



HOLDFAST

June 2022 - Number 41

www.tunnelrats.com.au

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VIETNAM TUNNEL RATS ASSOCIATION INC.



**WE'VE
GONE
TROPPO!**

**TOWNSVILLE IN AUGUST
VIETNAM IN NOVEMBER**

Nostalgia Pages



Pages of great pics from the past to amaze and amuse. ABOVE: Australian forces mostly used American C-Rations when out on operations, and this is the P-38 can opener which came with those rations.



OUR COVER

Two great trips coming up, giving us some exceptional opportunities to get together and enjoy our comradeship.

Holdfast Magazine

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How many Sappers does it take to look down a well?



This eight-man Combat Engineer Team of Tunnel Rats was part of a village cordon and search near Dat Do, and one of the team was tasked with dropping down into the village well to search for a suspected tunnel entrance. Naturally the rest of the team took on the role of 'observers'. Tunnels were sometimes found below water level in village wells.

Viet Cong sink US aircraft carrying ship



This heavily laden ship is the USNS Card, heading for Saigon Harbour, Vietnam. Once the ship had anchored on 2nd May 1966, a local Viet Cong guerrilla group sank the ship by attaching a series of charges to her hull. North Vietnam was so impressed they issued a special postage stamp to celebrate.

Apologies for the lateness of this issue

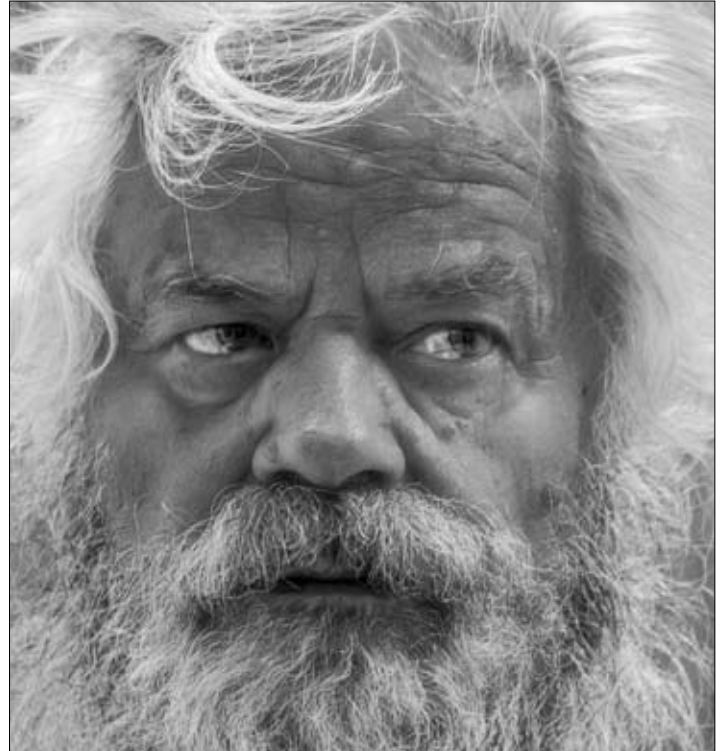
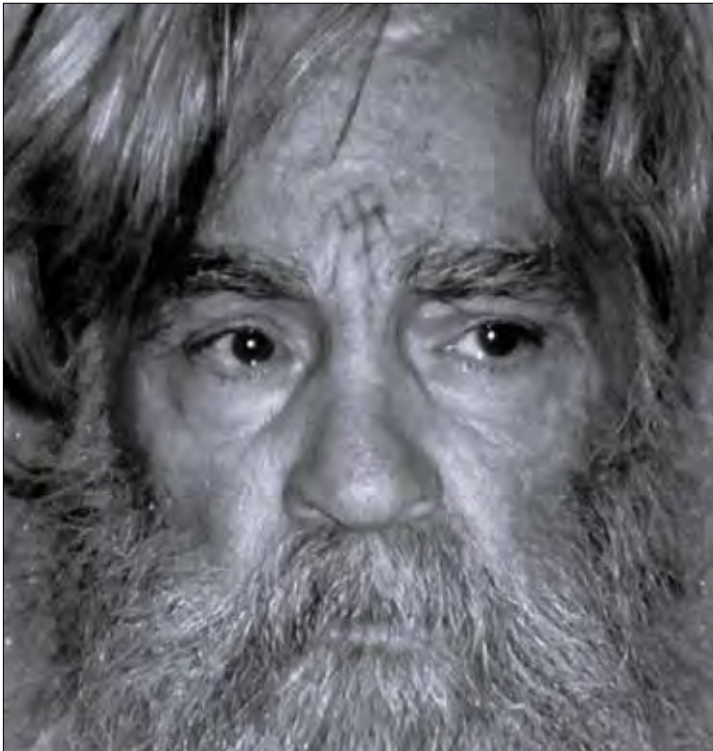
We held up publishing this issue while we waited for the details we needed to announce our trip to Townsville in August and our long awaited trip back to Vietnam in November. Both will be well worth the wait. We provide full details of both trips in this issue.

'Ready to roll' - Infantry and Tunnel Rats atop APCs



Tunnel Rat Frank Denley took this photo from a fourth APC within the group. The Infantry with their attached Tunnel Rat teams had just been given the order to head into the Long Hai hills, an area notorious for enemy mines and booby traps. The Viet Cong had a well established base camp in the hills, comprising caves, bunkers and tunnels. Due to the threat from enemy mines, it was often the Tunnel Rats who would lead the Infantry platoon into such areas to clear the way. This was always a slow process, but it was an essential tactic in such high risk areas.

Were they separated at birth?



On the left: Charles Manson, an American wacko who led the Manson Family, a California based cult which committed a series of nine murders at four locations in July and August 1969. And on the right, Tunnel Rat Harry 'Hi-Fi' Klopocic who served with 1 Troop 1967/68. Harry now lives in Vung Tau, and is our official photographer on the Tunnel Rats tours back to Vietnam. The big question is; were these two lads separated at birth, neither knowing what weird stuff their 'twin brother' was up to out there in the world?

Captured Viet Cong head off to prison



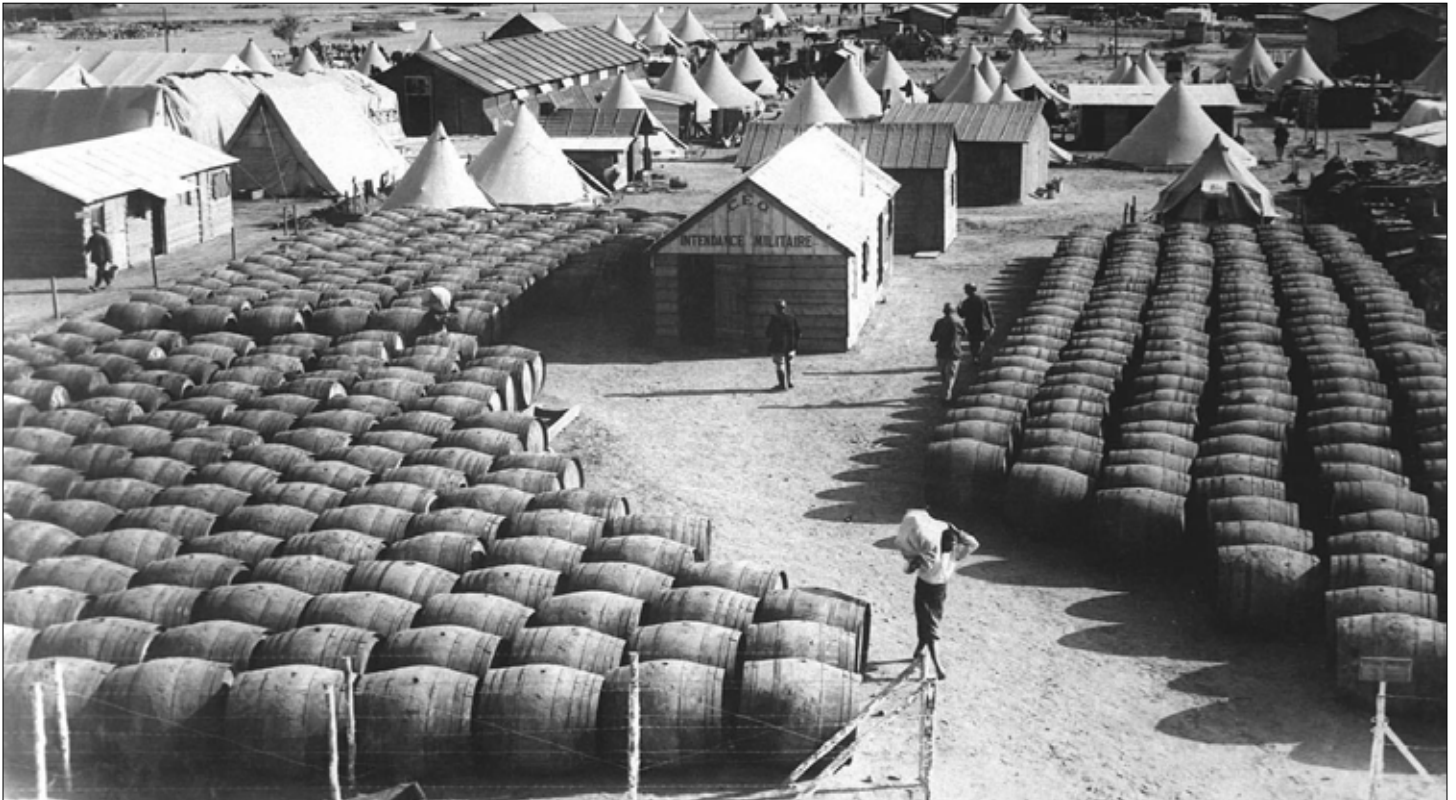
Tunnel Rat Micheal Weston (in the foreground) was on Operation Goodwood (3 December - 17 February 1969) when a large number of Viet Cong were captured. Several of the prisoners can be seen being led onto a truck for transport to prison. Operatoon Goodwood was a reaction to a dramatic increase in VC activity that suggested an offensive was being planned.

VC innovation



The VC have converted this old mortar round into a booby trap by inserting a fuze and tripwire into the top of the round. The fuze likely came from an 'instant' version of the US M-26 grenade. These grenades had no delay period after 'pulling the pin'.

The French certainly knew how to go to war



This photo was taken in Vietnam early in the French-Indochina war, around the late 1940s. It was the tradition for French forces to be issued with a daily ration of red wine, and the impressive array of wine barrels above gives an idea of the quantity required to meet the commitment. The wine was '*vin ordinaire*' rather than top shelf stuff, and it would be interesting to know how the wine was affected by sitting outside exposed to Vietnam's relentless heat and sun.

An angry young man



When a cordon and search of a village was carried out, all the occupants had to move out of their homes to a secure compound while the search was done by the Tunnel Rats. The older boy above is clearly pissed off at being moved out, along with his younger brothers. Incidents like this no doubt helped the VC recruit young men from the villages.

An Aussie approved girlie bar



The big letter 'A' in the window of this bar indicated the Australian army had approved the bar as a place Aussie soldiers could visit while on leave in Vung Tau. Nobody could explain what the criteria was for approval, and it certainly never stopped the girls inside from ripping you off on drinks charges and fixed dice games.

“Can you blow us out of this bog with a bit of C4 Sapper?”



By the time Tunnel Rats were well into their 12 month tour of duty, they became very skilled at blowing stuff up. But creating a 'lifting charge' big enough to get this 50 ton Centurion tank out of its bog would have been beyond the best of us! The Centurion tanks were a highly successful introduction into the war in Vietnam, but the soft soil of the wet season saw many a tank sink down 'to the gunnels. The only solution was an arduous towing process.

That's what mates are for!



Tunnel Rats Mick Van Poeteren (left) and Greg Gough are out bush and Mick is looking a little 'down in the dumps', perhaps thinking of home or a nice big juicy steak. Rather than offering comforting advice, Greg 'takes the piss' out of Mick with a classic finger sign for the photo.

Looking out for any danger ahead



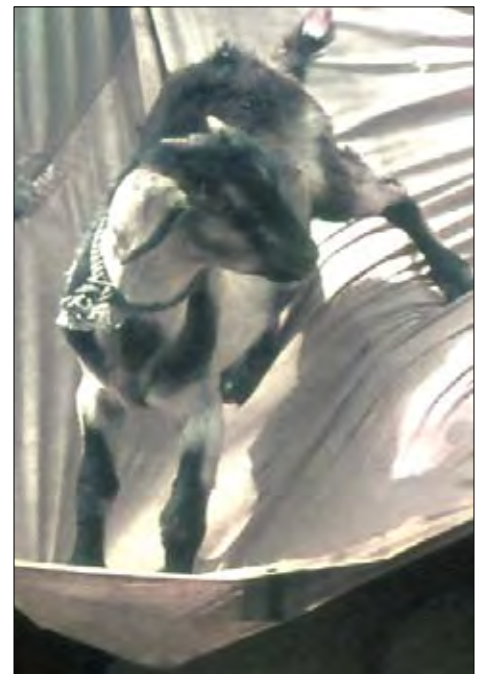
On Operation Cung Chung in June 1970, Tunnel Rat Colin Spies is sitting on top of this APC, directly behind the driver. They are heading into an ambush position to be conducted by the APCs of B Squadron, 3CAV. Colin's task is to keep an eye out for any signs of enemy anti-vehicle mines as they progress towards the ambush position - a difficult thing to do while on the move.

Sometimes the photographer is also pissed



This photo was taken back in base, in the 2TP recreation hut where we often enjoyed a few beers after a long operation out bush. It seems the photographer had consumed a few too many beers as well. Left to right, are Jock McMullen, Jimmy Paiano and Jim Maret. It must have been 'Funny Hat Night'.

It was a tough life for pets



Dogs and monkeys were common pets in 1FD SQN, but one Sapper somehow managed to acquire a Billy Goat. Billy is seen above after having escaped to 2TP and lodging himself on the awning above the entrance into Bob Ottery's tent. One issue with having pets was that when you went bush the pet had nothing to eat. Escaping and finding a new owner was the only solution.



2022/23 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have not already renewed your membership this year, renew now to ensure you keep receiving our fabulous newsletter "Holdfast". Membership cards will be produced and posted once we have most of the renewals in.

We have an option below where you can provide a donation to help us cover the costs. Your response on this in the past has been excellent and much appreciated.

Please tick and answer one of the following, and return the form so that we can update our records.

- I'm paying the normal membership fee
- I'm paying the normal membership fee plus a donation detailed below
- I already paid recently

HOW TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP – DIRECT BANK DEPOSIT AVAILABLE

Fill in the details below and pay by either Direct Bank Deposit, credit card, or by cheque or postal order made out to **Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association**. If paying by credit card or Direct Bank Deposit you can renew by copying or scanning the completed form below and emailing it to tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com or you can simply photograph the completed form with your phone and text it to: Jim Marett at 0403 041 962.

Name:	Service Number:
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Units served with (Please tick and fill in date details below)	
<input type="radio"/> 3 Field Troop	From Till
<input type="radio"/> 1 Troop 1 Field Squadron	From Till
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Please tick and detail the amount you are paying and your method of payment below:	
<input type="radio"/> I am paying the normal \$50 membership	
<input type="radio"/> I am paying the \$50 membership plus a donation of \$ Total payment is \$	
<input type="radio"/> I am paying by Credit Card . We accept Visa, Master Card and American Express (Please note: your credit card bank statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics")	
Card number	Expiry Date
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<input type="radio"/> I am paying by Cheque/money order payable to Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association	
<input type="radio"/> I am paying by Direct Bank Deposit (email or text us confirmation when you have made the deposit to help us identify your payment. Account name: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association Inc. Bank: Commonwealth Bank BSB number: 063-165 Account number: 10494523	
Email to: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com	
Or post to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142	

Photocopy or scan this page if you prefer not to cut the page from the newsletter



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

Negotiate your leave pass and book now, our next tour back to Vietnam is on for this November 18 to 27

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. Plus we visit the Cu Chi Tunnels, the barrier minefield area 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.

**10 days
9 nights
\$1180 PP
Twin Share**

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 or after 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 Friday 18th November and from there the Tour begins.

The first event is on the 18th November – welcome drinks and dinner, so 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 27 November. 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 Boozers' 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. Despite us now staying in much better hotels in Saigon and Vung Tau, we have been able to keep the cost of the tour remarkably low, and even better value than ever before: \$1180 if you are sharing a room, and \$370 extra (total \$1550) if you want a room on your own.



Stroll along Vung Tau's Front Beach to the Grand Hotel and walk through the streets you wandered down all those years ago.

Lots of great tours and activities plus the opportunity to share the incredible levels of comradeship we enjoy on these trips

OUR TOUR ORGANISERS



We have been working very closely with Mrs. Tran Minh Phuong ('Sam') and Mr. Kelvin Luong, both of Asiana Link Travel in Saigon over the last few months. Our aim is ensure we maintain the same exceptional experiences we have been enjoying for many years on our tours back to Vietnam through the late Mr. Ha. And just as importantly, Sam and Kelvin have helped us keep our costs down, even when they have upgraded the level of our hotels for this coming tour.

TOTAL COST FOR THE TOUR

The full cost for the 10 day, 9 night tour is \$1,180 per person if you are sharing a room (twin share). If you prefer a room on your own, the extra cost is \$370 (a total of \$1550) to cover the hotel single 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 Palace Hotel Saigon including buffet breakfast.
- Five nights in The Palace Hotel Vung Tau including buffet breakfast.
- Ferry tickets Saigon to Vung Tau and return Vung Tau to Saigon.
- 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 Welcome Dinner and Farewell Dinner, around \$60 each.
- Our dinner with the NVA musicians, around \$25.
- Donation to buy milk and rice for the orphanage, around \$20 each.
- Combined tip for the tour organiser, tour guides, bus driver etc: \$30 each.
- Lunch on the Cu Chi tour, around \$5.

TUNNEL RATS TOUR BACK TO VIETNAM - 18 NOV TO 27 NOV 2022



DAY 1 - Friday 18 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 The Palace hotel Saigon. After check-in you are free to roam, but be back in time for the 1800h start of our Welcome drinks and dinner gathering.

DAY 2 - SATURDAY 19 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. 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. Our tour organiser has many options available.**

DAY 3 - SUNDAY 20 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 Palace 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 (two-minutes walk away).

DAY 4 – MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER

The orphanage at Baria, the Binh Gia VC Memorial Cemetery, and various mine incident sites: 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 memorial cemetery for the NVA and VC killed in the area, before heading out to various mine incident sites. 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 5 – TUESDAY 22 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 and beers amongst the rubber trees.

DAY 6 – WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER (Optional)

The Long Hai Hills, the Horseshoe base and visits to various mine incident sites: 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 make a stop at the Horseshoe base site before visiting several mine incident sites. Then it's time to head back to the hotel in Vung Tau. The rest of the afternoon and evening is free. **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 through our tour organiser.**

DAY 7 – THURSDAY 24 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 organisers so they can arrange it for you.

DAY 8 - FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER

Ferry back to Saigon plus (optional) Subterranean Saigon and Saigon Highlights tour: Our bus departs the hotel at 0900h to the ferry terminal for a 1000h ferry departure, while our bus takes our luggage to Saigon. After our check-in at The Palace Hotel Saigon, have a quick lunch before our bus departs for the (optional) 'Subterranean Saigon' tour visiting VC bunkers and tunnels under homes and shops, used by the VC for weapons storage, print shops and hideouts. Followed by a quick Saigon Highlights tour to see some of Saigon's key attractions.

DAY 9 - SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER (Optional)

Visit to the former VC base in the Rung Sat 'Secret' zone: Our bus departs the hotel at 0900h for the Rung Sat area where we board a series of fast boats which take us through the swamps to the restored former VC camp. The bus then takes us back to the hotel in Saigon. At 1800h we have our Farewell drinks and dinner gathering. **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. Our tour organiser has many options available.**

DAY 10 - SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER

Time to head home: (Unless you have chosen to stay on for an extra day or so to chill out). 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.

TUNNEL RATS TOUR BACK TO VIETNAM - 18 NOV TO 27 NOV 2022

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



Visit to the restored VC base in the Rung Sat zone



Current serving Sapper, WO2 Tom Vallas (bottom right) gets into the spirit of things at our Designated Boozer in Saigon (the same great place as last tour)



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



We visit the site of 'mine incidents and hear first hand accounts what took place



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

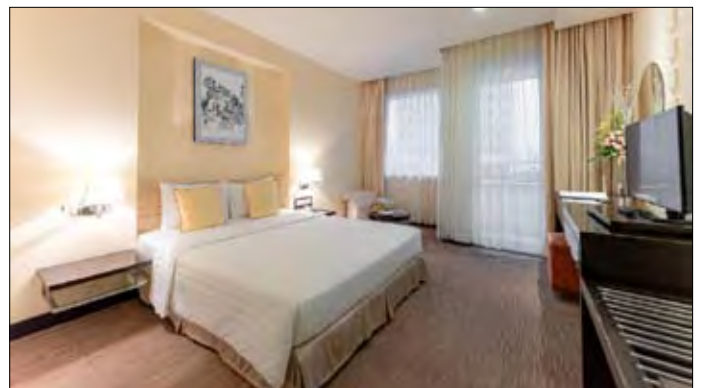


Following our ceremony at Nui Dat we hold a fully catered sit-down 'BBQ amongst the rubber trees. And you can tour our old troop lines after lunch.

Our Saigon hotel - perfect location and great value for us

The Palace Hotel Saigon

Our first two nights and last two nights of the tour are at the four star Palace Hotel. It's in a great location and just a two-minute walk to our Designated Boozer (the same one we enjoyed so much on our 2019 tour). The Palace Hotel is surrounded by a great shopping and restaurant area including the famous Dong Khoi Street. The hotel represents excellent value and provides a superb buffet breakfast which is included in our tour price.



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

The Palace Hotel Vung Tau

We'll be staying in the perfectly located four star Palace 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 within the hotel as well.



We have plenty of options for you to tailor your own tour

We have quite a few regulars on our tours, including some who have been on all eight 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.

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 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.



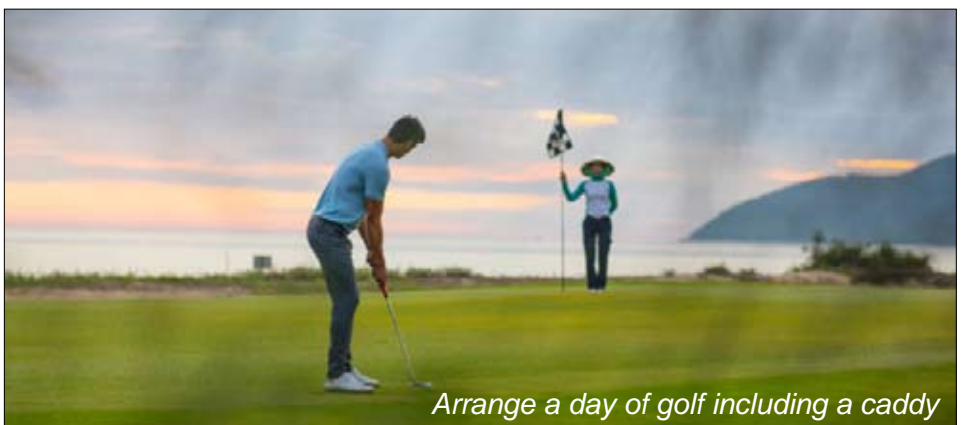
Tour the fascinating and historic Mekong Delta region



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 'Sam' at Asiana Link Travel by email on: sam@asianalink.com or by mobile on: +84 937 411 088

Current Serving Sappers are again invited to join us on the tour



ABOVE: Following our remembrance ceremony in 2015 in Vietnam, current serving Combat Engineers from 1CER assemble behind the old ceremonial rock still in place at the former 1FD SQN HQ area at our old base camp in Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy Province. (Left to right: CPL Jack Downing, SPR Teagan Murphy, SPR Trent Prestage, SPR Jacob Webb, SPR Ryan Best, SPR Damon Hill, LT Stephanie Sheldon, SPR Lindsey Albion, SPR Guy Hill, SGT David Myers and L/CPL Bryce Maybury (ranks at the time).

Current serving Sappers (male and female of all ranks) and Afghanistan era Sapper veterans are invited to join our tour - as long as they have served or currently serve 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.

An aspect of our tour which is always of great interest to current serving Sappers is when we visit the actual sites of mine inci-

HOT TIP

Current serving Sappers joining us on past tours have been able to do so without losing any of their leave. Their unit has treated the tours as beneficial training.

dents. We do this with men who were there at the incidents, and they talk us through what took place all those years ago. Many of the presenters on these visits were wounded in the incident they are describing, so we are witnessing living history. These are unique experiences for us all, and valuable training for current serving Sappers.

Plus on the tour there will be the very special 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. It almost makes us feel young again!

If you're a current serving or Afghanistan era Sapper veteran and you wish to join us on the tour, simply fill in the form and pay the deposit. Or if you have any questions about the tour, contact Jim Marett on: 0403 041 962 or by email on: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com

If you know a Sapper who has been on one of our tours in the past, have a chat to him about the experience - he will no doubt rave about it!

Phuoc Tuy Province before we arrived



After the Second World War ended, French forces re-entered Vietnam to continue running their old colony. On 9 February 1946, the French forces reoccupied Ba Ria Province – with columns advancing along Route 15 through Long Thanh and also through Xuan Loc, down Route 2 to seize Ba Ria Town. Resistance was light, with the French briefly engaging a Viet Minh ‘Republican Guard’ force on Route 15 at Phuoc Hoa.

Government control was quickly re-established in the province under Bui The Kham as the province chief and Lieutenant Colonel Pougin de la Maissonneuve as the sector commander. The local Viet Minh reacted promptly, forming the Quang Trung force at Long Phuoc village in 1946, and by the end of that year had reportedly grown to 25 ‘secret self-defence guerrilla units’ covering 40 villages across the province. Rubber plantation workers in the Route 2 area provided recruits, and further units were raised: the 16 Detachment, the 307 Regiment (established in May 1948) and

In the years building up to the arrival of the Australian Task Force in Phuoc Tuy Province, the area had become a hotbed of enemy activity and was highly unstable

the 397 Regiment (December 1949, combining the 307 and 309 Regiments). During this period, the Viet Minh were mostly active in the central and eastern areas of Ba Ria Province – principally in the Dat Do area, and from their Minh Dam Secret Zone bases in the Long Hai hills. However, the 700-strong Viet Minh 300 Battalion operated against Route 15 – principally interdicting the route in the Phu My area on the Ba Ria Province/Bien Hoa border and to the north. In September 1947, the route was cut by the Viet Minh

TOP: In February 1946 French forces come ashore at Vung Tau to reoccupy Ba Ria Province, later renamed Phuoc Tuy Province.

for almost five years. Road traffic from Saigon to Vung Tau was forced to travel eastward along Route 1 to Xuan Loc Town, and then south down Route 2 to Ba Ria and on to Vung Tau – a total distance of 155 kilometres, or to Long Hai on the shore of the South China Sea.

In early May 1953, a French officer, Capitaine Joseph Suacot (called ‘la Panthère noire’ by the Viet Minh), led elements of the 64 Vietnamese Infantry Battalion on a sortie into the Hat Dich. The force was ambushed by the Viet Minh’s 3 Company/300 Battalion – and Captain Suacot was killed. Six months later, on 5 November 1953, 3 and 4 Companies of 300 Battalion attacked a French convoy 2 kilometres from Binh Ba Subsector and killed Lieutenant Colonel de la Maissonneuve, the sector commander, a captain, a number of officers, and 60 soldiers of the local ‘65th BVN (Bataillon Vietnamien).



ABOVE: In 1952 French Forces capture two Viet Minh soldiers 1.5 km north of Binh Ba village.

In 1955, large numbers of Vietnamese Catholics moved from the North and were settled in the South. The government of Ngo Dinh Diem settled many of these refugees in Phuoc Tuy – principally in the villages of Binh Gia, Binh Ba and Phuoc Tinh, but also in villages along Route 15 including Phu My, Ong Trinh South, Phuoc Hoa, Lang Cat and Long Huong. The Saigon government established posts along Route 15 manned by the Civil Guard/Civil Defence Force (Bao An – later the Regional Forces) and the paramilitary Self-Defence Corps (Dan Ve – later the Popular Forces), but bandits from the Rung Sat continued to harass travellers and commercial traffic on Route 15.

At the beginning of 1958, the Military Committee of the communists' Eastern Region appointed Le Minh Thinh to take a section and a radio to Ba Ria and organise an armed force. After more than 20 days of cutting through the jungle and crossing hills, the group of Eastern Region military cadre reached central Phuoc Tuy. In June 1958, a provincial 40-strong VC C-40 Company was established with a base in the Hat Dich area in the west of the province.

On 12 March 1960, as part of a broader uprising movement, the Ba Ria Province Committee's C-40 Company attacked Binh Ba village on Route 2. This attack reportedly began the armed uprising movement across the whole Province. In April 1960, a second VC company, C-45 Company was raised and operated to the west of Route 2 as a mobile unit to defend the Hat Dich base and to

The black Panther



After the end of World War II Joseph Suacot volunteered for service in Indochina. The district of Long Thanh, sub-sector of Bien Hoa was entrusted to him. He was promoted to captain and assigned to the first battalion of the 22nd Ric. In 1952 he served with the French military mission to the government of South Vietnam and then took command of the 4th company of the 64th infantry battalion of Viet Nam, operating in the Baria region (later named Phuoc Tuy Province).

It was there that the enemy nicknamed him “the Black Panther”, because of his intrepidity and because he dressed his men in black just like the Vietminh resistance fighters. His superiors admired his total disregard for danger and his fine qualities as a war leader, considering him; *“an officer of legendary energy and tenacity. He was constantly on the go, always at the forefront of the fight, relentlessly harassing the adversary, with audacity and courage bordering on recklessness, galvanizing his troops by his example.”*

On May 11, 1954, a few weeks before the end of hostilities, he set out with his customary audacity for a raid in the rebel zone of Hat-Dich. He was wounded by a bullet in the abdomen during the assault. Compressing his wound with one hand, he continued to command, but died of his wounds several hours later.

His grave, in the cemetery of his birthplace in France is the subject of attentive and constant care and is in the process of becoming a heritage site. In Petite-Île, a college and a street bear his name. In Saint-Pierre, the soldiers of the 4th RSMAR called their Terre-Rouge camp “Quartier Suacot”.

harass both Route 2 and Route 15. With declining security, in 1960 the Saigon government established a Route 15 Security Task Force to protect commerce on the route and provide safety for Saigon elites travelling to their villas in Vung Tau and Long Hai.

In 1962, the VC's C-40 and C-45 Companies were reportedly combined as the C-445 Provincial Company (D445 Battalion's predecessor).

In early 1962, the Saigon government established the headquarters of the Phuoc Bien Special Zone in a camp beside Route 15, 2 kilometres north of Phu My village, to control security across Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy provinces. To improve security on Route 15, artillery detachments of 105 mm howitzers were based at Phu My, Ong Trinh and Ba Ria; and six of the province's 23 strategic hamlets were developed along Route 15.

The VC also developed fortified 'combat villages' with complex tunnel systems – the largest at Long Tan and Long Phuoc. On 5 March 1963, ARVN) and Regional Forces, with supporting M113 APCs and 105 mm artillery, attacked the fortified VC village of Long Phuoc. Exploiting the extensive system of tunnels, the VC forces reportedly held out for 44 days before withdrawing.

In February 1964, a high-level CIA report for the US Administration noted that the Viet Cong exercise 80% control in Phuoc Tuy. Security responsibility for Phuoc Tuy fell to the ARVN III Corps Zone's 33 Tactical Zone, with its major force as the 5 ARVN Infantry Division, under Colonel (later president) Nguyen Van Thieu, headquartered in Bien Hoa. In the period 1963–66, the VC Ba Ria Province Committee group (up to 60 strong) and its special action element was centred in their Bung Lung base in a treed valley between the Nui Ong Trinh and the Nui Dinh, in the far south of the Hat Dich zone.



The Battle of Binh Gia 28 Dec 1964 - 1 Jan 1965

Binh Gia was the picturesque and strongly Catholic village north of Binh Ba that most of us would have seen or visited during operations in the area. As peaceful as the village looked, it had experienced a massive battle in late 1964, sixteen months before the Australian Task Force arrived at Nui Dat in April 1966.

During the early hours of December 28, 1964, elements of the VC 271st Regiment and the 445th Company began their main attack on Binh Giã by penetrating the village's eastern perimeter. There, they clashed with around 65 members of the South Vietnamese Popu-

TOP: When the battle of Binh Gia was over five Americans and 200 South Vietnamese forces were dead, and 32 Viet Cong bodies had been left on the battlefield.

ABOVE: Binh Gia was in the centre of Phuoc Tuy Province

lar Force militiamen. The militia fighters proved no match against the overwhelming firepower of the VC, so they quickly retreated into underground bunkers and radioed for help.

Once the village was captured the VC regimental commander, Colonel Ta Minh Kham established his command post in the main village church and waited for fresh reinforcements,



which came in the form of heavy mortars, machine guns and recoilless rifles. To counter South Vietnamese helicopter assaults, Colonel Kham's troops set up a network of defensive fortifications around the village, with trenches and bunkers protected by land mines and barbed wire.

The local Catholic priest, who was also the village chief, sent a bicycle messenger out to the Bà Rịa district headquarters to ask for a relief force. In response, two Ranger battalions were sent to retake Binh Giã.

On December 29, two companies of the ARVN 33rd Ranger Battalion and a company from the 30th Ranger Battalion were airlifted into an area west of Binh Giã, by helicopters from the U.S. 118th Aviation Company. As soon as the soldiers arrived at the landing zone, they were quickly overwhelmed by the VC in a deadly ambush.

The entire 30th Ranger Battalion was then committed to join the attack, but they too did not initially succeed in penetrating the strong VC defensive lines. Several more companies of the Rangers then arrived for an attack from multiple directions.

Two companies of the 33rd Ranger Battalion advanced from the northeast. One of them came to the outskirts of the village but was unable to break through the VC defences. The other one, trying to outflank the enemy, had been lured into a kill zone in open terrain and was quickly obliterated in an ambush by the three VC battalions using heavy weapons.

The two companies suffered a 70 percent casualty rate, and survivors were forced to retreat to the nearby Catholic church. The 30th Rangers had more success by assaulting from the western direction and succeeded in fighting their way into the village, aided by local residents. It however also suffered heavy losses, with the battalion commander and his American adviser being severely wounded.

On the morning of December 30, the 4th South Vietnamese Marine Battalion at Bien Hoa Air Base was airlifted into the battlefield. They advanced towards the Catholic church and linked up with the 30th, 33rd and 38th Ranger Battalions. That afternoon the 4th Marine Battalion recaptured the village, but the VC

ABOVE: The sun breaks through the jungle foliage around the embattled town of Binh Gia, 6km north of Binh Ba in early January 1965, as South Vietnamese troops joined by U.S. advisers, rest after a night of waiting in ambush position for a Viet Cong attack that didn't come.

were nowhere to be seen, as all their units had withdrawn from the village during the previous night, linking with other VC elements in the forest to attack the government relief forces.

On the evening of December 30, the VC returned to Binh Giã and attacked from the south-eastern perimeter of the village. The local villagers, who discovered the approaching VC, immediately sounded the alarm to alert the ARVN soldiers defending the village. The South Vietnamese were able to repel the VC, with support from U.S. Army helicopter gunships flown in from Vung Tau airbase.

Acting against the advice of his American advisor, Major Nguyễn Văn Nho, commander of the 4th Marine Battalion, sent his 2/4th Marine Battalion company out to the Quảng Giao rubber plantation. Unknown to the 4th



Marine Battalion, the VC 271st Regiment had assembled in the plantation. About one hour after they had departed from the village of Bình Giã, the commander of the 2/4th Marine Battalion reported in via radio, then shortly afterwards, the VC opened fire and the 2/4th Marine Battalion was forced to pull back.

In an attempt to save the 2nd Company, the entire 4th Marine Battalion was sent out to confront the VC. As the lead element of the 4th Marine Battalion closed in on the Quảng Giao plantation, they were hit by accurate VC artillery fire, which was soon followed by repeated human wave attacks. Having taken heavy casualties from the VC's ambush, the 2/4th Marine Battalion had to fight their way out of the plantation with their bayonets fixed.

During the entire ordeal, the company did not receive artillery support because the plantation was beyond the range of 105mm artillery guns based in Phuoc Tuy. They however escaped with the crucial support of the U.S. aircraft and helicopters whose rocket at-

tacks forced the enemy to pull back, and halted their attempt at pursuit.

On the morning of December 31, the 4th Marine Battalion returned to the site, where they located American graves and recovered their corpses. At about 3pm, a U.S. helicopter arrived on the battlefield to evacuate the bodies. Instead of waiting for helicopters to arrive for the South Vietnamese casualties, at 4pm Major Nguyễn Văn Nho ordered the 4th Marine Battalion to carry their casualties back to the village.

As the 4th Marine Battalion began their return march, three VC battalions, with artillery support, suddenly attacked them from three directions. The 4th Marine Battalion's commanding and executive officers were immediately killed. Two Marine companies managed to fight their way out of the ambush and back to Bình Giã, but the third was overrun and almost completely wiped out. The fourth company desperately held out at a hilltop against VC artillery barrages and large infantry charg-

Survivor of the Battle of Binh Gia, US Marine LT P. Brady indicates where the Viet Cong attackers had advanced from

es, before slipping out through the enemy positions at dawn.

The 4th Marine Battalion of 426 men lost a total of 117 soldiers killed, 71 wounded and 13 missing. Among the casualties were 35 officers of the 4th Marine Battalion killed in action, and the four American advisers attached to the unit were also wounded. Backed by U.S. Air Force bombers, on January 1, three battalions of ARVN Airborne reinforcements arrived, but they were too late as most of the VC had already withdrawn from the battlefield.

This is the environment Australian forces then entered into in Phuoc Tuy Province in April 1966 when the Nui Dat base camp was established.

Acknowledgement: With extracts from 'Vietnam Vanguard' published by Australian National University Press

Our 'Nasho' Tunnel Rats who made the supreme sacrifice in Vietnam

The Tunnel Rats lost 35 men killed in Action in Vietnam, and we remember and honour every one of them. In this issue we take a special look at the 17 of those brave men who were National Servicemen. These men were carrying out just two years of service, and had been posted to Vietnam for 12 months - half of their total term of service. Sadly, these men never got to come home to their loved ones.



Sapper Glen Bartholomew was from Lismore, NSW. Glen was killed in action while laying mines in the Barrier minefield, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on May 10 1967. Glen was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper



Sapper Peter Bramble was from Taree, NSW. Peter died of wounds suffered while laying mines in the Barrier minefield, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on May 22 1967. Peter was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper



Sapper Geoffrey Coombs was from Smithton Tasmania. Geoff was killed in action in a mine incident in the Long Hai Hills, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on March 22 1968. Geoff was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper



Sapper Greg Brady was from Goondiwindi, Queensland, and was a wool classer when he was called up in 1965. Greg was killed in action while laying mines in the Barrier minefield, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on May 20 1967. Greg was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Dennis Brooks was from Melbourne, Victoria, and was wounded while laying mines in the Barrier minefield, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on May 22 1967. He died of his wounds at 24 US Evacuation Hospital, Long Binh, 13 days later. Dennis was aged 22 at the time. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Ramon Deed was from Mildura, Victoria. Ramon was killed in action while laying mines in the Barrier minefield, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on May 10 1967. Ramon was 21 years old at the time of his death. He was honoured with a full Military Funeral in Mildura. Rest in Peace Sapper



Sapper Alan Duncuff was from Subiaco, Western Australia. Alan was killed in action while clearing a booby trap in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on October 25 1969. Alan was 21 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper John Greene was from Paddington, NSW. John was killed in action when an APC hit an anti-vehicle mine in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on 8 December 1969. John was 21 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Anthony Hollis was from Sydney, NSW when he was called up. Tony was killed in action in a mine incident on January 30 1970 in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam. Tony was 23 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Harold Hurst was from Bathurst, NSW. Harry was killed in action in an anti-vehicle mine incident near Binh Ba in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on April 29 1970. Harry was 21 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Anthony Lisle was from Rockhampton, Queensland. Tony was killed in action after an enemy contact in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam. He died of his severe RPG wounds, aged 22 on November 12 1969. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper John O'Hara was from Woolongong NSW, and was killed in action while laying mines in the Barrier Minefield, Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on May 20 1967. John was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Honouring our 35 fallen comrades on one of our regular trips back to Vietnam. We conduct these ceremonies at the old HQ of 1 Field Squadron at Nui Dat.



Sapper Peter Penneyston was a carpenter from Queenstown Tasmania. Peter was killed in action in a mine incident in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on August 2 1970. Peter was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Terrence Renshaw was from Rutherglen Victoria, and was killed in action on May 30 1967 while laying mines in the Barrier minefield in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam. Terry was 22 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper Ian Scott was from Charleville Queensland, and was killed in action on June 15 1970 in Phuoc Tuy Province Vietnam when an APC he was travelling on struck a mine. Ian was 21 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper.



Sapper John Smith was originally from Grimsby UK, and was killed in action in a mine incident while clearing a road in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam on July 23 1969. John was 21 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper



Sapper David Steen was from the Falkland Islands and was killed in action on February 18 1968 during the battle of Fire Support Base Andersen near Bien Hoa. Geoff was 21 years old at the time of his death. Rest in Peace Sapper

“We still see their faces and we still hear their voices”

BELOW LEFT: Our Piper Ross Brewer and our local Bugler bring a special touch to our ceremonies at Nui Dat.

BELOW RIGHT: A group of current serving Sappers from 1CER honour our fallen on our 2015 tour.



BY INVITATION FROM 3CER OUR TOWNSVILLE VISIT AND REUNION IS ON FOR AUGUST 17-21



After being cancelled last year due to COVID-19, our reunion and visits to 3 Combat Engineer Regiment (3CER) in Townsville have been revived following an invitation we received from the CO of 1CER, LT COL Ken Golder.

Not only have we been invited to visit their base and attend their 30th Anniversary Parade at 3CER, but also to join them at their Sapper's Ball to be held at the Townsville Convention Centre, which will be attended by all members of 3CER. These are exceptional opportunities for us to meet and mix with the brave young Sappers of today – and to share our mutual stories of service and comradeship.

Our gathering in Townsville is

TOP: 3CER Sappers heading out on an exercise in Far North Queensland. ABOVE: 3CER Sappers on parade.

a 'blokes only affair'. This is what we are catering for in terms of our activities and gatherings. Whilst we are attending their Ball, we will be there, not for the dancing, but for the comradeship around the Tunnel Rats tables, and the comradeship of socialising with the young Sappers of today.

The members of 3CER have put together an exceptional se-

ries of events and activities for us. Dress standard for the reunion is casual - except for the Anniversary Parade which is 'Smart Casual', and the Sapper's Ball, which for the Tunnel Rats is 'Jacket and tie' while members of The Regiment will be wearing formal.

We have also been invited by the Thuringowa RSL to attend their Vietnam Veteran's Day



Lieutenant Colonel Ken Golder, CSC, Commanding Officer
&
Warrant Officer Class One Michael Smith, Regimental Sergeant Major

3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, Royal Australian Engineers

Request the pleasure of the company of

Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association

To attend the 30th Year Anniversary Parade
of the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment

Held at the
4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery Parade Ground, Lavarack Barracks
on Friday, 19th August 2022, commencing at 09:30 AM

R.S.V.P to the POC NLT 17 June 2022

CAPT Callum Griffiths, ADJT 3 CER

callum.griffiths@defence.gov.au

0420 641 600

Dress for serving members is Dress 2C

Dress for non-serving members is neat casual

service, after which their bar will be open. Army bus transport to and from the base and our hotel, and to the Convention Centre and the Thuringowa RSL is being kindly provided by 3CER. Please book for the reunion and associated events early using the form provided. We need to provide our numbers ASAP to 3CER so they can cater for us at the Sapper's Ball. The cost of the Sapper's Ball including dinner (\$75) is the only thing we need to pay for, apart from our own hotel room and meals. We will each arrange our own flights and book our own hotel rooms – we are recommending we all stay at Rydges Southbank Townsville. This will make it easy for the Army transport to pick us up and drop us off, plus Rydges is just a short walk to our 'Designated Boozer', The Australian Hotel.

Our day-by-day itinerary Wednesday 17th August

We all arrive in Townsville this day, to be ready to head out next morning on our first activity. After checking in to the hotel, make your way to our designated boozer, The Australian Hotel at



TOP: Our invitation from 3CER to their 30th Anniversary Parade
MIDDLE: Our recommended hotel, Rydges Southbank Townsville
ABOVE: Our Designated Boozer, The Australian Hotel

11 Palmer Street South Townsville, a short walk from Rydges Hotel. At The Australian hotel the Tunnel Rats will be gathering in the main bar. Here you will receive the latest itinerary for the next four days, plus your reunion name-badge. Members of the North Queensland Sappers Association will join us for drinks, and will attend several of our activities and events.

Thursday 18th August

We will be picked up by Army bus at 09000h to arrive at Thuringowa RSL (home of the North Queensland Sappers Association) for their Vietnam Veteran's Day service, followed by convivial drinks. Following this we will head out to 3CER where the Sappers will be running through training and development sessions, and of course practicing for their parade the following day. We will then be returned by bus to our hotel, where we can freshen up and (if you wish), meet up at the designated boozer for drinks and dinner.

Friday 19th August

We will be picked up by bus to take us to 3CER for the big Anniversary Parade and associated activities. We will then be returned to our hotel to freshen up and change, ready for the Sapper's Ball.

Saturday 20th August

This is a free day for us, but that evening we will have a very casual farewell gathering in the outdoor bistro area of The Australian Hotel. We will invite some officers and senior NCO's of 3CER as our guests, and hopefully a few others from the Regiment will attend. We will individually order our own food and drinks from the bistro menu.

Sunday 21st August

Time to head home, though some may stay on longer to spend more time with their mates or to tour around Townsville and the region.



TOP: Our invitation to the 3CER 'Sapper's Ball'. Cost for the Ball including dinner is \$75 per person, and dress for us is jacket and tie.

ABOVE; The outdoor bistro area at the Australian Hotel where we will be having our casual farewell dinner, with Sappers from 1CER joining us.



BOOKING FORM FOR OUR VISIT TO TOWNSVILLE AND 3CER INCLUDING THE SAPPERS BALL: AUGUST 17 – 21 2022

Yes, I will be attending the Tunnels Rats reunion in Townsville, including attending the 3CER 30 th Anniversary Parade, the Sapper's Ball, plus the Vietnam Veteran's Day service.	
Name:	
Mobile number:	Phone number (landline):
Address:	
Postcode:	
Email address:	
The cost for the Ball including dinner is \$75 per person	
Please mark a cross below to indicate your method of payment:	
<input type="radio"/> By EFT deposit into our bank account Bank: Commonwealth Bank BSB: 063165 Account Number: 10494523 Account name: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association Reference: Sappers Ball	
<input type="radio"/> By credit card. We accept: Visa, Mastercard and American Express Name on card: Card number: Expiry date: Three or four digit CVC: <i>(Please note: Card bank statement will read "Ultimate Design Graphics Pty Ltd")</i>	
<input type="radio"/> Cheque or Australia Post Money Order – payable to Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association Email this form to: tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com Or photograph the form on your phone: then text it to Jim Marett at 0403 041 962 Or post this form to: Vietnam Tunnel Rats Assoc 43 Heyington Place Toorak Vic 3142	

SAPPER SNIPPETS

3 Combat Engineer Regiment - busy on all fronts

We will be visiting 3CER in August to join in on the Regiment's 30th Anniversary celebrations.

TOP RIGHT: Sapper Guy Phillips from the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment works alongside a US Marine, during clearance of an enemy stronghold at Townsville Field Training Area.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Members of 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment make their way through the notorious obstacle course in their Townsville training area.

BOTTOM LEFT: Australian Army soldier Lance Corporal Hamish Burnie from 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment shakes hands with a Papua New Guinea Defence Force soldier after a game of rugby played at Igam Barracks in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Australian Army officer Lieutenant Lachlan Tracey (left) from 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment talks with Papua New Guinea Defence Force soldier Lance Corporal Christopher Jack at Igam Barracks in Lae, Papua New Guinea.



SOER soldiers dealing with some of the nasty stuff

Australian Army special operations force soldiers from the Special Operations Engineer Regiment prepare to immobilise a variety of explosive devices as part of a training activity at Holsworthy Barracks, Sydney.

The combat engineers and other technical specialists from the Special Operations Engineer Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks, Sydney, offer unique and vital technical enablement skills to the Australian Defence Force's special operations capability. They are highly trained to work as an integral part of an expeditionary Special Operations Task Force both within Australia and overseas.



Tunnel Rats feature at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum



The Tunnel Rats are well represented with an excellent long term display at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, Phillip Island, Victoria. The museum has an extensive collection of Vietnam War artefacts and objects, photographs and books, many of them donated by veterans and their families. From helicopters to Zippo lighters, from a Centurion tank to a letter home. The museum began as a travelling ‘museum’ trailer, and grew through committed volunteers working to display, store, and catalogue their collection.

Tunnel Rats List: If you served in 3FD TP or 1, 2 or 3 Troop of 1 FD SQN in Vietnam and want to be added to the list, send your Troop and year details, phone number and address to Graeme Gartside by mail to 9 Park Street Mt Gambier SA 5290 or by email to: ggart@internode.on.net

Our 35 Tunnel Rat comrades who paid the supreme sacrifice while serving in Vietnam

Cpl Bowtell R.W. 11 Jan 66
 Spr Prowse L. 25 Jul 66
 Spr Deed R.J.P. 9 May 67
 Spr Bartholomew G.T. 18 May 67
 Spr O'Hara J.L. 20 May 67
 Spr Brady G.V. 20 May 67
 Spr Brooks D.L. 22 May 67
 Spr Renshaw T.J. 30 May 67
 Spr D.S. Wride 10 Jul 67
 WO2 Moore B.J. 16 Nov 67
 Cpl Hutchinson M. 16 Nov 67
 Sgt McLachlan C. 18 Feb 68
 Spr Pattison A.G. 18 Feb 68
 Spr Steen D.J. 18 Feb 68
 LCpl Garrett J.E. 18 Feb 68
 Spr Coombs 22 Mar 68
 Spr Tobin V.J. 22 Mar 68
 SSgt Gallagher P.J. 5 Apr 68
 Spr Nicholson K.R. 12 Apr 68
 Spr Le Bherz N.W. 14 Sep 68
 Spr Peter Bramble 22 May 69
 Spr Ronald Davies 28 May 69
 Spr Smith J. 23 Jul 69
 Spr Smillie R.G. 23 Jul 69
 LCpl Hansen B.V. 21 Oct 69
 Spr Duncuff A.L. 25 Oct 69
 Spr Lisle A. 12 Nov 69
 Spr Green J.G. 8 Dec 69
 Spr Hollis A.E. 30 Jan 70
 Cpl Engstrom R.J. 30 Jan 70
 Spr Hubble R.N. 28 Feb 70
 Spr Hurst H.W. 29 Apr 70
 Spr Scott I.N. 14 Jun 70
 Spr Penneystone P. 2 Aug 70
 Spr Wilson R.B. 16 Jul 71

List of Tunnel Rats who served in Vietnam (not a complete list) Those who have passed since the war are displayed in grey

3 Field Troop (1965-66)

Ian Biddolph 02 4472 9434
 Brian Cleary 0438 239 387
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
 William Gallagher 07 3298 5680
 Geoff Green 03 6272 8167
 Barry Harford 08 8088 4371
 Brian Hay 03 9444 6098
 Keith Kermod 0427 233 063
 Sandy MacGregor 02 9457 7133
Frank Mallard RIP Sapper
Thomas Mason RIP Sapper
 Keith Mills 07 4770 7267
 Bill Murray 0497 385 732
Warren Murray - RIP Sapper
 John Opie 0427 280 703

Bernie Pollard 08 9248 3178
 David Roper 0427 521 304
Bill Unmeopa - RIP Sapper
 Snow Wilson Jnr 02 6649 3998
Chief Engineer Vietnam
John Hutcheson RIP Sapper
OC 1 Field Squadron
 John Kemp 02 6288 3428
Rex Rowe RIP Sapper
1 Troop (1966-67)
 Ray Bellinger 0407 952 670
 Ray Burton 08 8268 4575
 Ron Carroll 0408 884 327
 Joe Cazey 07 3710 8102

Allan S Coleman RIP Sapper

Grahame Cook 02 4390 5159
 Alan Hammond 0423 491 091
 Cul Hart 0439 536 631
 Ken Jolley 0438 616 733
 Barry Kelly 07 4661 2898
 Axel Kraft 0400 975 599
 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 0419 411 887
 Trevor Shelley 0419 784 954
 Ron Stibble 0447 028 986
 "Jethro" Thompson 0732168906
 Ross Tulloh 0418 223 345
 Graham Zaleska-Moon
 (Poland phone: 48 500366119)

1 Troop (1967-68)

Billy Adams 03 5974 2916
 Henry Baggaley 0419 902 268
 Reg Bament 02 6948 2524
 Bruce Bevan 0402 334 614
Neville Bartels RIP Sapper
 Col Campbell 0417 658 770
 Dave Campbell 07 4225 6310
 Bob Coleman 0408 519 500
Ross Comben RIP Sapper
Jack Green RIP Sapper
 Norm Hitchcock (Canada)
 1-250-2455137

Ray Kenny RIP Sapper

Harry Klopcic 84 76 5842041
 (Living in Vung Tau Vietnam)
 Peter Koch 0413 222 046
 Brian Lewis 0427 413 854
"Paddy" Maddigan RIP Sapper
 Mike McCallum 02 6288 5113
 John Neal 02 9982 6694
 Barry O'Rourke 0409 546 717
 Clive Pearsall 03 9459 4470
 Terry Perkins 0413 343 168
Alan Rantall RIP Sapper
 Ivan Scully 03 9802 0977
 Peter Sheehan 03 9390 2834
 Carlton "CP" Smith 0448 000 334
 Kevin Smith 0407871507
 Colin Treasure 0409 902 980
 Jim Trower 0418 842 744

1 Troop (1968-69)

Phil Baxter MM RIP Sapper

Adrian Black 0417 756 729
 Mike Bruggemann 0409 441 992
Peter Carrodus RIP Sapper
 Albert Eyssens 0407 875 287
 Ken Ford 0418 669 689
 Max Goiser 0409 717 143
 Peter Hollis 0487 231 351
 George Hulse 0412 341 363
 Robert Laird 0408 561 748
 Brian Lamb 02 6059 6947
 Kent Luttrell 0408 387 641
 Kerry McCormick 03 6344 5291
 Keith Murley 0429 729 764
 Alan Paynter 03 5975 7130
 Richard Reilly 0408 321 487
 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 0419 806 323
Allan S Coleman RIP Sapper
 Phil Cooper 0439 955 207
Gary Degering RIP Sapper
 John Felton 0467 612 342
 Graham Fletcher 0408 822 489

Brian Forbes 0412 047 937
 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 0421 904 562
 Paul Ryan 0429 165 974
 Les Slater 08 9361 0603
 Max Slater 0412 772 849
 Vic Smith 0432 916 485
 Dave Sturmer 0422 664 942

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 0419 837 833
Phil Duffy RIP Sapper
 Harry Ednie 0408 391 371
 Robin Farrell 0409 265 470
 Bruce Fraser 07 5499 0508
 Brian Grear 0413604475
 Garth Griffiths 0435 902 386
"Paddy" Healy RIP Sapper
 Peter Krause 0427 077 237

John Lewis 07 3425 1524
 R Loxton 0419 944 755
 Barry Meldrum 03 5427 1162
 Roger Newman 0487 413 854
 Peter North 0427 992 421
 Denis Pegg 0408 024 816
 Bob Pfeiffer 0497 501 960
 John Severyn 0407 008 610
 Garry Shoemark 02 6546 6778
 Garry Sutcliffe 07 4684 3229
 Donald Stringer 07 41559 515
 Paul Taylor (NZ) 64 274 372229
 Terry Ward 02 6566 6163
 Jim Weston 0419 260 463
 John Wright 0413 291 110

2 Troop (1966-1967)

Richard Beck 0408 885 788
David Buring RIP Sapper
 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 0409 938 830
 Rod McClelland 07 3267 6907

Noel McDuffie RIP Sapper

Bob McKinnon 07 3267 0310
Peter Matthews RIP Sapper
 Warren Morrow 0418 427 947
 Dennis Quick 0439 786 168
 Mick Shannon 08 8552 1746
 Bob Sweeney 08 9248 4432
 "Taffy" Williams 0423 628 319

2 Troop (1967-1968)

William Adams 0400 405 751
 M. Ballantyne 08 8298 2515
 John Benningfield 07 4778 4473
 Peter Bennett 0418 915 550
 Dennis Burge 08 8281 2270
 Kenneth Butler 0414 897 889
 Harry Cooling 07 4778 2013
 Garry Cosgrove 02 4845 5153
 Geoff Craven 0447 295 224
 Peter Fontanini 0438 881 940
 Roland Gloss 02 6367 5324
 John Goldfinch 02 6674 0855
 Paul Grills 07 4162 5235
 John Jasinski 0435 799 426

Ron Johnson RIP Sapper

Eddie Josephs 0417 882 491
 Lew Jordan 03 6397 3261
 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 0423 005 756
 Bob O'Connor 0418 742 219
 Tony Parmenter 0417 856 877
 Gary Phillips 0418 466 859
 Brian Rankin 07 4775 5095
 Hans Rehorn 03 5623 5572

Andrew Rogers RIP Sapper

Mick Robotham 0439 144 876
 Geoff Russell 0428 455 525
 Robert Russell 03 5975 5329
 Brian Sheehan 0438 933 631
 Carlton "CP" Smith 0448 000 334
 John Tramby 0428 659 048
 John Willis 03 9363 7878
 Steve Wise 0418841912

2 Troop (1968-1969)

Bob Austin 02 6644 9237
 Ross Bachmann 07 5495 1443
 Don Beale 02 6971 2424
Richard Branch RIP Sapper
 Harold Bromley 0417 050 614
 Peter Brunton 0429 953 052
 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 0433 747 401
 Robert Earl 02 4990 3601
 Brian Forbes 0412 047 937

- Robert Francis 0458 222 844
 John Gilmore 08 9795 6847
 Stan Golubenko 03 9361 2721
 Paul Grills 07 4162 5235
Geoff Handley RIP Sapper
 Ross Hansen 0409 225 721
 Wayne Hynson 0425 720 696
 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 0400 012 255
 Rick Martin 02 6928 4253
 Bill Matheson 0428 959 044
 Bill Morris 08 9384 2686
 Don Nicholls 0407 919 993
 Colin Norris 02 4627 1180
Terry O'Donnell RIP Sapper
 Rod Palmer 0417 672 643
 Jimmy Paiano 0417 984 721
 Allan Pearson 07 3281 1992
 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 0401 344 911
 Bruce Bofinger 02 4872 3175
 Frank Brady 02 6555 5200
 David Brook 03 9546 2868
 Jim Burrough 0400 884 633
 Ron Coman 0487 186 840
 Kevin Connor 0408 748 172
 Garry Cosgrove 02 4845 5153
 Arthur Davies 0412 823 112
 Grumpy Foster 07 4041 2321
 Graeme Gartside 08 8725 6900
 Doug George 0419 475 246
 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 0403 041 962
 Bob Ottery 0417 681 375
 Bevan Percival 07 5573 6925
 Pedro Piromanski 08 9306 8169
 Ian Pitt 0428 492 018
 Jack Power 07 4955 3761
Colin Redacliff RIP Sapper
 Rolf Schaefer 08 8962 1391
 Brian "BC" Scott 0400 713 994
 Peter Scott 0425 225 836
 "Roo Dog" Scott 0400 799 577
 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 RIP Sapper
2 Troop (1970-1971)
 Bruce Arrow 02 6288 3872
Mick Bergin RIP Sapper
 Graham Besford 03 9439 2661
 Mal Botfield 0434 536 435
- John Brady 0437 881 174
 David Briggs 08 9537 6956
 Keith Burley 07 5543 0990
 Peter Cairns 0400 039 446
 Brian Christian 07 4778 6602
 Grahame Clark 0408 533 869
 Dennis Coghlan 0429 938 445
 "Sam" Collins 0400 184 673
 Ron Cook 0414 508 686
 Jock Coutts 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 0450 931 112
 Des Evans 07 4128 2390
Harry Eustace RIP Sapper
 Bruce Fenwick 0408 434 529
 Ray Fulton 03 6288 1176
Ziggy Gniot RIP Sapper
Bob Hamblyn RIP Sapper
 Cec Harris 02 6629 3373
Paddy Healy RIP Sapper
 Kevin Hodge 08 8322 2619
 Paul Jones 02 6231 5963
 Jim Kelton 0488 972 139
 Kevin Lappin 0419 741 239
 Gary McClintock 0428 739 909
 Peter McCole 03 5155 9368
 Bob McGlenn 07 5426 1597
 Ian McLean 0412 431 297
 Jeff Maddock 0438 069 803
 Leon Madeley 0448 467 768
 Bill Marshall 0415 688 788
 Rod O'Regan 0419 431 79
 Graeme Pengelly 0407 138 124
 Des Polden 03 6223 3830
 Keith Ramsay 0439 856 933
 Mick Rasmussen 0428 790 645
 Ron Reid 0427 461 297
 Gary Sangster 0427 224 099
John Scanlan RIP Sapper
 Peter Schreiber 02 6569 3390
 Garry Shoemark 02 6546 6778
Alex Skowronski RIP Sapper
 John Smith 0400 032 502
 Roy Sojan 08 9926 1235
 John Stonehouse 08 9653 1895
 Peter Swanson 0401 392 617
 John Tick 04 3898 7262
Steve Walton RIP Sapper
 Terry Wake 07 4786 2625
 Dave Young 0418 425 429
2 Troop (1971-72)
 Warren Pantall 0417 096 802
3 Troop (1967-68)
 Ken Arnold 02 6974 1181
 Dennis Baker 08 89527281
Chuck Bonzas RIP Sapper
 Bruce Breddin 0418 766 759
 Norm Cairns 0498 765 425
Kerry Caughey RIP Sapper
 David Clark 08 8388 7728
 Bob Coleman 03 5332 0975
 Mervyn Dodd 0408 720 746
 Jim Dowson 03 5662 3291
 Bob Embrey 07 3351 1222
 Peter Fontanini 0438 881 940
 Barry Gilbert 03 5023 6657
 Brian Hopkins 08 9751 4946
 John Hoskin 0417 886 100
 Jack Lawson 0429 798 673
 Peter MacDonald 0419 909 273
- Barrie Morgan 0437 861 945
 Michael O'Hearn 0429 327 509
 Alan Pascoe 07 5463 2152
 Gary Pohlner 0427 172 900
 Peter Pont 07 4095 0150
Tom Simons RIP
 Kevin Shugg 0411 144 500
 Mervyn Spear 0431 212 960
Frank Sweeney RIP
 Brian Thomson 0428 551 68
 Vic Underwood 0429 907 989
 Murray Walker 08 9332 6410
 Glenn Weise 0488 741 174
 Mick Woodhams 08 9459 0130
 Bob Yewen 0435 051 475
 Ken Young 0409 124 096
3 Troop (1968-69)
 Geoff Box 08 9731 2757
 Col Campbell 0417 658 770
 Barry Chambers 0401 119 999
 Neil Garrett 03 5798 1522
 Brian Glyde 02 4455 7404
 Peter Graham 0428 325 182
 Peter Gray 0437711348
 Derwyn Hage 0408 802 038
 John Hollis 0437 711 348
 "Sam" Houston 07 5495 5480
 Ian Lauder 08 9419 5375
 Kent Luttrell 0408 387 641
 John Murphy 08 9493 3771
 John Nulty 02 6927 3535
 Ted O'Malley 0428 243 351
 Barry Parnell 07 4947 1976
Bob Pritchard RIP Sapper
 Art Richardson 0407 505 365
 Greg Roberts 03 5941 2269
 Warren Ross 02 6556 0133
 Walter Schwartz 0439 512 322
 Don Shields 08 8297 8619
 Kevin Simper 0423 5248 84
 Tony Toussaint 0417 249 235.
 Ray Vander Heiden 0410312807
 Wal Warby 0418 240 394
 Ray White 03 9740 7141
Three Troop (1969-70)
 Chris Brooks 0407 186 207
 Jim Burrough 0400 884 633
 Terry Carlidge 0411 252 859
 Bruce Crawford 02 6628 0846
 Greg Cullen 0427 050 208
 Richard Day 08 8088 4129
 Phil Devine 0439 066 012
Bob Done RIP Sapper
 Ray Fulton 03 6288 1176
 Graham Fromm 0429 322 561
 Doug George 0419 475 246
 Graham Harvey 07 5445 2636
 Robert Hewett 0422 165 003
 Trevor Hughes 0419 883 281
 Darrel Jensen 0428 387 203
 Mike King 08 9764 1080
 Rod Kirby 07 4973 7726
 Peter Knight 02 6247 6272
Gerry Lyall RIP Sapper
 Phil McCann 0417 423 450
 Chris MacGregor 02 4472 3250
 Norm Martin 02 4953 1331
 Jock Meldrum MID 0456 002 701
 Roelof Methorst 0411 473 817
 Gary Miller MM 0407 586 241
 "Jacko" Miller 03 6267 4411
 Chris Muller 0458 650 113
Danny Mulvany RIP Sapper
- Vin Neale 03 9786 1549
 Peter Phillips 0429 362 935
 G. Rentmeester 03 9735 5236
 Brian "BC" Scott 0400 713 994
 Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
 Gordon Temby 0419 954 658
 Peter Thorp MID 0405 845 787
 "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 0439 076 891
Steve Armbrust RIP Sapper
 Errol Armitage 07 5598 8018
 Geoff Ansell 0434 178 696
 Bob Bament 02 6071 3527
 Mike Barnett 02 9869 7132
 John Beningfield 07 4778 4473
 Darryel Binns 0417 170 171
 Trevor Boaden 0448 160 944
 Mal Botfield 0434 536 435
 Ian Campbell 0407 414 767
 Terry Carlidge 0411 252 859
 Brian Christian 07 4778 6602
 Bob Clare 03 5439 5532
 Ray Clark 08 9772 1162
 Graeme Clarke 07 4128 4660
 Ted Clarke 0438 225 844
 Allan J Coleman 0409834614
 Steve Collett 08 9371 0075
 John Davey 07 3378 4316
 Chris Ellis 0409 299 520
 Kevin Hodge 08 8322 2619
 John Jones 08 8357 5226
 Kenny Laughton 0498 566 508
 Garry Lourigan 02 4844 5545
Darcy McKenzie RIP Sapper
 R. McKenzie-Clark 08 9729 1162
 Robert McLeay 0429 861 122
 Jock Meldrum MID 0456 002 701
 Roelof Methorst 0416 834 846
 Carlo Mikkelsen
 (New Zealand) 64 9 3776322
 Ben Passarelli 0411 340 236
Robert Reed RIP Sapper
 Dale Rosengren 0466 244 367
 Paul Scott 02 6656 0730
 Les Shelley 07 3264 4041
 John Steen 0419 772 375
John Tatler - RIP Sapper
 Gordon Temby 08 9757 2016
Peter Vandenberg RIP Sapper
 Brian Wakefield 0427 350 713
 Kevin White 02 8517 3278
David Wilson RIP Sapper
Three Troop (1971-72)
 Bradley Bauer 0749281152
 Trevor "Zip" Button 0434 332 789
 Ron Byron 0439 910 568
 Jim Dewing 0402 433 776
 Mike Dutton 0438 627 140
 Alan Gorman 0413 063 336
 John Jones 0417 836 538
 Brenton J Smith 0408 806 685
 Peter Weingott 0418 870 496
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“The ultimate evolvement of the Combat engineer”



ADMIRATION AWE AND RESPECT
(Heaps of it)

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