate Jock's gravesite; Jock's 'mystery' Brisbane friend Toni who left a personal tribute to Jock at his Glasgow gravesite; The poppy plaque John and Rose bought with the money Toni left for them.

about the special bonds of friendship formed during times of war and how our sapper mateship means so much to us. But when I saw Toni's tribute to Jock and listened to her story, it struck me that Jock meant something special to someone else, someone outside his own family and our special Sapper family. That he mattered, that someone unknown to his family and sapper mates cared about him. And I got to thinking that there must be other "Jocks" out there who seem to have been forgotten but who still must mean something to someone. Someone cares about them. I feel that it's up to us to make sure that those "other Jocks" aren't forgotten. That we care about them. That the "Tonis" of this world care about them.

Let us make certain that "we will remember them".

By John "Ben" Beningfield

Ben served two tours in Vietnam as a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron - the first in 1967/68 with 2 Troop and the second in 1970/71 with 3 Troop

Start negotiating your leave pass, our next tour back to Vietnam is going to be another ripper



Again we will honour our 36 fallen comrades with a remembrance ceremony at the memorial rock which still sits in our 1 Field Squadron HQ area at Nui Dat

The tour is still on for early March next year, but we're holding off taking bookings until we get the all clear for safe travel to Vietnam

Focused on Tunnel Rats, our tour will visit key areas where we operated. We will 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 will 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. We visit the recently discovered and 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 Nui Dat, and used by the NVA in the Battle of Binh Ba. 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 will be 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 or after the tour, we can extend your booking at the same low rate we negotiate at the hotel.

Getting there: Don't book your air travel yet in case we don't get approval from government for safe travel to Vietnam in time for the planned early March 2021 tour dates (it's near impossible to get a full refund from many air-



"Meet you at The Flags"

lines). We expect to know about lifting of international travel restrictions in time to confirm this trip in the next issue of Holdfast (September issue 2020). At that time we will also announce the

costs. We don't expect any price rises other than those forced on us if the Aussie dollar remains low. The cost of our last tour was \$1080 per person on a twin share basis.

When it is time to book your air travel, 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 will be for us all to meet in Saigon on a spe-

TUNNEL RATS TOUR BACK TO VIETNAM - EARLY MARCH 2021

cific date in early March and from there the Tour begins.

The first event is on the specified day everyone is asked to arrive in Saigon – this is our welcome drinks and dinner in a function room in our Saigon hotel.

What's included in the cost

- Each guest will be met at the airport and transported to the hotel.
- Four nights in The Bong Sen hotel Saigon including buffet breakfast.
- Five nights in our hotel in 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 scheduled tour venues.
- All wreaths for our ceremonies.
- All bus hire 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 \$15 each.
- Combined tip for the tour organiser, tour guides, bus driver etc: \$25 each

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.

A summary of our proposed schedule



Day 1 Australia to Saigon: Guests arriving at the airport at different times throughout the day will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel. Welcome drinks and dinner gathering in the hotel function room that evening. Each evening our tour the Designated Boozer is open till late.

Day 2 Cu Chi Tunnels tour (Optional): A guided tour just for our group, and you'll have the opportunity to fire AK47, M60 and M16 Armalite weapons at their rifle range (cost US\$2 per bullet). We head back to Saigon in time for a late lunch. Afternoon and evening free.

Day 3 Saigon to Vung Tau by ferry: After we check in to our hotel we have a briefing on our planned activities for the next five days. The rest of the afternoon and the evening is free for you to check out the town.

Day 4 Baria orphanage, the Kim Long tunnel and the Binh Gia VC Cemetery: Then in the evening we will enjoy a music concert performed

by former NVA and VC veterans, followed by a dinner, with the musicians as our guests.

Day 5 Long Tan and Nui Dat: After visiting Long Tan we tour our old base camp at Nui Dat, then hold a memorial service for our fallen Tunnel Rat comrades at the site of our former Squadron HQ, followed by a catered BBQ amongst the rubber trees.

Day 6 (optional) Long Hai Hills, mine incident sites and meeting with former enemy mine lifters: We visit the VC's base camp and old caves plus enter their memorial to local fallen NVA and VC. We then visit several mine incident sites where men involved in those incidents talk of what took place. On arrival back at our hotel we meet with former VC involved in lifting mines from our Barrier minefield.

Day 7 Vung Tau free day: You'll have plenty of time to relax, explore Vung Tau, go shopping, walk along the beach or go for a nostalgic bar crawl with your mates.

Day 8 Ferry to Saigon via Can Gio and the former VC base in the Rung Sat zone: In Can Gio we tour a restored VC camp in the mangrove swamp and meet with former VC there. We then return to Saigon by ferry to check in to our hotel. The rest of the afternoon and evening are free.

Day 9 Subterranean Saigon plus Saigon Highlights tour (Optional): Visit VC bunkers and tunnels under homes and shops used by the VC during the war. Plus visits to key attractions of the city. In the evening we have our Farewell drinks and dinner gathering in the hotel function room.

Day 10 Time to head home: Those leaving today will be picked up and transported to the airport. Some of us will stay on for an extra day or so to chill out.

TUNNEL RATS TOUR BACK TO VIETNAM - EARLY MARCH 2021

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



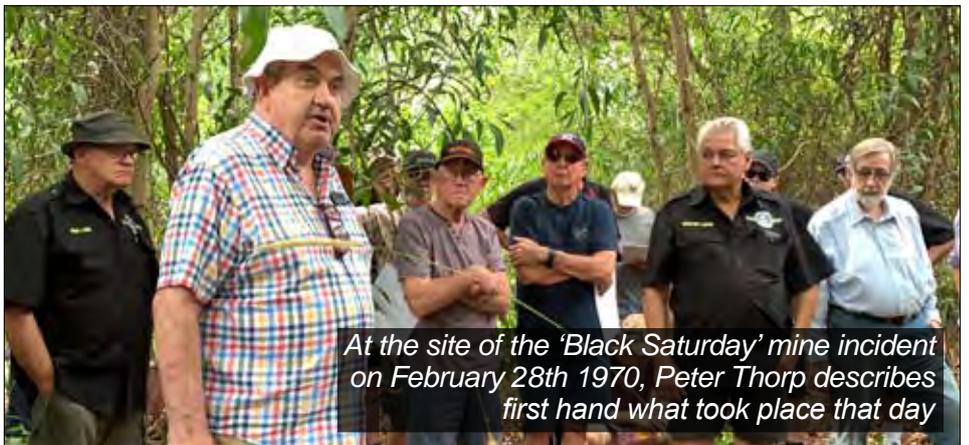
Visit to the restored VC base in the Rung Sat zone



Normally of a shy and retiring nature, current serving Sapper, SGT Tom Vallas (bottom right) gets into the spirit of things at our Designated Boozer in Saigon



We visit the notorious Long Hai hills, site of many grim experiences for the Tunnel Rats



At the site of the 'Black Saturday' mine incident on February 28th 1970, Peter Thorp describes first hand what took place that day



On our visit to the orphanage at Baria we donate rice, milk products and cash to help the kids and assist the staff in the great job they are doing



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

We have new 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 seven 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, Mr. Ha of Asia Travel Service has many options available 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.



Tour the fascinating and historic Mekong Delta region



Experience some of Saigon's exotic Buddhist temples



Visit Black Virgin Mountain. Once a key US communications base, it's now a tourist attraction complete with a 'Luge' ride down the hill.



Arrange a day of golf including a caddy

If you wish to pre-arrange any private trip or activity during your tour, contact Mr. Ha by email on: nguyendanhha2009@yahoo.com.vn or by mobile on: +84 98 998 95 97

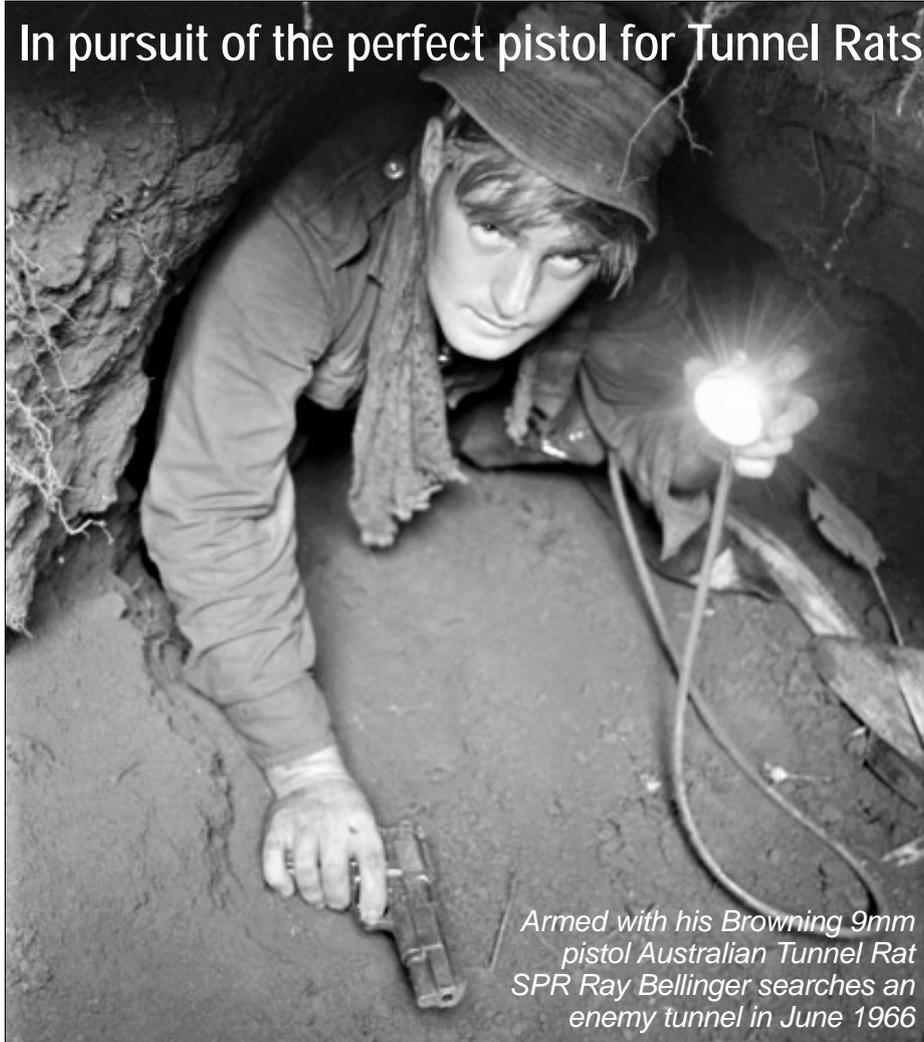
HEADS UP!

"GETTING A REFUND FROM THOSE MONGRELS AT THE AIRLINES IS HARDER THAN GETTING A SLOUCH HAT OUT OF A Q STORE! SO MARK THE TOUR IN YOUR DIARY AND WORK ON YOUR LEAVE PASS, BUT DON'T BOOK YOUR AIRFARE YET IN CASE WE DON'T GET THE GREEN LIGHT FOR SAFE TRAVEL TO VIETNAM."



THE NEXT TUNNEL RATS TOUR TO VIETNAM IS IN EARLY MARCH 2021

In pursuit of the perfect pistol for Tunnel Rats



Armed with his Browning 9mm pistol Australian Tunnel Rat SPR Ray Bellinger searches an enemy tunnel in June 1966

Australian Tunnel Rats in Vietnam were issued with a Browning L9A1 9mm pistol and the Americans initially carried the M1911A1 Colt .45 pistol. But the sound of these pistols going off in the close confines of a tunnel was deafening. On top of being too loud, the Colt .45 was also considered too big and too cumbersome.

Revolvers were subsequently chosen by a number of U.S. tunnel rats as their search techniques became more sophisticated through experience. The .38 revolver was relatively small, light, and easy to handle. In addition, the Smith and Wesson or Colt revolvers could handle the dirt and muck of the tunnel environment easily, but they were all still 'eardrum busters'.

By 1969, subterranean combat in the tunnels of South Viet-

A major flaw in the concept of Tunnel Rats being armed with a pistol was that firing it in the confined space of a tunnel caused serious hearing loss for days - or at worst could burst your eardrums. An innovative American firearms maker came up with an amazing solution, the Quiet Special Purpose Revolver. The pistol was effectively a miniature shotgun and it made as little noise as a toy capgun.

nam had been refined by time and experience. The tunnel rats knew what worked for them and were exceedingly conservative in adopting any new hardware or weapons. It was in July 1969 that ten of possibly the rarest modern US military handguns ever made arrived in Vietnam.

Earlier, in December, 1967, the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MAC-V)

had recognized that the need still existed for a low-noise weapon for what were now officially called the tunnel exploration personnel in the Republic of Vietnam.

Some tunnel rats had competent armorers who made up suppressors for a variety of handguns, including several for the M1911A1. The big .45 didn't operate dependably with a simple muzzle can, but the sound suppression given the big pistol was well liked by the experienced rats in the field.

A few of the WWII era OSS suppressed High Standard HD .22 automatics made their way into Tunnel Rat hands. But these weapons were very few in number and wanted by a number of other special units. Personal weapons were used by the rats,

ranging from .25 caliber automatics to sawed-off shotguns. MACV looked at some of these field improvisations and added their characteristics to their request for a new weapon.

To increase hit probability in the dark tunnels, ammunition for the new weapons would be of the multiple-projectile type. A spread of shot would be much easier when the target may only be visible for a fraction of a second, or maybe not visible at all. Since tunnel combat was by nature at a short range, the weapon was to be lethal at 10 metres, minimum. Basically, MAC-V wanted a small, handheld, suppressed shotgun for the tunnel rats.

The Army passed on the project to a qualified civilian contractor, Aircraft Armaments Inc. (AAI) of Baltimore, Maryland. AAI had been working for a number of years on various applications of captured piston and expanding capsule (teleshot) technology for both the military as well as NASA and the aerospace industry. The company's experience with firearms had them quickly applying the captured piston concept to the tunnel weapon project.

In the captured piston system, propellant gases from normal smokeless powder drives a piston pushing a payload down a cylinder with one open end. When the gas-driven piston strikes a constriction at the open end of the cylinder, it is trapped and held in place. The payload continues away from the cylinder, moving at what can be a significant velocity. The captured piston seals off the end of the cylinder, trapping the propellant gases inside the system where they can bleed off slowly. With no propellant gases escaping violently, muzzle blast, flash, and the resulting noise, is reduced considerably. Exchange a steel cartridge case for the



The Quiet Special Purpose Revolver was created from a dramatically modified .44 Smith & Wesson Model 29 Magnum using a radical new form of ammunition. The cartridge is a .52 caliber steel scabbard 47.4 mm long. The hammer "A" strikes the first piston "B" which then strikes piston "C" (having two pistons makes sealing the rear of the sheath possible). Piston "C" contains the powder charge. "D" is the .40 caliber sabot containing 15 x 3.5mm metal balls.

open-ended cylinder, and a plastic capsule full of shot for the payload, and you have the heart of the tunnel weapon.

The "muzzle velocity" of the projectile, in this case the shot charge, is dependent only on the length of travel and pressure pushing the internal piston of the round. A sealed-in percussion primer ignites the propellant charge in a normal way. Heavy threads at the muzzle end of the cartridge slow and stop the piston as it shears through them. The capsule continues out the barrel of the weapon and breaks up on hitting the resistance of the air, releasing its shot charge.

To increase the lethality of the shot charge, heavy metal shot was used instead of the usual lead shot. Sintered tungsten-steel alloy shot was formed under pressure for the sub-projectiles. The sintered-metal technology involved compressing powdered alloy in a die between two punches and gave the shot a noticeable belt in its center, topped by two

hemispherical ends. The shot looked much like a round ball with a band around the center.

To fire the new ammunition, a revolver system was used to eliminate any problems with trying to function a semiautomatic weapon. To maximize available space for the ammunition design, the largest commercially-available revolver design was chosen for development into the tunnel weapon. The revolver decided on was the Smith & Wesson Model 29, .44 Magnum.

The .44 magnum barrel was removed and a simple short cylinder threaded into its place. The stub barrel had a 10.16mm smooth bore reamed through its center, and the extractor rod of the revolver was cut back to just in front of the end of the muzzle. The main mechanism of the revolver was little changed outside of the cylinder.

Each chamber of the .44 magnum Model 29 cylinder was reamed out to 13.40mm straight for its entire length. Over 78.61g

of steel were removed from the cylinders that originally weighed over 220g. This gave the cylinder walls of the tunnel weapon enough strength to function and carry the ammunition, and that was about all. But since the steel cartridge case itself held the pressure of the propellant gases, the cylinder walls could safely be made very thin.

An additional coil spring was placed near the top of the main-spring to give the hammer additional power to hit the slightly recessed primers of the special ammunition. The precision sights of the Model 29 were useless with the new ammunition and the rear sight was removed, leaving a square slot in the top of the revolver for rough aiming if desired.

When fired, the new ammunition gave out little more than low-intensity sparks. The blast and noise of a normal revolver shot was almost completely eliminated. The 15-pellet load gave the revolver the shot spread of a very open .410 shotgun.

The shot from what was now called the Quiet, Special Purpose Revolver, would penetrate a 20mm thick sheet of plywood at 5 metres. This was later used as part of the demonstration of the weapon to its users in Vietnam. In July, 1969, ten Tunnel Weapons and 992 rounds of ammunition arrived in Vietnam for testing.

Five of the new weapons and 496 rounds of ammunition were each issued to the 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions for a 90-day field test period. On 22 August, 5 Tunnel Weapons and 125 rounds of ammunition were transferred from the 1st Infantry Division to the Americal Division for the balance of the testing period. Training time for the new weapons ranged from none to several hours, but it usually always included a firing demonstration at the recom-



mended plywood target.

Accuracy was reasonable with the new weapons. Most users trained for an hour or less with the new weapons, firing 30 or fewer rounds each during the session. Acceptance of the new weapon was limited by the very conservative tunnel rats. But within weeks of their arrival in Vietnam, the tunnel weapons were being carried in their special shoulder holsters into the tunnels of Vietnam.

“Since tunnel combat was always at short range, the weapon needed to be lethal at 10 metres. Basically, MACV wanted a handheld, suppressed small shotgun for the tunnel rats”

The “silent” quality of the tunnel weapon gave some of the users questions regarding its lethality. The shot load of the Tunnel Weapon was effective but it didn’t have the stopping power of a regular bullet. A number of encounters with VC and NVA troops in tunnels resulted in wounded

ABOVE: QSPR leather holster and ammunition pouches custom made for the Tunnel Rats.

and disabled enemy forces, but they were not killed by the shot load of the Tunnel Weapon.

But another group of US forces liked the tunnel weapon - a lot. The 25th Infantry Division issued their Tunnel Weapons also to members of one of their reconnaissance and Intelligence platoons as well as to its Ranger company and infantry companies. The Americal Division used its Tunnel Weapons with its Ranger and Infantry companies. This put the tunnel weapons to use in ambushes, prisoner snatches, and other more covert actions.

The Tunnel Weapon was found to be ideal for ambushes, especially at night. Enemy soldiers were killed at ranges of less than Three metres with other troops nearby never hearing the shots. Comments on the weapons from these users included;

“That pistol is the most magnificent weapon I ever seen in action. I could use three of these in my platoon. The pistol doesn’t

make any noise louder than a cap pistol and it hits the target just by using the pointing method. I never aimed the weapon. This weapon is far better than a .38 pistol we had. It's more accurate, it's very quiet, and it handles better than any other pistol I've handled."

But besides its use in 1969, the Tunnel Weapon was never fielded again in any numbers after the evaluation period. Only the ten examples, and a single specimen maintained by AAI, were ever made. Two of these are at the US Ordnance Museum at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Specimen #5 is on public display there and the AAI specimen is there in storage.

On a very odd note, one of the Tunnel Weapons was reported lost in Vietnam. This weapon was later recovered in California where it had been used as a suppressed weapon in a murder. Almost no live specimens of the ammunition exists, especially not in private hands. The captured-piston ammunition for the Tunnel Weapon has been declared a suppressor by The US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms (BATF).

QSPR Technical Data

Overall length - 172mm

Barrel length - 35mm

Bore diameter - 10.16mm

Weight (empty) - 0.91kg

Weight (loaded) - 1.07kg

Weight (cylinder) - 0.19kg

Ammunition

Case diameter - 13.36mm

Rim diameter - 14mm

Round length - 47.40mm

Round weight - 27.5g

Projectile - 15 tungsten-steel alloy shot in 3pc plastic sabot

Pellet diameter - 3.73mm (belt)

Pellet weight - 0.48g (each)

Muzzle velocity - 228mps

Effective range - 15m

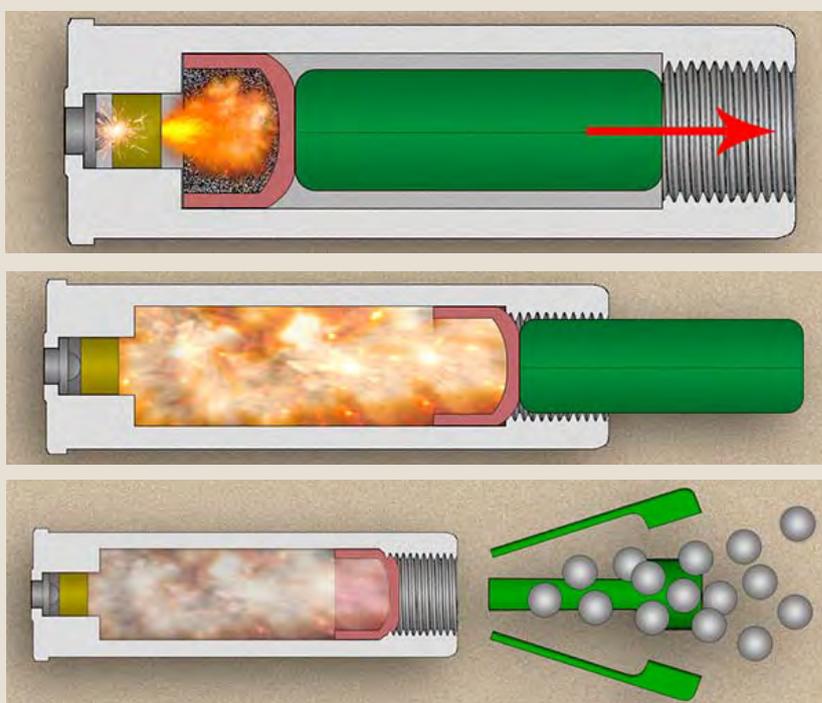
Maximum range - 400m

Sound level:

- 120 Decibels/1m from muzzle



Top view of the QSPR with the revolver chamber open

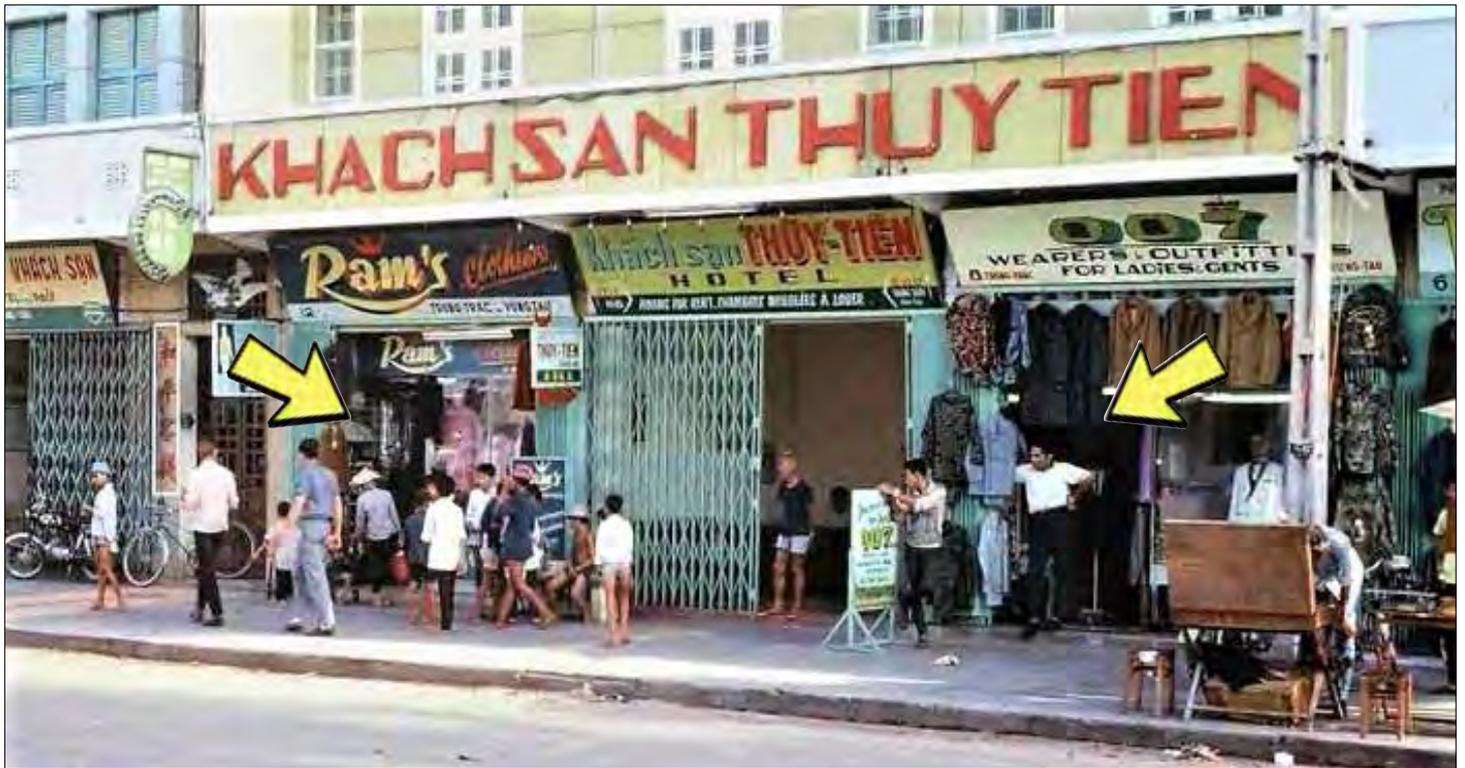


TOP DIAGRAM: When the 'hammer' hits the first piston it in turn hits the second piston igniting the powder charge within. Gases push the piston forward which in turn push the sabot. The rear of the cartridge is sealed so there are no leaks of any kind and the only sound is the detonation of the piston, which is greatly muffled because it is within a thick-walled steel sheath.

MIDDLE DIAGRAM: The sabot emerges from the scabbard and enters the barrel. The gases from the combustion of the propellant remain inside the sheath because the piston keeps it completely sealed. There is no leakage of abnormal noise. The threaded passage blocks the piston but allows the sabot to pass cleanly through.

BOTTOM DIAGRAM: The sabot exits the muzzle and opens in three petals, releasing the 15 projectiles at a speed of 228m/sec which is too low a speed to create the usual supersonic 'boom' of a traditional pistol or revolver bullet. At most, only a few low intensity sparks are visible beyond the barrel but the shot will not produce any noise. The noise test result of between 110 and 120 decibels at one metre from the barrel is slightly less than the noise made by a .22 LR calibre weapon with a suppressor. The noise generated has been described as; "similar to a toy cap-gun".

Here's where we did a little illegal currency dealing to 'cash up' for a few days leave in Vung Tau



ABOVE: These two Indian tailor shops in Vung Tau ("Rams" on the left and "007" on the right) were our go-to places to double our money as a perfect kick-off for two days of leave. BELOW: The \$10 note of the Series 641 certificates issued from 1965 to 1968

For Australian soldiers, Military Payment Certificates (MPC), along with dog tags, bush hats and C-rations, bring forth vivid memories of our wartime experiences.

Military Payment Certificates were used in Vietnam because during the earliest days of the war, the South Vietnamese economy was wrecked by a large and well organized black market. Trading in American currency, along with printing and distributing counterfeit currency, was a thriving business. As in other conflicts, the US military began printing MPCs in Vietnam in 1965 to help restore confidence in the local currency. Intended for use only in combat zones, in theory MPCs could not be legally possessed by anyone other than authorized personnel. Nonetheless, many local Vietnamese merchants, in particular ethnic Chinese and Indian traders, accepted the certificates and valued them as regular American currency.

While serving in Vietnam



Australian soldiers were paid in US dollars and this was reflected in our paybooks. However, when we needed cash we were issued with those MPC notes instead of US dollars. We could use MPC in our unit boozier and at the duty free facility operated by the Army on base but it was illegal to use the MPC in Vietnamese towns and villages. When we were going on local leave to Vung Tau our pay office at 1 Field Squadron could change our MPC notes into the local currency at the official

rate. We all quickly learnt that we could get double the official rate by changing the MPC illegally in Vung Tau (a great way to start two days of leave!).

In Vung Tau it was the Indian operated tailor shops which were the go-to places for our illegal currency deals. No doubt they were ripping us off and better rates would have been available elsewhere, but who is going to quibble over a few bucks when you are doubling your money!

In an effort to thwart counter-

feiting, the MPC series were randomly changed. On conversion day, or what became known as “CDay,” the bases were closed to civilians. After each conversion to a new MPC series, the previous series was worthless. It was rumoured that many bar owners and ‘mama-sans’ caught out with millions of now valueless MPC saw no alternative but to commit suicide. When word got out that a conversion was occurring, local merchants would rush to the front gate of a base and try to get in, or at least get the notes to a someone to exchange them. Some soldiers, thinking they could get rich by turning in and converting large quantities of MPCs held by the locals, failed to note a regulation that prevented any service member from converting more than his rated pay.

Counterfeiting MPCs became a major problem almost immediately. The principal source of the activity was Saigon’s Cholon district. The ethnic Chinese of Cholon were proficient at producing near-perfect copies of American MPCs. The enemy learned quickly how to exploit the skill of the Cholon counterfeiters: Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army soldiers would go into South Vietnamese villages and demand “tax payments.” The villagers handed over, often at gunpoint, all their South Vietnamese currency. The VC and NVA would then go to the Cholon district and trade legitimate South Vietnamese currency for counterfeit MPCs at high rates of exchange—as high as 50-to-1. The VC would trade the counterfeit MPCs on the black market.

Four different Military Payment Certificate (MPC) series were used during the Vietnam War. The debut of the first series, designated 641, coincided with the arrival of the first major U.S. combat units. Issued from 1965 to



1968 and printed at the U.S. Government Printing facility in Guam, Series 641 had seven different denominations: 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents, \$1, \$5 and \$10. The Series 661 MPC, which circulated from 1968 to 1969 had the same seven denominations but different designs. The Series 681, from 1969 to 1970, had only six denominations but included a \$20 note. The final MPC series, 692, was used from 1970 to 1973. It had only five notes ranging in denomination from 5 cents to \$20.

TOP: The 25 Cent note of the Series 661 certificates issued from 1968 to 1969. MIDDLE: The 10 Cent note of the Series 681 certificates issued from 1969 to 1970. ABOVE: The 5 Cent note of the Series 692 certificates issued from 1970 to 1973

As each series was replaced by a new one, the old certificates were supposed to be counted and destroyed. Nonetheless, Vietnam-era MPCs remain available to collectors, principally via currency dealers in Vietnam and online auction houses.

When Saigon was tragically falling to the communists this South Vietnamese pilot risked everything in a bid to save his family



“On the last day of his country’s existence, South Vietnamese Air Force MAJ Buang-Ly commandeered a tiny two-seater airplane and somehow squeezed his wife and their five children into it before climbing into the pilot’s seat and heading out to sea. As his country crumbled, they made a high-risk landing on the US aircraft carrier Midway, becoming some of the first refugees to flee Vietnam. Millions more would follow, confirming the cause Australian and US troops were fighting for was just and correct. The South Vietnamese would rather risk their lives escaping than live under communism.”

It was April 29, 1975, and chaos had enveloped the nation. Two years earlier, the 1973 Paris peace agreement had theoretically ended the war, but after Australian and American combat forces left the country, the North Vietnamese took the opportunity to press their new strategic advantage. The long war between North and South Vietnam paused only briefly before ferocious fighting resumed.

In early 1975, the North Vietnamese Army seized key bases in the Central Highlands, and, by the end of March, had captured areas along the coast. The remain-

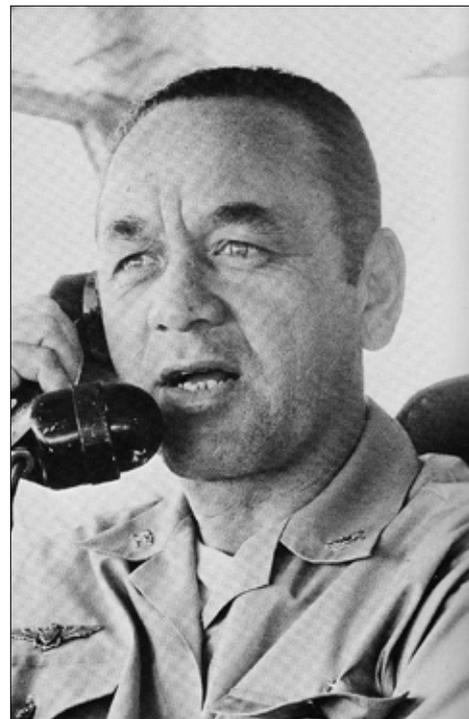
ing American advisers and many South Vietnamese families began frenzied evacuations on American military aircraft and civilian transport planes.

Buang and his family were stationed on Con Son Island, about 50 miles off the southern coast and home to one of the last bases still under South Vietnamese control. Used mainly as a prison camp, the island also had a small airfield. When Buang and his wife learned that North Vietnamese forces were closing in, they loaded as many of their possessions as possible into the plane and got airborne - with no plan for

what to do next.

Their tiny aircraft, an O-1 Bird Dog, was a modified Cessna 170, a light, single-engine plane with fixed landing gear and a range of just over 500 miles when fully fuelled - and Buang’s fuel tank was not.

As Buang coaxed the overloaded plane airborne, he faced enormous challenges. The Bird Dog was not designed to operate over water. It lacked sophisticated navigation equipment, life vests and the ability to safely ditch in an emergency. Buang had never seen, much less landed on, an aircraft carrier—and to make matters worse, this Bird Dog



had no working radio because Buang had not been able to bring a headset. Still, he knew that his family was more likely to find safety out at sea, where the U.S. Navy was in control, than on the land now controlled by communist forces.

After flying for a half-hour, Buang spotted a gaggle of helicopters in the distance heading east. At the time he had no idea they were loaded with friendly evacuees, but it seemed like a good idea to follow them. "I was searching for a safe place," Buang later recalled. "It made me think there was something out there we could depend on." He was right, and it was called Operation Frequent Wind where an ad-hoc fleet of helicopters and several elements of the 7th Fleet were conducting a massive humanitarian operation, transporting and caring for thousands of refugees.

The Midway was then commanded by Capt. Lawrence Chambers, the first African-American carrier captain and just the second to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy when he earned his degree in 1952. Chambers had reported aboard the carrier in January 1975 and been in command



TOP LEFT: News reporters talk with the pilot, MAJ Buang shortly after his heroic landing. TOP RIGHT: Capt. Lawrence Chambers had been in command of the Midway for only a few weeks when Operation Frequent Wind began. ABOVE: Sailors rushed to the deck to hold down Buang's plane while his wife and youngest child (circled) climbed out. The other children followed.

for only a few weeks. In a television interview years later, he recalled the scene as he watched from his chair on the bridge, just above the action: "A flight deck is a hazardous operation under normal conditions. And when you see little kids and mothers holding little babies, and airplanes, helicop-

ters are taking off and landing, you just kind of hold your breath."

Toward the end of that wild afternoon, spotters on the carrier saw a tiny two-seat Cessna come into view. Through binoculars they counted at least four people in the plane, which had South Vietnamese markings.

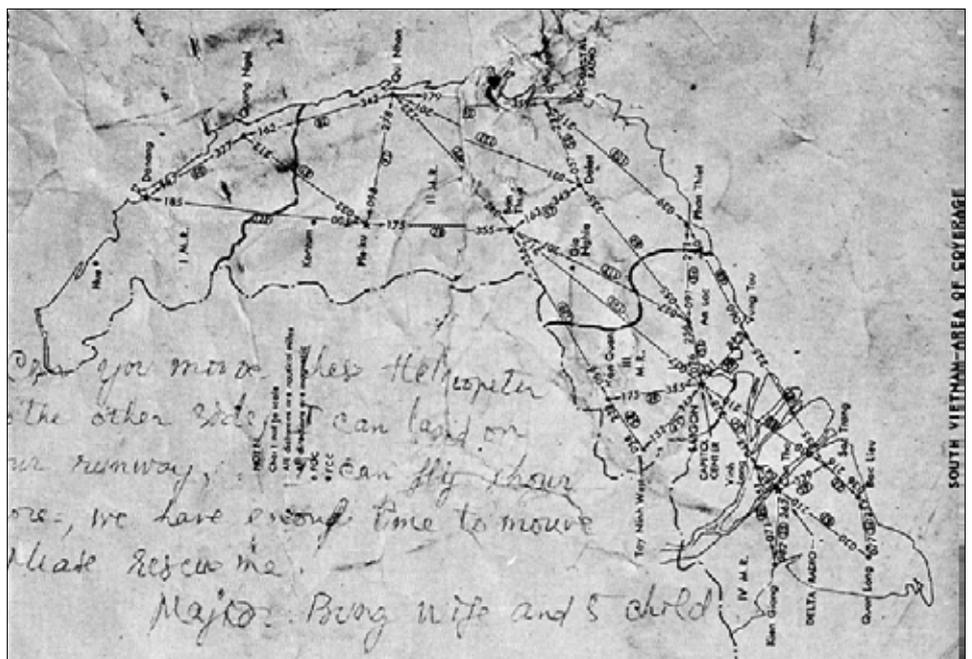


The Bird Dog began circling overhead with its landing lights switched on. Periodically the pilot rocked the plane's wings. A Vietnamese translator was rushed to Primary Flight Control to assist but attempts to radio the plane were met with static. From the bridge Chambers quickly consulted task force commander Adm. William Harris, who was at his battle station below deck.

"The admiral ordered me to tell the Bird Dog to ditch," Chambers later recalled. However, the fixed-wing Bird Dogs fixed landing gear would cause the plane to flip onto its back as soon as the wheels touched the water. Only a well-trained crew member, properly strapped in, would get out alive. If the plane was ditched, the rest of its occupants had almost no chance.

"My judgment told me, if I didn't give him a chance to land that he was going to crash it on the deck," Chambers said.

As the Bird Dog circled, the pilot dropped three paper notes from the plane, but they blew over the side before the ship's crew could snatch them. On the next pass he stuffed a fourth



TOP: UH-1 Huey and CH-47 Chinook helicopters head to the deck of the USS Midway, already a cauldron of evacuees from Saigon during the last days of April 1975. ABOVE: MAJ Buang stuffed this note into his pistol's leather holster to weigh it down then dropped it from his aircraft onto the Midway during one of several hairy passes over the ship's deck.

note into his pistol's leather holster to weigh it down, and sailors rushed to grab the little package after it hit the deck. They read a scribbled message written on a crumpled chart of South Vietnam: "Can you move those Helicopters to the other side, I can land on your runway, I can fly 1 hour more, we have enough time to move. Please

rescue me. Major Buang wife and 5 child."

The message was quickly relayed to the bridge where Chambers was discussing the situation with the ship's air boss CMDR Vern Jumper over the phone. Ignoring pressure from the admiral, Chambers decided to do whatever was necessary to let the Bird Dog land, even



TOP: Buang-Ly and his family with Admiral Larry Chambers outside the Florida Air Museum during a 2014 reunion. Buang-Ly is sitting in a restored version of the same type of aircraft he flew on that fateful day in 1975.

if that meant throwing millions of dollars worth of equipment over the side and possibly being relieved of his command.

Chambers said into the phone to Vern; “give me a ready deck.” Jumper called for all available crewmen and volunteers to help prepare the angled flight deck for the Cessna.

The captain turned his ship into the wind to prepare for a fixed-wing landing. Fire crews readied their hoses and donned fire-retardant suits. Since the Bird Dog had no tail hook, sailors removed the four landing cables that normally spanned the runway. Other crew members leaned in together to heave three Hueys and one Chinook over the side. Immediately, five more airborne Huey pilots took advantage of the cleared runway to land and disembark their passengers. Assuming he would be court martialled anyway, Chambers ordered those helicopters thrown overboard as well. The old ship rattled and groaned as its speed increased.

Jumper gave the green lamp signal to land. Buang made two practice passes over the ship to get a feel for the approach while translators—in English and Vietnamese—tried to warn him about the dangerous downdrafts that naturally occur behind the ship’s fantail. With no response, the crew could only watch, hoping that he would carry enough power to fly through that turbulence.

Buang lowered the Bird Dog’s flaps and approached in a shallow descent at a speed of 60 knots (69 mph). With the ship providing an estimated 40 knots (46 mph) of headwind to aid the landing, the light plane slowly caught up. It seemed to flutter for a moment just above the deck, then bounced once in the landing area and rolled to a smooth stop in the middle of the runway.

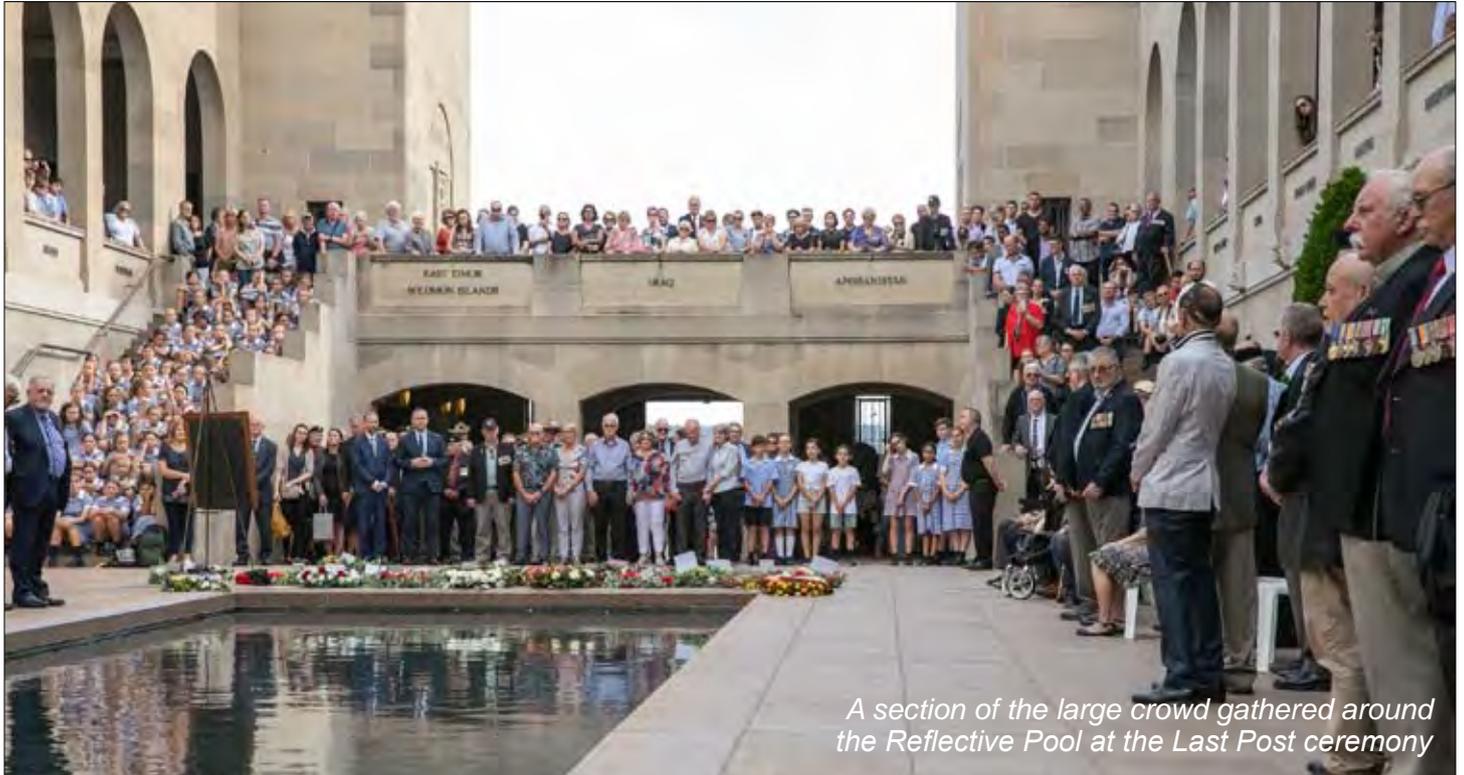
Dozens of sailors ran toward the plane to grab it in case

the aircraft’s momentum was enough to send it over the side, but the Bird Dog stayed where it had stopped. A hodgepodge of squadron crew and ship’s company weighed the plane down with their bodies while Buang and his wife, carrying their youngest child, climbed out of the cockpit. He pulled forward the seat and out tumbled the other four children. Cheers rang out and sailors clapped while the family walked into the ship’s island.

Chambers kept his job as the aircraft carrier’s captain and was later promoted to rear admiral; he retired in 1984. Nobody was prosecuted for the estimated \$10 million loss of the helicopters that Chambers ordered overboard. The Midway’s crew collected money to help ease the transition for the Buang family, who eventually resettled in the United States. All seven are now naturalized and intensely proud American citizens.

SAPPER SNIPPETS

The Tunnel Rats Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial



A section of the large crowd gathered around the Reflective Pool at the Last Post ceremony

The Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association Last Post ceremony was held at the Australian War Memorial on 18 February this year - the date on which the Battle of Fire Support Base Andersen took place in 1968. On that night we had four of our Tunnel Rat comrades killed in action. As the tradition is set that each Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial is a tribute to one individual, we chose Sapper Allan Pattison who was one of those Sappers killed at FSB Andersen.

The other three Tunnel Rats killed in action that night were; Staff Sergeant Colin McLachlan, Lance Corporal John Garrett and Sapper David Steen. Their Section was acting in their secondary role of Infantry, conducting an overnight standing patrol forward of Fire Support Base Anderson near Bien Hoa, Vietnam during the Tet Offensive .

The Tunnel Rats took the opportunity to treat the ceremony as a tribute to all 36 of our fallen comrades.



Photo on display during the ceremony of Sapper Allan Pattison, one of the four Tunnel Rats killed in Action during the Battle of FSB Andersen on 18 February 1968

SAPPER SNIPPETS



OC 1 Field Squadron RAE Vietnam 1967/68, COL John Kemp AM after placing a wreath at the ceremony. John was OC of the Sqn at the time of the Battle of FSB Andersen.



Head of Corps, RAE, BRIG John Carey CSC (left), and Corps Regimental Sergeant Major, RAE, WO1 Sean Chainey DSM after placing a wreath at the ceremony.



Some of the Tunnel Rats and partners beside the Reflective Pool during the ceremony.

SAPPER SNIPPETS



ABOVE: Sapper Logan Spark who was selected by The Corps to be the 'representative Sapper' at the Last Post ceremony. He conducted himself superbly during the ceremony, but did mention to the Tunnel Rats that on return to his unit, 1CER "this honour will likely cost me one or two slabs!"



ABOVE: Placing wreaths at the ceremony are: Angela Gartner, the niece of Sapper David Steen, KIA at the Battle of FSB Andersen, and three Tunnel Rats who were at the Battle of FSB Andersen, (L to R); Jack Lawrence, Lyndon Stutley and Norm Cairns



ABOVE: Waiting for the ceremony to begin, two old warriors 'chewing the fat' and solving the world's problems; Tunnel Rat Keith Kermode (left) who did two tours of Vietnam, in 1965/66 and 1970/71, and Infanteer Lindsay Hansch who also did two tours of Vietnam, in 1966/67 with 5RAR and in 1971 with Special Air Service (SAS).

SAPPER SNIPPETS

Words of praise for the Vietnam Tunnel Rats from Head of Corps at our dinner following the Last Post ceremony

The Head of Corps RAE, BRIG John Carey CSC and the Corps Regimental Sergeant Major RAE, WO1 Sean Chainey DSM attended the Tunnel Rats dinner at the Hellenic Club Canberra on February 18 this year. The dinner followed after the Australian War Memorial

Last Post ceremony that day.

BRIG Carey spoke at the dinner and his words still ring proudly in the hearts of every Vietnam Tunnel Rat. Those fortunate enough to be there on the night walked back to their hotels that night a few feet taller and with a greater feeling that

Army recognises their special contribution within the Corps.

Later that night a few of the lads would have whispered HOC's message to their troopmates who never came home. Below we share the following extracts from BRIG Carey's speech:

"On evenings like this most of us will remember the tragedy of losing comrades...and we do remember them... magnificent Sappers with broad smiles who led with purpose. But tonight is also about celebrating the Tunnel Rats - an absolutely essential part of RAE history.

Your efforts in South Vietnam were nothing but extraordinary. But we should not have been surprised.

I remember growing up as a young Sapper officer and learning about the legendary Tunnel Rats of South Vietnam. You were instrumental in finding and searching tunnels miles long and pioneering the employment of two-man teams to carry out the search and demolition of hundreds of enemy underground bunker systems. You always led from the front – you had to. There was no other choice. The infantry and armour could not operate without you.

You developed new search techniques to save lives in the fight against mines and booby traps, which caused over 50 percent of Australian casualties at the peak of the war. And of course you paid an awful price, with 36 of your mates killed in action and just under 200 wounded from the same 650 men who operated in this role over the six years of the war, a casualty rate of around 33 percent.

The Tunnel Rats provided a flexible and adaptable force, quickly and without fuss – it was world class. Your wide range of skills shown in the face of danger give truth to our Corps mottos of 'Everywhere' and 'We

make and we break'. It was your collective dedication and obvious professionalism that so easily impressed and I can tell you, it has left such a strong legacy for those who have served after you.

The Tunnel Rats adapted, innovated and overcame, in order to get to the objective and accomplish the mission, whatever it was...And to me that is what being a combat engineer...a Sapper...is all about: a state of mind that figures out how to get the job done – no matter what – and has the willpower, perseverance and strength to see the mission through to completion...all the while taking great care of our People.'

In closing, Jim regularly sends the RSM and I a copy of each edition of Holdfast – it has pride of place in my office for all to read who come and go. For those of you who know, on the back page, it always ends with a salute to modern-day Sappers. Well, to Jim and all Tunnel Rats everywhere – Admiration, Awe and Respect (Heaps of It).

The Corps honours all Tunnel Rats who closed with the enemy and never let us down. Even today, many years later, they continue to support the Sapper. Next time you meet a Tunnel Rat, or indeed any Engineer veteran from the war in South Vietnam, please shake their hand and thank them for their incredible courage, determination and Sapper spirit."

*All the Best,
John*

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 RIP Sapper
 Bill Corby 07 5502 1193
 John "Tex" Cotter 07 4723 1244
 "Meggsie" Dennis RIP Sapper
 Des Evans 07 4128 2390
 Ray Forster 07 3409 1907
 Geoff Green 03 6272 8167
 Barry Harford 08 8088 4371
 Brian Hay 03 9444 6098
 Keith Kermode 0427233063
 Sandy MacGregor 02 9457 7133
 Frank Mallard RIP Sapper
 Keith Mills 07 4770 7267
 Bill Murray 0497 385 732
 Warren Murray - RIP Sapper
 John Opie 0427280703
 Bernie Pollard 08 9248 3178
 David Roper 0427521304
 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 Bellinger 0407952670
 Ray Burton 08 8268 4575
 Ron Carroll 0408884327
 Joe Cazey 07 3710 8102
 Allan S Coleman RIP Sapper
 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
 Sandy Sempel 0419411887
 Trevor Shelley 0419784954
 Ron Stibble 0447028986
 "Jethro" Thompson 0732168906
 Ross Tulloh 0418223345
 Graham Zalewska-Moon
 (Poland phone: 48-815177391)

1 Troop (1967-68)

Billy Adams 03 5974 2916
 Henry Baggaley 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 RIP Sapper
 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
 Colin Treasure 0409902980
 Jim Trower 0418842744

1 Troop (1968-69)

Adrian Black 0417756729
 Mike Bruggemann 0409441992
 Peter Carrodus RIP Sapper
 Albert Eyssens 0407875287
 Ken Ford 0418666989
 Max Goiser 0409717143
 Peter Hollis 0487231351
 George Hulse 0412341363
 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 0408321487
 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 RIP Sapper
 Phil Cooper 0439 955 207
 Gary Degering - RIP Sapper
 John Felton 0467612342
 Graham 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 Campbell 03 9870 0313
 Ray "Brute" Carroll 08 9342 3596
 Raymond Collins 0419837833
 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 0413291110
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
 Graeme Leach 07 4777 8627
 Ken McCann 0409938830
 Rod McClennan 07 3267 6907
 Noel McDuffie RIP Sapper
 Bob McKinnon 07 3267 0310
 Peter Matthews RIP Sapper
 Warren Morrow 0418427947
 Dennis Quick 0439786168
 Mick Shannon 08 8552 1746
 Bob Sweeney 08 9248 4432
 "Taffy" Williams 0423628319
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
 Dave Hogarth 0428501133
 John Jasinski 0435799426
 Ron Johnston 07 3351 1609

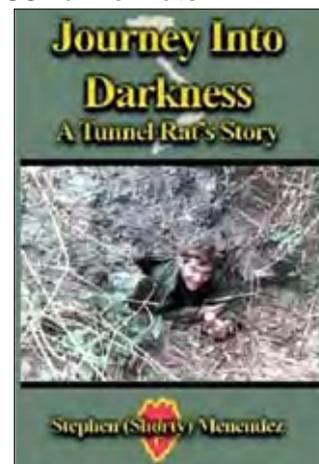
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 Lew Jordan 03 6397 3261
 Ray Kenny RIP Sapper
 John Kiley 02 4228 4068
 David Kitley 02 4735 4991
 Bernard Ladyman 08 9795 7900
 Warren McBurnie 02 6687 7030
 Stephen McHenry 08 9344 6939
 Eric McKerrow (Silent number)
 Dave McNair 08 9725 2821
 Kevin 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 Tramby 0428659048
 John Willis 03 9363 7878
 "Snow" Wilson RIP Sapper
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 0429953052
 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 RIP Sapper
 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
 Jimmy Paiano 0417984221
 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 0401344911
 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
 Phil Lamb RIP Sapper
 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 Piroanski 08 9306 8169
 Ian Pitt 0428492018
 Jack Power 07 4955 3761
 Colin Redacliff RIP Sapper
 Rolf Schaefer 08 8962 1391
 Brian "BC" Scott 0400713994
 Peter Scott (219) 0425225836
 "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 0437881174
 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 0400184673
 Ron Cook 0414508686
 Jock Coultts 08 9279 1946
 Bill Craig 08 9530 1008
 Denis Crawford 03 9497 3256
 John Cross RIP Sapper
 Robin Date 03 9783 3202
 Gino De Bari 0450931112
 Tom Dodds 040672260
 Harry Eustace RIP Sapper
 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

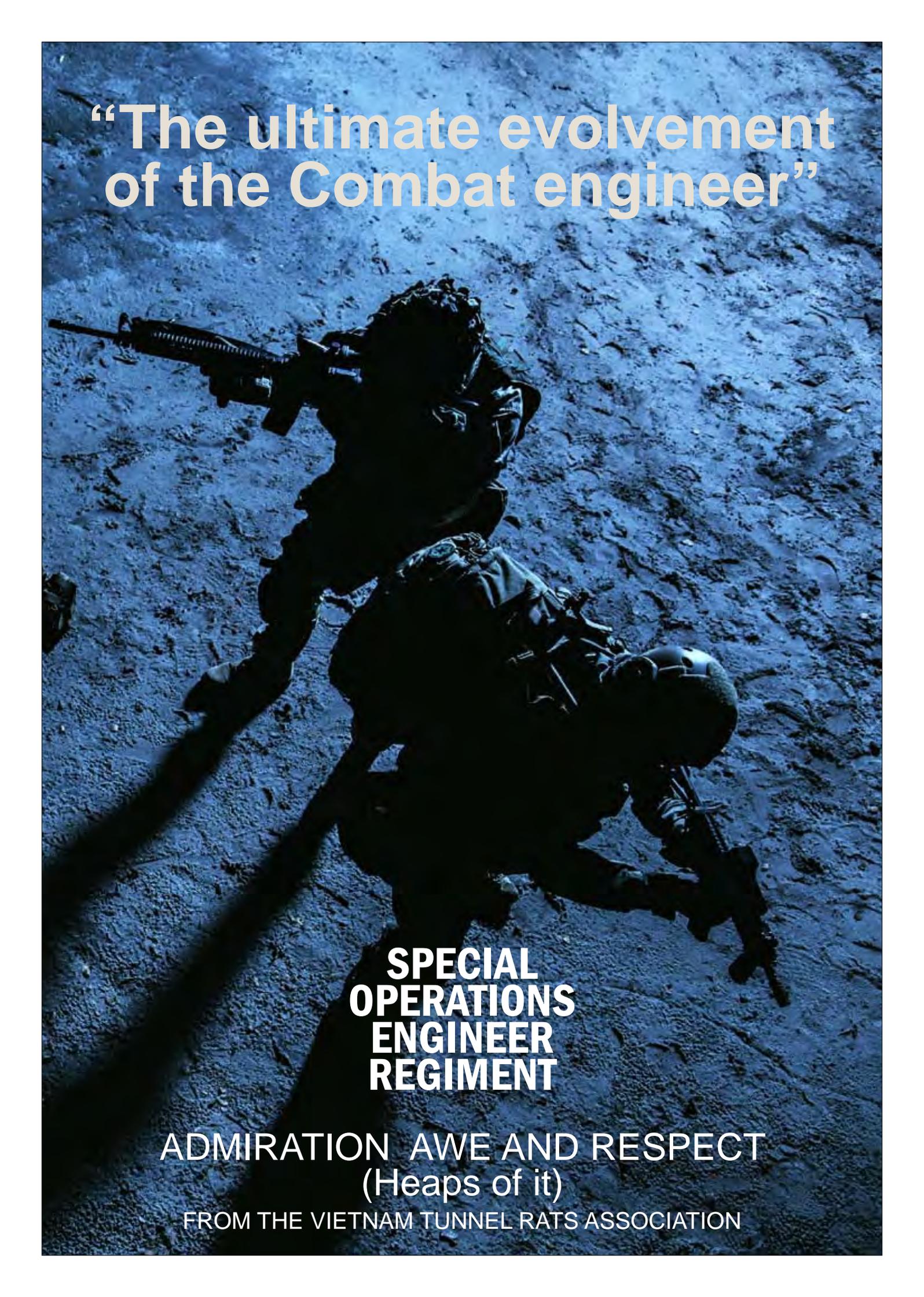
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 Kevin Lappin 0419741239
 Gary McClintock 07 4788 0123
 Peter McCole 03 5155 9368
 Bob McGlenn 07 5426 1597
 Ian McLean 0412431297
 Jeff Maddock 0438069803
 Leon Madeley 0448467768
 Bill Marshall 0415 688 788
 Rod O'Regan 0419431779
 Graeme Pengelly 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 RIP Sapper
 Steve Walton RIP Sapper
 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 RIP Sapper
 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 0437711348
 Derwyn Hage 0408802038
 John Hollis 0437711348
 "Sam" Houston 07 5495 5480
 Phil Lamb RIP Sapper
 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
 Kevin Simper 0423524884
 Tony Toussaint 0417249235.
 Ray Vander Heiden 0410312807
 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
 Mike King 08 9764 1080
 Rod Kirby 07 4973 7726
 Peter Knight 02 6247 6272
 Gerry Lyaal RIP Sapper
 Phil McCann 0417423450
 Chris MacGregor 02 4472 3250
 Norm Martin 02 4953 1331
 Jock Meldrum MID 0456 002 701
 Roelof Methorst 0411473817
 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
 Gordon Temby 0419954658
 Peter Thorp MID 0405845787
 "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 RIP Sapper
 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
 Ray Clark 08 9772 1162
 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 0498566508
 Garry Lourigan 02 4844 5545
 Darcy McKenzie RIP Sapper
 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 Taitler - RIP Sapper
 Gordon Temby 08 9757 2016
 Peter Vandenberg RIP Sapper
 Brian Wakefield 0427350713
 Kevin White 02 8517 3278
 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



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 John Thiel
 drjthiel@gmail.com
 Mark Morrison
 Imorrison18@cox.net

A high-angle, blue-tinted photograph of two soldiers in a trench. One soldier is kneeling in the foreground, facing right, holding a rifle. The other soldier is standing behind him, also holding a rifle. The trench walls are visible on either side, and the ground is uneven and textured. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

**“The ultimate evolvement
of the Combat engineer”**

**SPECIAL
OPERATIONS
ENGINEER
REGIMENT**

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

FROM THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION