



INFANTRYMAN

The Journal of the RAR Association SA
Keeping the Spirit Alive

August 2014



Lynn Graham cuddles one of the infants at the Vung Tau Orphanage when the Dennis party visited Vietnam in March and April. See story page 2-3.

AGM 2014

Few committee changes

Michael von Berg was re-elected for a sixth term as President of the Royal Australian Regiment Association at this year's AGM.

Rodney Graham was elected Vice President and is President of the RSL Sub-branch while Greg Dwiar is Club Manager and Neil Nicholls Bar Manager. Robert Whinnen was returned as Secretary and Mike Bevan is Assistant Treasurer as well as remaining Webmaster.

The new Treasurer and Membership Officer is Tony J. Boyce.

Other positions: Ceremonial Manager Adrian Craig; Welfare Officer Lynn Fisher; Minute Secretary Lynn Graham, and Infantryman Editor Penelope Forster.

**Combined Regiments
Battle of Long Tan
Commemorative Service
Linden Park 1100 hours
Monday 18 August 2014
Details page 5**

Welcome to Governor-Designate

The Royal Australian Regiment Association congratulates His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Hieu Van Le (pictured) on his wonderful achievement in being announced as the newly-appointed Governor Elect for South Australia.

The Premier the Hon Jay Weatherill said:

"Her Majesty The Queen has approved the appointment of Mr Hieu Van Le AO as the next Governor of South Australia, beginning 2nd of September this year. Mr Le has a story of great significance to South Australia – from arriving as a boat person in 1977, advancing his education, establishing a family, rising through the ranks of business and community leadership, to becoming the Lieutenant Governor of South Australia."

Mr Le is the first Vietnamese-born person in the world to be appointed to a Vice Regal position and whether you're a Monarchist or a Republican, or perhaps still engaging in the political dialectic of the rights and wrongs of the Vietnam War, what is indisputable is that the ex-members of the Regiment who served in Vietnam will on ANZAC Day 2015 look our new Governor in the eye on the saluting dais and whisper to themselves that it was all very worthwhile.

Once again South Australia leads from the front and there would not be an individual in our association who is not chuffed and proud. Chuffed that we have the first Vietnamese-born Governor and proud we in our individual way all played a very small part so many years ago.

In this same vein it would be remiss of us not to thank our outgoing Governor, His Excellency Rear Admiral the Honourable Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR and Mrs Liz Scarce for their outstanding contribution to South Australia.

The Governor and Mrs Scarce have the common touch which has endeared them to the people of South Australia and, although out of the Vice Regal spotlight, I am sure both will throw themselves into another challenge after a well-earned break.

In conclusion, Your Excellency and Mrs. Scarce on behalf of the Association thank you and good health.

**Michael von Berg MC
President**



FROM THE SECRETARY

I must commence my 2014/15 elected term as your Secretary with a call to arms. Once again our service to this nation is not just being taken for granted but is literally being spat upon by a selfish bunch of ideologues; AKA the Liberal National Coalition Government! Not content with ignoring the Harmer Report that recommended an 11.4% increase to Veterans' Disability Pensions to maintain their relative value. Abbott and Hockey have announced that as of 2017 Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE) will be removed from the input to calculate DVA Pension increases and CPI will be the sole component of maintaining any future increases. This will see the value of this compensation (not welfare) rapidly eroded; the taking away of MTAWE destroys any real link we would have in the sharing of Gross Domestic Productivity (GDP) (the component of measuring income within 1 year) which in effect denies us in the sharing of the nation's future prosperity, the very thing I thought our service and sacrifice contributed to. You can be assured the indexation with current serving MPs and Prime Ministers will remain for those very same Lib/ Nat. MPs' pensions! One of the few positives of the first Rudd government was to restore the nexus for calculation of increases in DVA pensions. Are we going to do nothing and allow this to happen without a fight?

We all saw what could be achieved by the ADF Superannuation campaign. We need to organise a campaign of political activism now or see ourselves treated like dirt and merely survive in what should be our Golden Years. Those of us who were conscripted (a large part of the RAR in Vietnam) should not forget it was the Lib/Nats. who stole our youth. There was no free university education for us, unlike Abbott, Hockey and others, and it was not our fault that our Compulsory National (Selective) Service cut short our productive income earning years.

Perhaps this mob would like to reintroduce a ballot for Veterans Disability Pensions?

On a positive note it is good to see the support for the newly-established RAR Association (SA) Welfare Fund. Donations have come from a broad cross-section of supporters not just from within the veteran and ex-service community. The balance is now more than \$3000. I believe the general community is appreciative and supportive of Veterans and their special place in our society and current government policy is well out of step with community standards and values. A recent donation of \$200 from CHASA (Conservation & Hunting Alliance of SA) shows just how we can tap into support from the general community. Much has already been said better than I could by others re the passing of our dear friend and comrade Mike Dennis.

What I will say is that never have I ever known anyone to live and to fight for life with more passion and commitment. Let's maintain his legacy, look after our health and fight for what is our right.

Bob Whinnen
Secretary RARA (SA)



John Francis, Treasurer of the CHASA, presents a \$200 donation to RAR Association (SA) Secretary Robert Whinnen for the Association's Welfare Fund at the end of a great day's quail shooting over Bob's Setters.

Launch of "A Duty Done" by the Governor-Designate Hieu Van Le.

The book, written by
Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Fred Fairhead,
is a summary of operations by
The Royal Australian Regiment
in the Vietnam War 1965-1972.

Friday September 26 at 4pm

**RAR SA headquarters,
Beatty Street, Linden Park.
All welcome.**

Donations buy sewing machines

During our trip to Vietnam in March and April this year, we purchased supplies for the Vung Tau Orphanage. We spent time among the children, many with HIV and others with various severe disabilities.

It was a moving visit, but the many volunteers and workers in the orphanage did their best, which was better than the alternative for these poor children. Later we visited the Long Hai School, which provided a basic education for those children who cannot afford the very minimal fees required to put a child through school. Some of the children were close to 10 years old before being able to start in Grade 1, such is their penury. The school provided a basic education and further training for the students to become hairdressers or motor bike mechanics. The school also provides one free meal a day for all its children.

In one photo you can see some of the sewing machines which RARA members generously contributed towards last year. The machines are used to manufacture clothes for the children and staff and help towards making the school kids more independent. There is a future for at least some of these children.

Mike Bevan
RARA SA Treasurer

FROM THE COMMAND POST

The last few months have been a bitter sweet period with some changes and upheaval. **Mike Dennis** "The Fox" passing away after a long illness is a tragic loss of a very hard working Vice President and resident stirrer and his farewell at his funeral and memorial service held at the Club was a fitting testament to the man and his efforts.

Thankfully **Rod Graham** has stepped up to the position of Vice President at our recent AGM and also President of our RSL Sub Branch and I am sure you will all be supportive of Rod in his new roles.

Our hard working and very capable Treasurer **Mike Bevan** has decided to step down after many years in this vital role and **Tony Boyce** our membership officer has offered to take up this role and was duly elected at the AGM. We owe Mike considerable gratitude and thanks in all he has done to keep our finances on track and he has very kindly offered to fulfil the new role of Assistant Treasurer to assist Tony as Treasurer.

Spike Dwiar, who can turn his hand to almost anything, will be our new Club Manager. I ask us all to support Spike in his new role.

The most significant upheaval for the Veteran community is the resignation of **Bill Denny** from his role as Veterans' SA CEO. The Association wishes Bill well in his future endeavours which will keep him in touch with the veteran community. Bill has indicated his willingness to work with and assist the RAR Association with any major project we may undertake in the future. A suitable replacement is being sought for this important position.

As an association we try very hard to be apolitical but could not contain our enthusiasm in the appointment of The Hon. **Martin Hamilton Smith** MP as our new Veterans Affairs Minister. Taking the politics right out of it and taking absolutely nothing away from The Hon **Jack Snelling** and **Mick Atkinson** MP, who have both been

wonderfully supportive of veterans and a pleasure to deal with, we now have a Minister who has served, done the hard yards and understands the serving and ex-serving members of the Defence Force and the unique nature of military service. We wish Marty well in this and his other portfolios vital to this state and can report he has hit the road running.

Fred Fairhead's book "A Duty Done" has been printed. It is a timely publication as to the history of the Regiment and its service in South Vietnam. With all of our current serving Battalions now going back to a light infantry role and concentrating more on our immediate geographical areas of interest and influence, the book is not only a history of the operations of the Battalions but the conditions to be expected when back into a jungle warfare environment. DVA has been extremely supportive and generous of this RARA (SA) initiative and we are indebted to Fred's hard work and attention to minor detail which will be the only reference material of its type on the Vietnam War. It will be a vital publication for both students of military history and the art of war in a South East Asian environment.

All other incumbents of the Committee were returned at the AGM and I am proud to be the President of our Association and humbled in the trust you have put in me and the Committee to take our Association forward. I am delighted **Laurie Lewis** will continue on in the role of Patron and very thankful for his sage advice.



Duty First
Michael von Berg
President

Royal Australian Regiment Association

to support improvements for orphans in Vietnam



Some of the sewing machines at the orphanage; a children's dormitory; Barb Dixon hugging an orphan; and a shopping expedition with Brian and Joy Johnson.



TREK PREPARATIONS

The organisation and logistics planning for the next trek is well underway. The trek dates are 21 to 26 Sep. Any veteran, male or female, serving or discharged, may join us for the journey. This year a pilot female trek will be conducted in parallel with the male trek, now in its sixth year of operation. Two suitable veteran female facilitators have been identified to undertake some of the responsibilities for program delivery to the women. They will receive face to face familiarisation training prior to departure. Check out the web site www.trojanstrek.com for further information. POC for each trek is :

Female, Mark Keynes, 0487453488; and

Male Greg Hallam, 0419312884;.

LONGITUDINAL STUDY

A honours student from UniSA has commenced a study into the longer term benefits of the trek. Although many of the trekkers remain in contact with the staff, the long term impacts have not been independently quantified. We know the impact of the trek is powerful and in some cases life changing, but we do not know the facts regarding the longevity of those outcomes. Such investigation may reveal that follow-up in some form may be worthy of consideration. We look forward to her report.



Approach to Moolooloo Station

THE TROJAN'S TREK BIG RAFFLE

In order to continue to provide help to veterans, the Foundation requires human and financial resources. To that end and in combination with the Veterans' Support Walk, a big raffle is being conducted this year and is mentioned elsewhere in this magazine. There are four excellent prizes to be won.

Please support both activities. To those who have already purchased tickets, thanks, the response so far has been excellent. The raffle will be drawn on 26 October at the Support Walk conclusion.

VETERANS' SUPPORT WALK

This is our major fund raiser for the year. The walk/run will commence at 0930hrs on 26 October opposite the Torrens Parade Ground, which is available for parking. This year there will be a financial incentive to take part.

The TT paramedic, Greg Hallam, has provided \$500 to encourage involvement. Prizes will awarded as follows: First male and first female over the line \$100 each, First team of five over the line \$300. Watch the web site for detail and pencil in the date.

AGM

At the AGM on 4 June, three additional Directors were elected. Their contribution is welcomed. The current board is now: Emeritus Professor Ross Kalucy MB, BS, Dr Peter Byrne AM, RFD, ED, Reuban Vanderzalm, John Schumann OAM, MAJ Connie Jongeneel, Paul Keady B LegS, MLaws, Andrew Badenoch, and Secretary Moose Dunlop OAM.

Students' poppy sales benefit Trojan's Trek

What does Marryatville Primary School have to with Trojans Trek? They have become part of the school fundraising base to assist Trojans Trek.

On the 11 November 2013, the school librarian **Nicole Nelson** and assistant librarian **Tsam (Sam) Georgoudis**, organised students from the school to make poppies and use them as a fundraiser. Students volunteered their time and produced some 400 plus poppies, the school has about 500 students. Selling the poppies at 50 cents each, the school decided the money would be donated to Trojan's Trek to assist our wounded and damaged war veterans, past and present.

Why did they decide on Trojan's Trek as the recipient? The school decided that because of the School Military History program through the Royal Australian Regiment Assn SA and 3RAR SA Association this was the appropriate thing for the school to do.

On Friday 13 December 2013 at end of year school break up, I was invited to attend the school assembly,

during which I was called forward and **Nicole Nelson** presented me with a rather large sized mock-up cheque made out for \$207.35 for Trojan's Trek. They then presented the bankable cheque.

The children had sold 414 poppies. They have pride in what they had achieved for our veterans.

This school, along with so many others, evokes the pride the youth of today are displaying towards our veterans.

The school, under the guidance of the Principal **Anne Bahnisch** and library staff with the students have decided they will now make this an annual event with the proceeds going to Trojan's Trek from the Remembrance Day poppy sales.

To the principal, library staff, teachers, students, administration and parents, I say "thank you" on behalf of Trojan's Trek and the veterans you will help with your donations.

Ken Duthie JP

Your club, your input, you're welcome



COMBINED REGIMENTS BATTLE OF LONG TAN COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE LINDEN PARK 1100 HOURS MONDAY 18 AUGUST 2014

On Monday August 18 the RAR Association (SA) and the RAAC Vietnam Veterans Association (SA) will conduct a combined commemorative service for the Battle of Long Tan at the RAR RSL, Beatty Street, Linden Park, at 1100 hours.

Both the Royal Australian Regiment and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment were awarded the battle honour Long Tan for their actions on 18 August 1966.

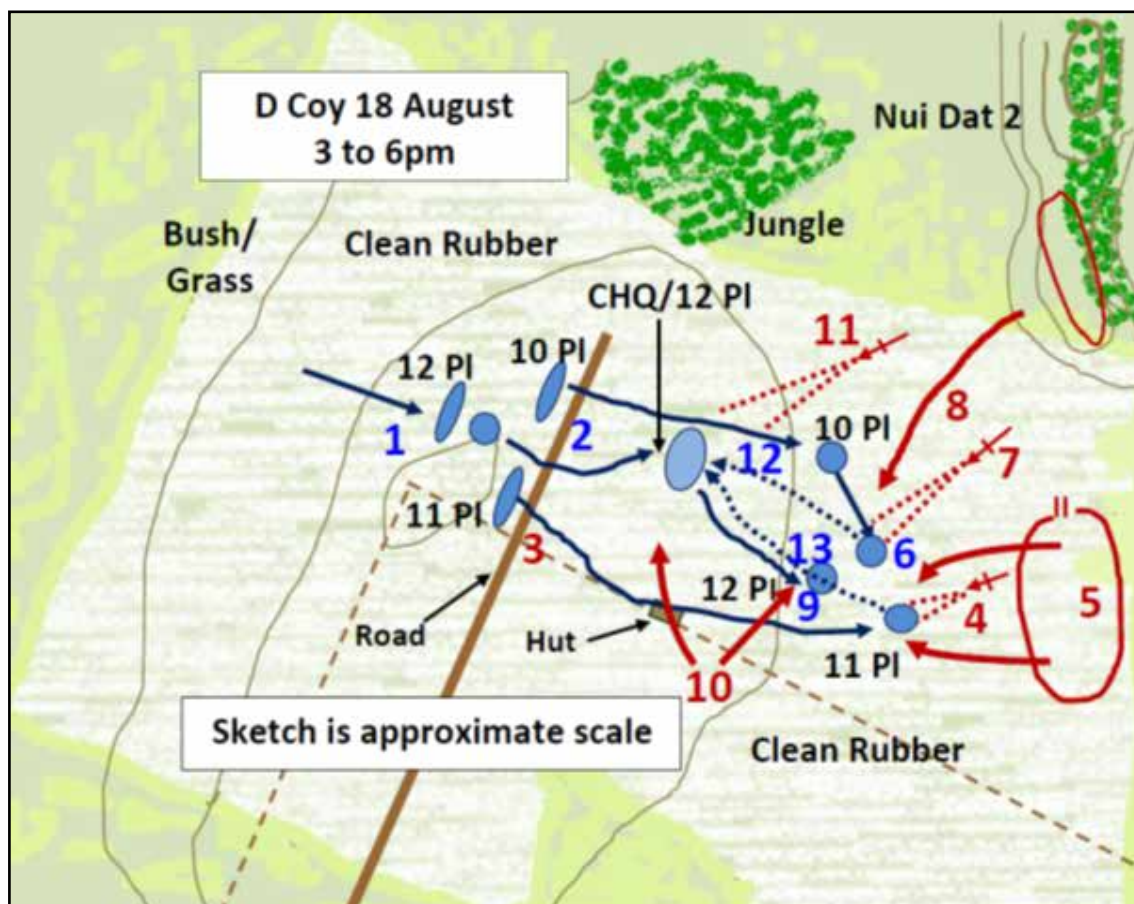
The RAR Association will coordinate the service with key players from the 6 RAR Association, the RAAC Association and D Squadron 1st Armoured Regiment.

The service will be held inside the clubrooms because of the history of wet weather in August. A light lunch will follow. It is hoped to have some music during lunch.

As a mark of respect to our war dead current and ex-service members are requested to wear decorations and medals.

Questions on the service and lunch: Ceremonial Officer RAR Association SA

Adrian Craig on 8263 4784 or as.craig9rar@bigpond.com





III



3 RAR ASSOCIATION SA BATTLE OF MARYANG SAN COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE LINDEN PARK 1100 HOURS TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2014

On Tuesday October 7 the 3 RAR Association (SA) will conduct its annual commemorative service for the Battle of Maryang San at the RAR RSL Linden

Park commencing at 1100 hours.

The Royal Australian Regiment was awarded the battle honour Maryang San for 3 RAR's actions 2-8 October 1951 as part of Operation Commando.

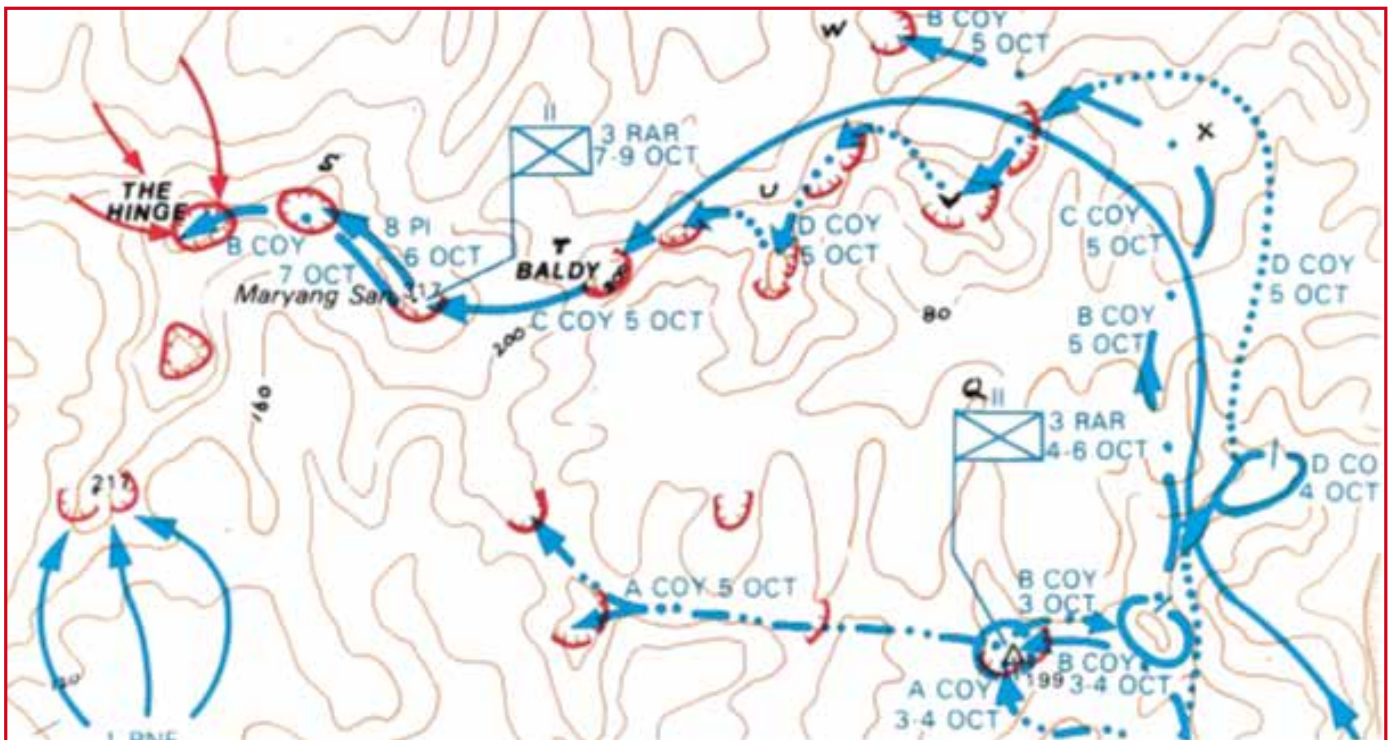
The venues for the service and lunch have changed this year from the 3 RAR Memorial on the Pathway of Honour and the London Tavern respectively and to the

RAR RSL per Kapyong Day this year.

The service will be held outside the clubrooms weather permitting. A light lunch will follow and it is hoped to have some music entertainment during that lunch.

As a mark of respect to our war dead current and ex-service members are requested to wear decorations and medals.

Questions on the service and lunch should be addressed to the Ceremonial Officer 3 RAR Assoc. SA Adrian Craig on 8263 4784 or as.craig9rar@bigpond.com



WE ARE WHAT WE THINK PART 3

Acceptance: A dirty word or what?

I have just returned from the theme parks in Queensland with my family, so this article will be like a ride; frantic start and over before you know it. For me Acceptance is more than words in the wind, or a fatalistic or blind response to life. Acceptance, while being painful can be life - giving.

Painful, because acceptance recognises that I cannot change the past and I need to take responsibility for my actions instead of blaming others and feeling like a victim. That hurts. Truthfully though, I hate feeling like a victim, it doesn't reflect who I want to be.

Life - giving because when I accept the reality of my life I can move beyond the grasping hands of the past that want to hold me back. Accepting the reality of our lives with all its technicolour drama can be hard. However the truth can provide a way of recognising our humanity. None of us are born armour plated or impervious to the

reality of life, so it is natural we get hurt or make mistakes which we may regret.

In summary, acceptance is at the heart of reality. We cannot change or grow if we do not accept what has happened. Acceptance allows us to put energy into living in the NOW of life, rather than living in the past with regrets. So then like any good theme park ride, all the action of your life lies in front of you.



Regards

Padre David Prior, 7 RAR. 2014

If you would like to make a comment about what I have written please contact me

via email: david.prior1@defence.gov.au

Calibre of PM's military health council members impressive

The Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Military Mental Health (PMAC) met at Parliament House, Canberra, on Thursday and Friday July 24 and 25.

Chaired by Vice Admiral **Russ Crane** AO, CSM, RAN (retd) with **Ben Roberts Smith** VC, MG as deputy chair, the PMAC spent two very productive days in being briefed by various experts in military mental health and discussions and planning to address what is a serious issue.

The Prime Minister, The Hon **Tony Abbott** MP and the Minister of Veteran Affairs, Senator The Hon **Michael Ronaldson** are absolutely adamant that soldiers returning from post 1975 conflicts will not suffer the isolation and indifference experienced by the Vietnam Veterans.

Nominated by the members of the DVA Ex Service Organization Round Table, I am both proud and humbled to be accepted as a member of the PMAC.

I look forward to this body making the appropriate recommendations to the Ministers which hopefully will make a difference.

I do not profess to be an expert in military mental health but I have been around long enough to know and understand the issues in particular as they affected so many after Vietnam, me included, and what I will bring to the table is the passion and the determination to ensure our many young men and women who have done an outstanding job post 1975 will not be forced to suffer silently on their own, like so many after the Vietnam War.

After two days discussions I am really excited and encouraged by the talent and experiences of the members of the Council who are a good mix of gender, maturity and service. But, most importantly, well led by the Chair and all on the same page.



The Prime Minister dropped in for a cup of tea and a chat where he reiterated his commitment in ensuring that those that have served their country are recognised and looked after.

Members of the PMAC:

- Chair: Vice Admiral Russ Crane AO, CSM, RAN (retd).
- Deputy Chair: Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC, MG.
- Members: Mr. Geoffrey Evans – Younger Veterans Advisor, RSL Life Care (Commando WIA).
Mrs Mel Pyrah – Partners of Veterans Association of Australia.
Air Commodore Tracy Smart AM – Joint Health Command.
Mr. Ryan Stokes – CEO Australian Capital Equity.
Mr. Michael von Berg MC – ESORT, RARC, VAC.
- Ex Officio: Ms. Judy Daniel – First Assistant Secretary, Health and Community Services DVA.
Maj Gen Mark Kelly AO, DSC - Repatriation Commissioner DVA.
Dr. Graham Killer AO – Chair, Mental Health Clinical Reference Group DVA.

Michael von Berg
President

Royal Australian Regiment Association (SA)

You can now pay Membership Fees by Internet Banking

For your convenience we have now introduced Internet banking for the paying of your Membership Fees. Details for completing transactions:
Account Name.....Royal Australian Regiment Assoc. (SA) Inc.

Bank.....ANZ

BSB No.....015 237

Account No.....484328191

If you avail yourself of this service please provide your full name and Membership Number.

Tony J. Boyce Membership Officer

Free Wi-Fi internet access on Fridays

We are now offering free Wi-Fi Internet access at the RAR Association clubrooms when you visit on Fridays. So come along catch up with a few old friends and log on to your favourite websites for free.

Final Farewell

The family, friends and the RAR Association bade Mike an appropriate and deserving final farewell at his funeral at the Heysen Chapel on Friday 9 May 2014 followed by a memorial service at the RARA Club Rooms on Saturday 10 May 2014. So typical of Mike, he had planned both events to such a level that all we really had to do was turn up, which we did in our hundreds.

Heysen Chapel was bursting with many standing at the rear. I would defy anyone in the congregation admitting to not having a tear in their eye when Mike's sister spoke so lovingly and full of interest in what Mike and his sister used to get up to in the wilds of Papua New Guinea as young kids and the Fijian choir singing so beautifully to bid Mike farewell.

Many of you would know that Mike was the Honorary Counsel for Fiji in South Australia and the relationship Mike and his family had with Fiji and their people which went back to Mike's great great grandfather, who was the first Harbor Master of Suva in the early 1800s.

Appropriately Mike's funeral was a solemn affair. But the memorial service the following day really was a very humorous celebration of life where both of Mike's sons spoke and revealed what we knew about him all along.

VALE

After a long and courageous battle with cancer, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Dennis passed at 4.15pm on Saturday 3 May 2014.

Mike had a long and distinguished career as an Infantry Soldier and Officer over 28 years. He enlisted as a private in 1967 and after initial and corps training was posted to 9 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. He was quickly promoted to section commander, but suffered an injury during training which prevented him from deploying with the Battalion to Vietnam in 1968. However he applied and was accepted to attend the Officer Cadet School at Portsea in 1968.

On graduation in 1969 into Infantry, he was posted to the 1 Battalion, The Pacific Islands Regiment, where he served as a platoon commander until 1972 when he was posted to the 2 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment as Pioneer Platoon Commander.

In 1973-74 he was posted as Adjutant of the Monash University regiment and the Adelaide University regiment as Training Officer.

From 1975 to 1978 he served in South Australia in Headquarters, Fourth Military district and then as a Company Second in Command with 3 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. From Adelaide he was sent to the Land Warfare Centre, Canungra, as an Instructor on Battle Wing, a very much sought after posting.

In 1982 Mike returned to Papua New Guinea as the Major, Operations Officer of the 1 Battalion, The Pacific Islands Regiment. During this posting he was appointed

He was a stickler for organisation and to get both Simon and Sean organised must have been an extremely daunting and frustrating task and this was revealed in their presentations.

The service was attended by the then Lieutenant Governor the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO and the Second Secretary of the Fiji High Commission Jonetani Tagivetaua and his wife and many friends from interstate and overseas.

A humorous and very informative military eulogy was delivered by Laurie Lewis and the Vietnam Tourist Team donned their fawn cotton coats and fedora hats to recall Mike's last trip overseas which he had organised. Annie has been a tower of strength, wonderfully supported by all of her family and friends and will I am sure fire us up as Mike used to if something is amiss in the Club. You have all been warned!

Mike may no longer be with us but his spirit and presence will always be remembered through this very appropriate quote:

"The basic difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge, while an ordinary man takes everything as a blessing or as a curse."

**Michael von Berg
President**

Royal Australian Regiment Association

a Member of the Order of The British Empire (MBE) by the Papua New Guinea Government in recognition of his outstanding service.

In 1986, after a brief posting in Townsville he was appointed a senior desk officer at the Defence Intelligence Organisation, Canberra. Then followed a series of intelligence/diplomatic appointments centred around Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. These culminated in an appointment as Defence Attache South Pacific, covering Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu.

Mike resigned from the army in 1995 and entered the commercial world. His subsequent appointments included General Manager of Suncorp Stadium Brisbane, Cleanevent Australia and Vice President of Cleanevent International.

He became heavily involved in veterans' issues, working with the department of Veterans' Affairs, the RSL and the RAR Association (SA). He was appointed to the Minister For Veterans' Affairs National Committee on Emerging Issues in the Australian Defence Force. He was a strong advocate for a range of veterans' issues, especially those which he believed deprived veterans and their families of seductive and their rights.

He will be sadly missed by the veterans' community.

**Brigadier Laurie Lewis AM (Rtd)
Patron**

Royal Australian Regiment Association

LT COL MIKE DENNIS MBE (RETD)

Final Farewell

Colonel Dennis was Fiji's Honorary Consul in SA from March 2006. His appointment did not come as a surprise as he had the experience, passion and love for the country and a deep connection to our beautiful country.

His great great grandfather Captain Robert Cocks, great grandfather James Cocks, his grandmother Amy Florence Cocks and his father John Denis were born in Fiji and his grandfather Selwin Dennis, although born in Victoria, died in Fiji.

Colonel Dennis served as the Australian Defence Attache to the South Pacific from 1991 and was based at the Australian High Commission in Suva.

He was the first coach and manager of the Fiji National Rugby League team.

"Fiji has indeed lost one of its true sons. We will never be able to repay the many sacrifices and achievements Colonel Dennis has done for Fiji."

*Notes from the address by
Jonatani Tagivetaua
Second Secretary of the
Fiji High Commission.*

Simon's remembrance

Initially Dad found civilian life very hard. For my brother and I growing up as Army brats it felt like we were attending Duntroon every day and he as our Commanding Officer. An expectation of excellence and doing it the army way even though we were only kids. I thank Dad for it as it was an amazing experience. Once Dad settled into retirement he became our father - nothing else but our Dad - no longer the Commanding officer and for a good 15 or so years we can truly say we were close mates.

Dad was diagnosed with cancer just a couple of months before my wedding. The first round of chemotherapy and radiotherapy almost took him. During one of his darkest moments he looked at Mum and said he had premonition.

Continued page 12

Mike and Ann played a significant role in not only providing professional and family support to all families, they went out of their way to bring us together professionally and socially and bind us together as one integrated supportive family.

The degree of trust, friendship and confidence generated by Mike's leadership role cannot be overstated.

On a lighter note, although security was a concern in Port Moresby, the Dennis clan were the only ones who left their gate permanently unlocked.

They had a squeaky gate and Herman, a cross between a Rottweiler, Rhodesian Ridgeback and a lion. When the gate squeaked Herman would run to the gate like a bolt of lightning. Mike said: "The only thing left, as an

unfortunate gate-opener ran down the road chased by Herman, was poop and sandshoes". Ann spent time stitching up those who tried to enter and were caught by Herman.

The Pith Club, under Mike's leadership, became a tongue-in-check stab at the old colonial past.

The blokes wore white suits and pith helmets (known as solar topees) and the ladies evening wear or saris. The club arranged numerous trips and fun adventures.

"I don't think anybody at that time would have wanted to spend Christmas in any other location (the Dennises) or in any other way.

Mike in this way was letting everyone know indirectly that all was good and all was safe."

"Mike was able to always maintain the dignity and respect appropriate to his

rank and position. He never had to demand respect, he had 100% from all of us.

"You have been a true supporter of PNG and its people. You were never afraid to speak out in defence of a true cause when the tide of opinion was against it.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down this life for his friends. We said it and meant it" Mike lived his life to the full and took us along for the ride. We are privileged to have known him and served with him. He is a true mate who will be missed.

*Extracts from the eulogy by
Lt Colonel Terry O'Neill*



**Mike's wreath and card
at the National War
Memorial**

LT COL MIKE DENNIS MBE (RETD)

Final Farewell



RAR SA Patron Laurie Lewis with
Lieutenant Governor Hieu Van Le.



Above: Sons Sean and Simon Dennis



Jonetani Tagivetaua, Second
Secretary of the Fiji High
Commission, and Mrs Tagivetaua



Left:
Catherine
Lambert
singing
Amazing
Grace



Gary Macrae, Laurie Lewis, Fred Fairhead, Ann Dennis
and Di Fairhead



Above: Ruth Devine, Captain Paul Gilmour -Walsh
retired Mike's former boss in PNG, Gwenda
Larkins and Di Fairhead.

Right: Ann Dennis, Mike's sister Margie Lindsay,
Lynn Graham, daughter-in-law Liza Dennis, and
Denise O'Neill and Ann Eastgate both of Qld.



Final Farewell



Right: Rod Graham, Fred Fairhead, Lynn Graham, Mike Bevan and Steve Larkin.

The story behind this photo is that Mike had organised a trip to Vietnam he was determined to see the group off so we went to Saigon a few weeks before his death. The jackets and the hats were Mike's idea as part of the trip. The jacket on the chair is Mike's and his hat is on Lynn's head - Ann.

My big brother Mike was born on 17 November 1946 in the King George V Memorial Hospital in Sydney. Mum and Mike went to New Guinea on the Malaita, one of the early ship to take women and children back after the war. Mum recalled how shocked she was to see Japanese prisoners of war walking around Lae when she arrived. They lived in Bulolo until I was born when they moved to our plantation called Kareeba on New Britain island. Dad grew cocoa and coffee. Mike, Jenny and I grew up on Kareeba as little bush kids. We spoke Pidgin, never wore shoes except to go to town or Australia every three years, and were full of hookworm. Camoquin or Nivaquin crunched up with honey to keep malaria at bay was the worst time of the week. We played soldiers endlessly, Mike, with his real unloaded gun over his shoulder. We had a secret cave we visited daily. One day Mum and Dad found us playing among the left over war supplies and ammunition! Mike and I would sit on the



was so decent and loyal in everything else that make a bloke something special." Mike, you have flowers from us all - orchids for your love of orchids in New Guinea and Fiji with Annie and the boys, bougainvillea from my garden and frangipanis from Jenny and me representing the plantation days and hibiscus from yours and Annie's garden. So, Mike, I hope Mum and Dad are sitting on a verandah somewhere, Dad with a rum and Mum with gin and water and a drink poured for you - for their man's man, their officer and their gentleman

Margie Lindsay
Mike's elder sister



Ann said: With Mike's jacket and hat on the chair in the centre, we sat in a circle as close friends told a story about him. It was wonderful.

LT COL MIKE DENNIS MBE (RETD)

Final Farewell - Premonition a blessing

Continued from page 9

He knew my wife Michelle was pregnant before we announced it. The thought of being there for the birth of his first grandchild gave Dad his next short-term goal to live for. On 7 June 2013 Harvey Michael Dennis arrived and Dad was ecstatic. For the 11 months he had Harvey in his life there was a special connection between the two. Harvey would look at Dad with innocent eyes and Dad would stare back at Harvey with love and admiration. He was so proud of his "little boy".

Despite being advised in the second half of last year that the cancer had returned - this time in Dad's lungs - he set his next short term goal. A holiday in Bali with all of us together as a family.

Unfortunately for Dad, the most recent of his travels with Mum and close friends, the trip to Malaysia and Vietnam would be his last. This was only six weeks ago.

Mum, Sean and I and all of Dad's extended relatives I say a very special thank you to everyone who supported him and Mum through what has been a very difficult two and a half years.

To the members of the SA RAR Association, Dad's Band of Brothers, you are family, it's that simple. You gave

Dad friendship he needed in the post army years to feel important again, and you've given Mum the support and strength to make it through the ups and downs.

In true Mike style he went on his own terms, in his own bed, surrounded by his friends and family. He wouldn't have had it any other way.

Simon also recalled:

The way his mother saved his father's life.

The time Mike turned up at Ann's home with a box of chocolates for her birthday and the reverse psychology, Ann became interested but when Mike asked Ann's father for her hand in marriage he was met with "She is

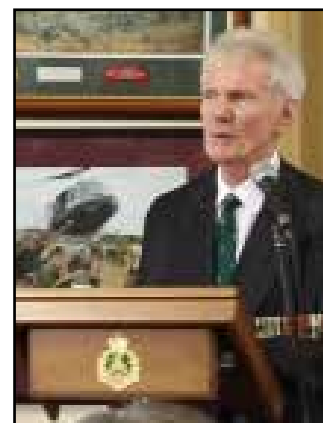
not marrying a bloody private. Come and see me when you are an Officer". When he returned as an Officer and after a two-year engagement they married and moved to PNG the day after their wedding.

During his 20s Mike was a state and national supercross champion and at the height of his riding years rode for Team Suzuki. With his father they started Mike Dennis Motorcycles at St Marys.

Golf: From an early beginning to helping build the Keravat golf course to trips around the world playing in five-star courses, he played golf throughout his life.



Fred Fairhead, and Laurie Lewis and Jonetari Tagivetas.
Above: RSM Noel Smith with (from left) Tony Boyce, Barb Dixon, Mike Bevan and Ken McGorman.



FROM THE BATTALIONS

3 RAR

We conducted a very successful quiz night on Saturday 28 June at the RAR Clubrooms. Our next Quiz Night will be on Saturday October 18. Our last lunch was at the Hackney Hotel on Friday August 8. The Battalion's Birthday function will be on Sunday November 23.

Fundraising

Sausage sizzles at Bunnings Windsor Gardens continue at the rate of one a month with the last on Sunday August 10.

Commemorations



Kapyong veteran Ray Aubert. Ray was a rifleman in 7 Platoon C Company 3 RAR at Kapyong.

We conducted our annual Kapyong Day service at the RAR RSL on Thursday April 24. This was a change of venue from our Memorial on the Pathway of Honour which was very successful.

We conducted three individual commemorative services for our Vietnam war dead in May - Sgt **Peter Lewis** on the 13th and Privates **Alan Cooper** and **William Thomas** on the 26th.

We will be conducting our annual Maryang San commemorative service at the RAR RSL on Tuesday October

7. This is a change in venue from our Memorial on the Pathway of Honour.

We are looking at a date for a commemorative service for our operations in Borneo to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Battalion's deployment March-July 1965.. Newsletter Out soon.

5 RAR

Binh Ba Anniversary 45 years

The S A Branch of the 5RAR Association organised a commemoration ceremony at the RAR Headquarters on June 6. I was ably supported in organising the day by



Allan Tuckfield (D Company) places the wreath for Private Teeling.

Spike Dwiar, both of us being Binh Ba Boys, and **Adrian Craig**, the RAR Ceremonial Officer. RAR Association President Mike von Berg (first tour with 5 RAR) was roped in as MC Twenty-five supporters were there to honour the occasion. A wreath was placed for Private **Wayne Teeling**, the only soldier killed in the action. A report on the action was given by me and Spike spoke of his personal experiences during the

action. It was pleasing to catch up with **Allan Tuckfield**, the only D Company representative, the rest of us being B Company. **Francis Bedford** MP was also present.

Mo Hancock, 5 RAR Representative



7 RAR Shooting Team AASAM 2014

7 RAR

2014 has continued to provide the challenges and training opportunities the men and women of 7 RAR have come to expect in a very busy and demanding training cycle.

The soldiers of A Coy continue with their deployment to Malaysia as Rifle Company Butterworth and as this edition goes to print they are finishing their advanced jungle training and live fire ranges at Pulada Range Complex.

The Battalion will welcome them home in early August. C Coy has deployed to Far North Queensland for the duration of July to support the major Army war fighting activity, Exercise Camel as enemy forces and are doing a great job making life dangerous and difficult for the 3rd Brigade. A significant proportion of the Officers and NCOs from the unit are also providing umpiring and observer/trainer support to the exercise.

7 RAR competed in the 2014 Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting (AASAM) in June with great results including:

7 RAR Team: Gold Medal - Service Pistol Match.

LCPL McCurdy and **Pte Madden**: Bronze Medal - Combat Pistol (Pairs)

LCPL McCurdy: Gold Medal- Service Rifle 400m Deliberate
Silver Medal- Service Rifle 450m Deliberate

LCPL Watson: Silver Medal- Light Support Weapon Night Shoot

Reconnaissance and Direct Fire Support Weapons (Heavy Weapons) courses over June and July provided qualified specialists ready for employment in Support Coy. Both courses were demanding and arduous with not all trainees making the grade.

The Inter-Unit Winter Sports Competition continues with 7 RAR fielding competitive teams in rugby, Australian Rules, soccer and netball. Sporting finals will be held in September for the winter sports. RAR Association members are encouraged to attend. Duty First.

FROM THE BATTALIONS

Colonel Gordon Hurford AM (Ret'd), Secretary 2RAR Association Brigadier

Lt Col **Patrick Forbes** MC (Retd), as a young lieutenant with 2RAR in Korea, had a bloke in his pioneer platoon called "**Sparrow**" **Ross**. He was quite a small man which was most probably the reason he was called "Sparrow".

Sparrow had a brown felt toy dog which he carried in his pack. The dog wore a small army slouch hat and various insignia including the Commonwealth Division Badge.

Some years after Korea, the then Major Forbes, as a member of the CMF, was at JTC Canungra doing his promotion exams for Lt Col. At the end of the course he returned to his room to find Sparrow's dog on his bed with a note saying "I thought you might like the dog. Sparrow".

Unfortunately he was never able to catch up with Sparrow, who died a number of years ago. But he has kept the dog ever since.

Lt Colonel Forbes decided that he would take the opportunity to present the dog, now named "Sparrow" in memory of his former owner, to the battalion CO Lt Colonel **Michael Bassingthwaighe**, DSM, who was attending the 2RAR Association's 2014 ANZAC Reunion in Adelaide. Lt Colonel Bassingthwaighe accepted Sparrow on behalf the Battalion. The dog will hold a place of honour in the soon to be upgraded Battalion museum.

The museum will be an important educational tool for all



Laurie Lewis AM (Ret'd), Patron RAR Association (SA), second from left; Lt Colonel Michael Bassingthwaighe DSM, CO 2 RAR with the 61-year-old "Sparrow"; Lt Colonel Patrick Forbes MC (Ret'd), donor of "Sparrow"; and Major Leo Van De Kamp (Ret'd), President 2RAR Association. Photo taken in the Drill Hall, Torrens Training Depot, Torrens Parade Ground, Adelaide, on Thursday 24 April, 2014.

members of the Battalion, especially for new members marching into the Battalion.

Also of interest is that Lt Col Forbes' father was in the first class to enter Duntroon in 1911 and was awarded his MC during WW1.

Patrick's elder brother, Dr **Jim Forbes**, who was also a Duntroon graduate, was awarded the MC in WW11 and was later the Minister for the Army for a period during the Menzies Government (during the reintroduction of National Service). He went on to be Minister for Health and later Immigration.'

THE ARMY MUSEUM OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA [AMOSA]

A brief narrative by Major C. Roe, Manager

The Military Museum of South Australia was inaugurated at a meeting on 21 September 1992.

Since then it has been at a variety of locations within Keswick Barracks. The galleries are now in Building 76 with the unit – AMOSA as it became known – also housing administrative and command elements almost adjacent in Building 203 and having part or full occupancy of a variety of other storage facilities in Keswick Barracks. Easy access to one of Adelaide's main roads, aptly named Anzac Highway, and the retention of Keswick as an open barracks makes this museum particularly accessible to those people wishing to visit "off the street."

AMOSA is a fully functioning part of the Army Museum Network [AMN] as one the 'Regional' (as opposed to 'Corps') museums.

Sunday afternoons see the Museum proper open to the public for a four-hour block - noon to 4pm. Tours can be conducted then and at most other times by negotiation. The Museum Catering Group [MCG] supports tours with a barbecue and light lunches, if requested, and the Keswick Barracks Heritage Walk can be included at any time as an adjunct to a museum tour. The Army Museum of South Australia Foundation [AMOSAF] supports the organisation as a whole with board, regional networking and minor fundraising responsibilities.

AMOSA is widely recognised as one of the state's best small displays and is working hard to promote itself to as broad a range of organisations as possible.

This is especially important as we traverse the Great War anniversary years of 2014-18.

The AMOSA website at www.amosa.org.au provides all pertinent information about important museum contacts.



FROM THE BATTALIONS

9 RAR

45th Anniversary Commemorative Services

In the first half of July we conducted the last two of the 45th Anniversary of the deaths of our SA war dead.

The first was at Whyalla for LCpl **Richard Abraham** who was KIA on 6 July 1969. Rick was the Section 2IC of 2 Section 10 Platoon D Company 9 RAR and was killed when the enemy fired upon the platoon's ambush position.

A Meet & Greet was held at Rick's nephew's home on July 5 followed by the commemorative service at the Whyalla Cemetery at 1100hrs next day. This was followed by a short service at the Whyalla Oval where there is a pictorial display of Rick's and Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. The service was well attended with Rick's family and family friends and 10 Platoon playing key roles at both services.

A highlight of the service was the letter by **Peter Abraham** and read by family friend **Geoff Ettridge** which described the desperate method Rick took to get fit to pass his Army medical after a motor bike accident left a leg with multiple fractures and the subsequent placing of pins in the leg. After working on the injury Rick had the pins removed and passed his medical to enable him to do his duty in National Service. Talk about Duty First.

The second service was at Centennial Park for Cpl Bruno Adamczyk, who, along with his forward scout Pte Beresford Paul Edwards were KIA on 12 July 1969 while investigating a bunker system. Bruno was a veteran of active service in Borneo with 4 RAR and was the Section Commander 5 Section 11 Platoon D Company 9 RAR. The service was well attended with Bruno's family and D Company having key roles and was followed by lunch at the Torrens Arms Hotel.

New Banners

We are having two new banners made with one to be placed in the RAR RSL and the other for use at services. They will be identical and interchangeable.

Adrian Craig, 9 RAR Rep and Ceremonial Officer.

Foundation scholarships announces

The first recipients of the Royal Australian Regiment Foundation's scholarships have been announced. They are **Matthew Dole**, son of Corporal **Keiron Dole** who served with 4 RAR, who will study Physical and Health Education at La Trobe University in Bendigo; **Ramona Holmes**, daughter of Private **John Holmes** who served with 1 RAR and 2 RAR, who will study Laws at Bond University on the Gold Coast; and **Fiona Cameron**, daughter of Major **Ewan Cameron** who completed 25 years service in the Regiment, who will study Law Education at James Cook University in Townsville. The RARF will sponsor three tertiary scholarships a year of \$3000 for eligible children of soldiers who are currently serving or have served in the Regiment. The scholarships are administered by the Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust. Applications open on August 18 and close on October 31. Selection relies on three criteria. Details and applications: AVCAT website www.avcat.org.au. Inquiries: (02) 9213 7999. Email: avcat@dva.gov.au



Above: Keith Wright ex-D Company hands over the National Flag to armourer Jim Fisher while Simon Kelly bends to place his poppy. MC and Ceremonial Officer Adrian Craig supervises while Sandra Craig holds the poppies and Bruno's grandson Dylan Matthews looks on at the right.



D Coy 9 RAR. L-R Rick's brother Peter Abraham, Peter (Noddy) Cliff of 12 Platoon of Wauchope, NSW, Adrian Craig Platoon Commander 10 Platoon, John Retschlag of 3 Section 10 Platoon of Kilcoy, Qld, Tony Mullavey rifleman of 2 Section of St Marys, NSW; Jeff Howe Coy HQ D Coy of Parafield Gardens and Graham Cousins Section Commander 2 Section of Maitland, NSW.



Lunch at the Sundowner Hotel/Motel with 10 Platoon's Graham Cousins, Tony Mullavey and John Retschlag while John's wife Denise and Adrian Craig's wife Sandra look on.

Royal Australian Regiment Association Committee 2014-2015

Patron Laurie Lewis AM

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CLUB ACTIVITIES AUGUST - DECEMBER 2014

		BAR	MEAL
AUG	1	Linda	Gourmet Hamburger & Chips
	8	Jim/Spike	Ladies night, 3 Course Meal
	15	Petra	Steak Sandwich & Chips
Mon	18	Long Tan Day	Sausages & Onions
	22	Adrian	Chef's Choice, 2 Course meal
	29	Barb	Egg & Bacon Sandwich & Chips
SEP	5	Linda	Gourmet Hamburger & Chips
	12	Neil/Kara	Ladies night, 3 Course Meal
	19	Petra	Steak Sandwich & Chips
	26	Adrian	Chef's Choice, 2 Course meal
OCT	3	Barb	Gourmet Hamburger & Chips
	10	Adrian/ Spike	Ladies night, 3 Course Meal
	17	Linda	Steak Sandwich & Chips
	24	Petra	Chef's Choice, 2 Course meal
	31	Jim	Egg & Bacon Sandwich & chips
NOV	2 Su	Spike	Melbourne Cup Calcutta
	7	Barb	Gourmet Hamburger & Chips
	14	Neil/Kara	Ladies night, 3 Course Meal
	21	Linda	Chef's Choice, 2 Course Meal
	28	Adrian/Spike	RAR Xmas Function
DEC	5	Petra	Gourmet Hamburger & Chips
	12	Jim	Xmas Dinner, Ladies night
	19	Linda/Spike	Club Xmas Drinks

Club Re-opens Friday 9 Jan 2015

Change to Infantryman contributions

All articles and photos for *Infantryman* are to be submitted to Editorial Committee members Michael von Berg, Greg Dwiar and Robert Whinnen - see this page for email addresses - and Fred Fairhead at mfred@bigpond.com.

Editorial Committee members will vet them, prepared them for publication and then submit them to Editor Penelope Forster for preparing the layouts. All emails, both articles and photos, must show in the subject line with the word "Infantryman" and then another word or two. Just numbers on emailed photos make it very difficult to sort out which articles they should be matched up with. When more than one photo is submitted for the same article, type: Infantryman parade 1, Infantryman parade 2, etc. Articles are to be submitted in Word in 10pt Arial and all photos as jpgs separately - **not included within the text**. Phone numbers must be written XXXX XXXX (four numbers, a gap, and four numbers) for landlines and XXXX XXX XXX (four numbers, a gap, and three numbers and a gap, three numbers) for mobiles as seen on TV and advertising hoardings and in newspapers and magazines. Please include a phone number on emails as a second source of communication when verification needed about a story or photo. All photos must have captions. The next issue will be the December one. The deadline for submission of articles and photos: Monday November 3 - if not before. Thank you - Penelope.

Thanks to all contributors to this issue.

Special thanks to Ann Dennis, Lynn Graham and Greg Dwiar for their help and support - Penelope.