

1 FIELD SQUADRON GROUP
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS
QUEENSLAND INCORPORATED

'FOLLOW THE SAPPER'

Website - www.1fieldsappers.org
email: info@1fieldsappers.org

June 2020 Edition 34



Greetings fellow Sappers and Friends.

"The Times They Are A Changin'" – So wrote Bob Dylan in 1964. The lyrics to his song were very timely then as they would be today. The Soothsayer in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar warned to Beware the Ides of March (15th March). How prophetic are both. Who could possibly have imagined that our lives would have changed so dramatically? Our Nation has coped with floods, bushfires and droughts in the past year and now we have COVID 19. My Son and I were in Vietnam in January. Word of the virus was just emerging. We were given masks to wear on our flight home. We transited in Singapore. Temperature checks were conducted but 'social distancing' had not yet entered our vocabulary. When we arrived in Brisbane, there was no hint of concern. The times were about to change – rapidly. So now we have a new 'normal' which is also in a state of flux. We must hang tough and endure.

BREAKING NEWS:

The media published the Australian Queen's Birthday Honors on 8th June 2020. Our Association is delighted to advise that our President, George Hulse has been awarded an OAM. From all George, our sincere congratulations for a well deserved award.

For our Association, the virus brought about the postponement of the opening of Amiens Memorial Bridge. The intention is though, to have the dedication on 8 August 2021. Our President will write more on this. So as always Sappers remain resilient. As it happens, the other Amiens (here in Queensland) already has a bridge. Committee stalwarts Robin Farrell and Gary Sutcliffe (Life Members) are seen above at the bridge. Well done those men.

No doubt most have been ham strung because of social distancing, border closures and travel restrictions. My bet is however that as resilient Sappers, most have found productive ways to fill time. Your Committee has likewise been active. We have launched an updated web site. We have been working very closely with Mr. John Robertson (Website Designer) and reckon the finished product will be well received. John has done an amazing job on this. There is no doubt that our new web site will provide an excellent platform for members to share news and images to all. We have some great pictures of our current Sappers from their service in Afghanistan and Iraq. We hope to include other recent deployments in the near future. So we have been busy.

To all our readers and families/friends/associates, do be safe and stay well. Like all Sappers let us look out for each other, adapt and move forward.

Derek Smith - Editor

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George Hulse OAM

Contact Details

Please ensure your mail and contact details are correct!

If you have relocated or your contact details have changed please message our Hon Secretary directly at:

info@1fieldsappers.org
or
P O Box 236 Raymond Terrace
NSW 2324

facebook

Vale - 1 FD SQN GP RAE members:

The following list is of our brothers who have marched out since our last newsletter.

SPR George Hamill	1 FD SQN GP 1969/70	Passed away 5 January 2020
CPL William John Maher	1 FD SQN GP 1969/70	Passed away January 2020
SPR George Van De Wege	21 EST and 55 EWPS 1971/72	Passed away 21 January 2020
SPR Peter Rhys Cosh	1 FD SQN GP 1967/68	Passed away 15 February 2020
CAPT Ivan Royle Dunning	34 WATER TPT SQN RAE But CMF visitor to 1 FD SQN GP June/July 1971	Passed away 18 March 2020
LCPL Anthony George Evans	1 FD SQN GP 1967	Passed away 5 April 2020
CAPT John Ignatius Moller	1 FD SQN GP 1969	Passed away 13 April 2020
LTCOL Rudolf Philip Kudnig	1 FD SQN GP 1971	Passed away 27 April 2020
SPR Philip Lamb	1 FD SQN GP 1968/69	Passed away 13 May 2020
SPR Phillip Raymond Duffy	1 FD SQN GP 1970/71	Passed away 20 May 2020



The Corps also lost a long time RAE Legend. WO1 Harold (Harry) Buckley, born 28 July 1926, served in World War 2, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam (AATTV 1970/71) passed away on 13 May 2020.

The Corps also lost BRIG Francis (Frank) James Cross who served at HQ 1ATF in 1969/70. He passed away on 9 May 2020.

Also on 22 May 2020 Anita Perry, wife of Peter Perry (1 FD SQN GP 1967/68) passed away.

Our deepest sympathies to all those families of those we have lost.

This item also concerns the passing of a Vietnam veteran. Although he was not RAE, it is none the less an inspirational story.

A WARRIOR HAS PASSED. HIS DUTY IS DONE

16956 Neville William Tickner born 28 June 1945 at Mount Morgan, Queensland and served in 4th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, Vietnam, from 1st May 1967 to 5th March 1968, passed away in January 2020. May he rest in peace.

I was first connected to Nev via a mutual mate and old Artillery man, as I was planning to visit Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam. Nev had been living in Dien Bien Phu for 10 or so years, hence the link. It also happened that he lived in the same hotel that I was booked into – the Phadin Hotel. I had received a few emails from Nev who assured me that he would ensure our stay in DBP was going to be a good one and we would see lots of good things and meet some wonderful people including his partner, Heather and his well trusted guide Thanh Binh Ca Thi – we called her Bing. The next message I got was from our mutual mate, telling me Nev had passed away.



We (myself, my Son Michael and a mate, John) decided to push on to DBP and figured we could select stuff to do and visit during our 3 night stay. We were at the airport in Hanoi waiting for our flight to DBP when a lady approached me and asked if I was Derek. That was surreal. It was Heather, Nev's partner. She had just completed all that was required to have Nev's ashes returned to Australia. I could not imagine the grief she was enduring. Yet here she was, still wanting to follow through on Nev's wishes to ensure we had a great time in Dien Bien Phu. A truly amazing lady.

And so we did. We were so well looked after in DBP by both Heather and Bing. Everywhere we went we encountered people who identified us as being friends of Nev or as he was so well known there, Ong Tay – Grandfather. We continued to hear of the wonderful support he had given to the ethnic minority Tay people of the region. He was a much respected man. We were invited to a dinner at a Tay home where a place was set for Nev and a drink placed where he would have sat had he been there. We raised a glass to absent comrades.

Our visit to DBP will live in our memories. We cannot express enough, our thanks to Heather and Bing for their caring and assistance during our visit. I am so sorry we never got to meet Ong Tay. I am confident his memory will live on in DBP for many years to come. My sincere thanks to Heather and Bing and our sincere sympathy for your loss of such an amazing man.

Derek Smith OAM (Major RAE ret'd) 14th February 2020

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1 Field Squadron Group Web Site

is maintained by John Robertson at
Visreal Productions - Currumbin, Queensland. 4223
Mob. 0421 045 100
Email: visrealproductions@gmail.com

We acknowledge photos marked with * are from AWM or Wikipedia
All others are from private collections and in some cases source is unknown.

Our Patron and HOC BRIG John Carey CSC received the letter below from the Corps Colonel Royal Engineers.
Such camaraderie from our RE brothers and sisters in arms is truly valued.

Colonel Matthew Quare MBE ADC

OFFICIAL



Corps Colonel Royal Engineers

Headquarters Royal Engineers
Ravelin Building, Brompton Barracks,
CHATHAM, Kent, ME4 4UG

Phone: 01634 822227 ATN: (9)4661 2227

Mobile: 07769 875545

Email: Matthew.Quare859@mod.gov.uk

Brigadier John Carey CSC
Head of Corps
Royal Australian Engineers
Kings Highway
Bungendore NSW 2621

24th April 2020

Dear Brigadier John,

We live in difficult and demanding times. Our countries are currently engaged with the rest of the world in fighting a common cause, COVID-19, but we are deeply conscious that you have had many other challenges to cope with in recent years including devastating fires, long periods of extreme drought and earthquakes.

At times like these we can draw strength from our long-standing friendships, heritage and deep-rooted connections of loyalty and family which have seen us through similar challenges before and will do so again in the future. On Anzac Day, on behalf of the Chief Royal Engineer and the Corps of Royal Engineers everywhere, I extend to you, our Brothers-in-Arms in Australia and New Zealand, our strongest and most heart-felt expressions of sympathy, condolence, support and affection. Whilst formalities on the morning of the 25th will be significant different, our thoughts, prayers and best wishes remain as strong as ever.

As we look forward, once again we will meet on sports pitches, training areas and in operational theatres across the globe, to reinforcing further the already strong and enduring bond between us all as part of the global "Sapper Family".

*Ubique. Yours loyal
Matty*

Matthew Quare MBE ADC
Colonel

Please read the extracts from the Current Affairs Bulletin 1967, appearing on Page 8. How things changed. The map here is from the Newsweek Magazine dated 28 April 1975, just two days before Saigon fell to the North – 30 April 1975. (Published by Newsweek Inc, New York, NY). The map shows the forces engaged in Vietnam's last battle – the battle of Xuan Loc. Reading the CAB content of 1967 and examining the Newsweek article of 1975, it could be seen that the final outcome of the Vietnam War was inevitable.



President's Report June 2020

Engineer Monument to WWI Sappers in France

As a consequence of COVID-19, our memorial in Amiens France has been rescheduled for 8 August 2021. All the arrangements as previously advised for the construction and dedication of it remain the same except moved forward exactly one year. I will keep you updated through future newsletters and our website going forward.

Reunion 22 to 24 October 2021

The Association's committee confirmed that our reunion for 2021 will be at the Mantra Hotel at Tweed Heads on 22, 23 and 24 October 2021. COVID-19 strikes again with the details on costing etc. because the function staff who run the event for us are not on a position to provide a quote for the meals and support facilities for our Memorial Service in Chris Cunningham Park on the Saturday afternoon. As soon as we can confirm these details we will finalise the registration material and get it out to you.

Website

After innumerable hours of work, our new-look website is available for your use and information. The information will be updated from time to time and I urge you to access it as often as you please. Feel free to add comment or contact the committee through this means.

On behalf of every member of the Association I congratulate Derek Smith OAM and John Robertson (our website manager) on a job well done. I can't begin to tell you what a big project this has been and thanks to Derek and John for putting in an enormous effort, we now have a professional and modern website.

Meritorious Unit Citation for 1 FD SQN

1 FD SQN, including its iterations as 1 FD COY (and for a brief period 28 FD COY), is one of the most prestigious military units in the ADF. It has an awesome military history with an inescapable link to major battles spanning more than 105 years, significant military support actions and ongoing support to the civil community. This unit is deserving of recognition of its historical significance in the ADF particularly during both World Wars, Vietnam and Afghanistan. It is our intention to apply for the Meritorious Unit Citation (MUC) for 1 FD SQN. The ADF website tells us that:

The Meritorious Unit Citation is awarded to a unit for sustained outstanding service in warlike operations. The award was introduced in 1991.

It looks like this:



1 FD SQN has filled the criterion "for sustained outstanding service in warlike operations" several times.

As ex-members of the unit we will not be permitted to wear it -unless we were present in the actions for which we are claiming recognition, but the Sappers in the unit will be able to wear it whenever they are posted to the unit. Unit personnel would receive the MUC without the Federation Star in the centre. The committee has formed up a team to go after this award and we are aware that it may take several years to accomplish what we are after. We are also aware that it might all end in disappointment. But that is a fact of life and it will not deter us from proceeding.

Membership Renewal

Don't forget that 1 July is the renewal date for our memberships. Please fill out the details and send in your subscription as soon as you can. We appreciate the funds because they help to pay for our website, newsletter and the admin and log that affects every registered organisation with the governing bodies who regulate us.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is being managed well in Australia. It is not over by a long margin and it is disease for which there is no vaccination at this time. All we can do is to follow medical advice with physical distancing, avoid massed gatherings and keep your hands clean. Things will change for the better, hopefully, soon.

Follow The Sapper – George Hulse OAM, President

24 June 2020

ANZAC DAY 2020

No doubt most of us commemorated a very different ANZAC Day this year. I am not sure whose idea it was to hold a 'driveway' service, but what a wonderful idea that was. The images on the various social media clearly showed just how we can adapt despite the virus. Honoring our service men and women who have gone before us is such a vital part of our culture. I had my own little Dawn Service with the Ode, Last Post, Rouse and the two National Anthems delivered via local radio here in Townsville. I placed my Dad's parachute beret and medals (he was 1st Aust Para Bn WW2) and my Grandfathers unit badge and medals (he was 5th Aust Light Horse WW1), on a table.

Lest We Forget.



Royal Australian Engineers Sappers' Fund

Earlier this year we received an email from Patron and HOC BRIG John Carey CSC.
This Fund is a most worthy cause so please give it some serious consideration.

Fellow Sappers,

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

The RAE Sappers' Fund income is generated from fortnightly or annual subscriptions from serving (both Full-Time and Part-Time) and ex-serving members of the RAE, as well as various donations. The recommended contribution and how to subscribe is enclosed. There are currently 132 active subscribers; an increase from 92 at the start of 2019. I listed these members in Australian Sapper magazine and I once again thank them for their contribution.

The Sappers' Fund is used to foster our Corps spirit, not only by ensuring our past is captured, but also by making sure we continue to build our identity into the future. The Fund exists to provide support to prizes, awards, incentives and initiatives. Ideally, this encompasses recognition of individual and team achievements, written articles, memorial and museum projects, as well as special projects requested by individual members or sub-units/units of the Royal Australian Engineers and affiliated Associations. During the last twelve months, Unit COs/RSMs have been highlighting to all Sappers how to seek funding support from the Corps Committee. The SO2 HOC/Corps Secretary Major Dave Spriggs (cc) recently re-released an update on Corps Policy Statements for greater transparency and understanding. The Corps also has a list of projects supported by the Fund in 2019/20, and this will be included in the end of year Australian Sapper. I appreciate this has been a challenging year – bushfires, pandemics and a troubled economy. The Sappers' Fund not only belongs to past and present Sappers, but also to our successors. We must leave them a strong and vibrant 'Family.'

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

My POC for any questions is the Corps Treasurer,
WO1 Robert Oltvanji (cc).

UBIQUE



WHY SUBSCRIBE?

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

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

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

WHAT IS THE COST?

The annual cost of subscriptions is as follows:

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

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

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

- Corps sporting events, teams, and tours
- Corps Adventure training activities
- Individual and Team Engineer Awards and Prizes
- Publication of Corps and Unit histories
- Establishment and upgrade of RAE Memorials
- Purchase of wreaths for funerals and remembrance of serving members
- Assistance to Army History Unit to manage historical items relevant to the RAE

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

HOW DO I SUBSCRIBE?

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

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

Please include your PMKeys number and surname with your payment.

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

A Blast From The Past

Publishing newsletters for Sapper units is no new thing. We had the Nui Dat News for 1 FD SQN GP in Vietnam, the Hairy Goat for 55 EWPS in Vietnam and in 1974 we had the High Range Marauder. 3 FD ENGR REGT deployed from Lavarack Barracks up to High Range to construct roads for the new training area.

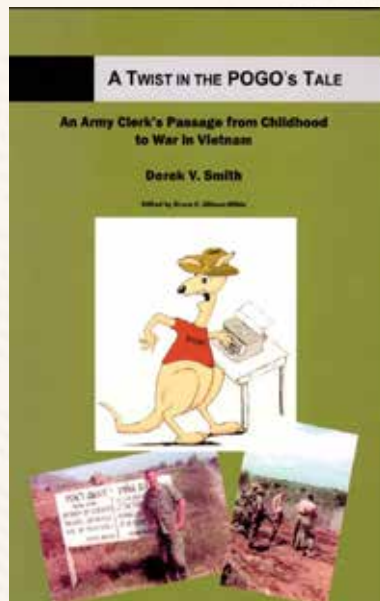
Most of the REGT spent Mondays to Fridays under canvas. A small group including a young CAPT Graeme Mackenzie and this Editor, launched the High Range Marauder. Here is a wee bit from the June 1974 edition.

Waterloo Dinner 1974

By all accounts our fearless leaders had a highly successful night at their social event of the season – the WATERLOO Dinner. They succeeded in keeping everyone awake with their singing (slightly off key) or to be more specific, 'The little RAE of Sunshine' from Call Sign 20. We also have it on good authority that when the band burst forth with 'Hurrah for the CRE' the CE, COL Hanlin and MAJ Haigh, COL COMDT) put on an excellent demo of 'old school marching' up and down the table. But without a shadow of a doubt the event of the evening, heralded by a fan fair from the band, was the STREAKER. It is understood that said STREAKER was a Bluebell (RAEME) who was well rewarded for his heroic act.



A Plug for Authors



As most will know, 1 FD SQN GP has produced a few authors along the way namely Alex (Sandy) MacGregor, Kenny Laughton, Derek Smith and George Hulse.

Not wishing to be too self indulgent, we want to plug Derek's and George's books again.

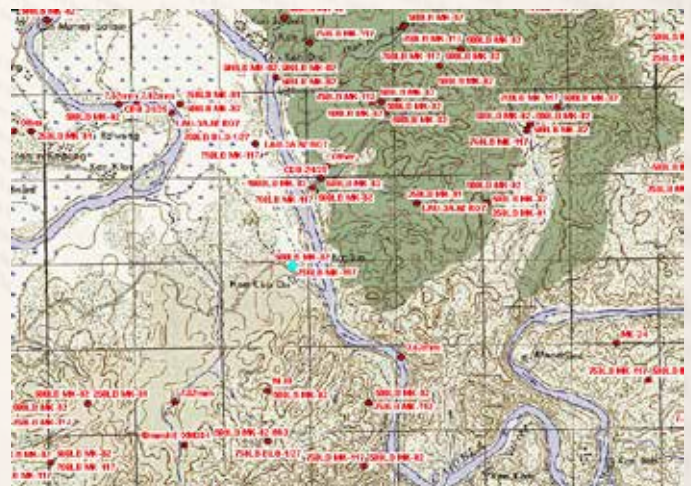
Both are available for \$20 each and with postage of \$10 represent a good buy. If you already have copies, perhaps buy another to give as a gift.

Proceeds from George's book go to ADFTWDA – Australian Defence Force Trackers and War Dogs Association.

Proceeds from Derek's book go to support his projects in Montagnard villages and orphanages in Kon Tum Vietnam.

Kon Tum Province

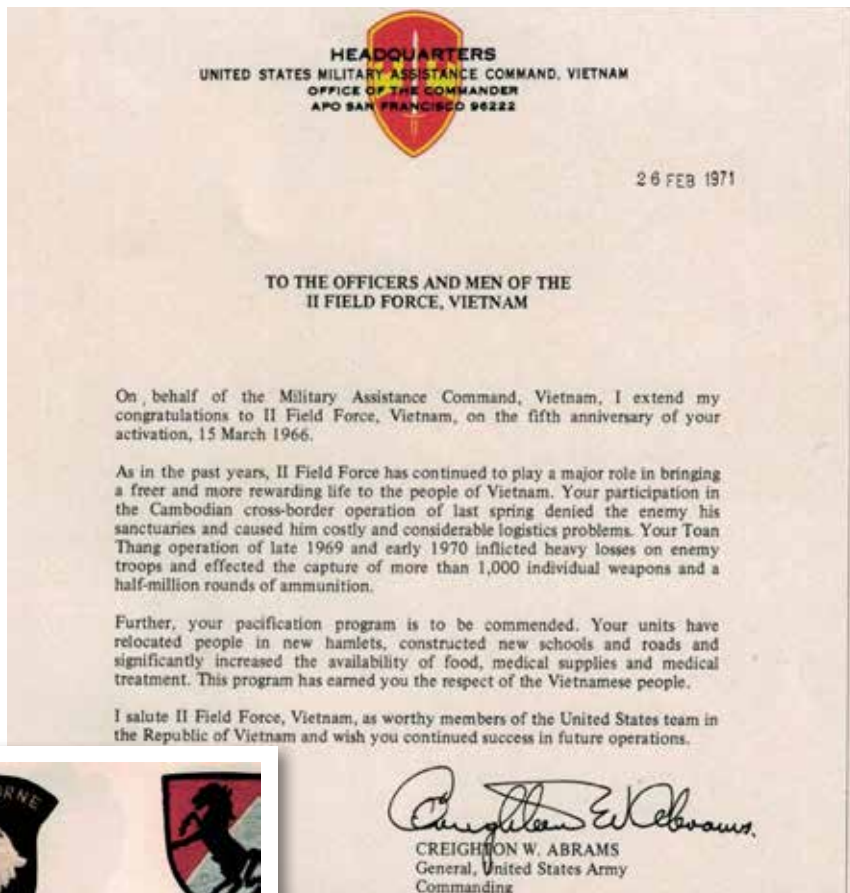
Your Editor has been a frequent visitor to Vietnam (20 times not counting the War). I have seen the suffering of the people. To add some context, where I do my volunteering is Kon Tum Province. I assist Montagnard orphanages that about 700 children call home. I assist Montagnard villages across Kon Tum. One must be always cautious of any earth works like culvert or well construction. The reason is possibility of UXB – unexploded bombs. During the Easter Offensive in 1972, American Airforce dropped around 60 million pounds (27216 tonnes) of bombs around Kon Tum during 25 days. (Source Kon Tum: The Battle to Save South Vietnam (Battles and Campaigns) by Thomas P. McKenna) The map shows some of the area and the size, of bombs dropped.



From The US Army Hurricane Magazine 1971



It is surprising what one keeps from the past. I was having a scratch around and found this magazine. 1 FD SQN GP was part of II Field Force Vietnam. General Creighton W. Abrams was commanding.



He wrote this letter to the Officers and Men of his Command, dated 26 February 1971.



RETROSPECT

**UNITS
BATTLES
CAMPAIGNS
OPERATIONS
COMMANDERS**

DURING ITS FIVE YEAR AND ONE MONTH LIFETIME, II Field Force Vietnam (II FFORCEV) has achieved a proud place in the history of warfare. Its area of operations (AO) has been the most critical in the Vietnamese conflict. At peak strength, it was the largest corps level unit ever fielded. During its early life, it conducted more major operations against the enemy than any comparable unit in country. During its later life it has trained its counterpart—the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) III Corps—and turned over combat operations to them before any other American corps in the country could do the same. And it was the first American corps in Vietnam to be reorganized, to get its job done.

The II FFORCEV AO is Military Region 3 (MR3), earlier known as the III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ). It consists of Saigon and the eleven surrounding provinces (see map on page 21).

Throughout the war, the communist's primary objective has been to take and hold Saigon in order to control the government, population and industry centered there. By the time the American military build up began in mid-1965, III CTZ had seen more major battles and more prolonged confrontation with the enemy than any other CTZ in Vietnam. It also housed the only significant enemy base areas and war zones in the country.

Consequently, when II FFORCEV became operational on March 15, 1966, its AO was critical. Starting with five major units (see chart on page 22), and adding and dropping units from its operational control as the war progressed, II FFORCEV soon seized the initiative from the enemy.

Of the five major confrontations with the enemy during its first year, only one was the result of enemy initiative. The other four ensued from II Field Force operations (see chart on page 26).

II FFORCEV maintained this initiative during 1967, when three of five major confrontations with the enemy resulted from II FFORCEV operations. Longtime enemy strongholds were cleared, and the communists were forced to move their base areas back into Cambodia.

COMMANDERS

LTC Jonathan G. Seamon	15 March 1966 – 23 March 1967
LTC Bruce Palmer, Jr.	24 March 1967 – 30 June 1967
LTC Frederick C. Wyand	1 July 1967 – 21 July 1968
LTC Walter T. Kerwin, Jr.	1 August 1968 – 2 April 1969
LTC Julian Johnson Swell	3 April 1969 – 14 April 1970
LTC Michael S. Dawson	15 April 1970 –

UNITS

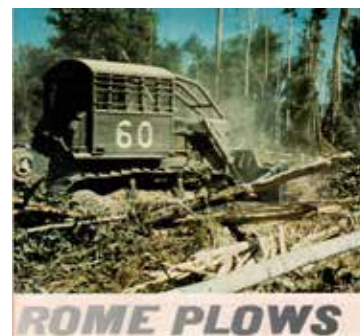
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)	Oct 68 – Apr 71
1st Infantry Division	Mar 66 – Mar 70
25th Infantry Division	Mar 66 – Dec 70
101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)	Dec 67 – Jan 68
3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division	Dec 68 – Oct 67
3d Brigade, 8th Infantry Division	Dec 68 – Sep 70
2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division	Dec 70 – Apr 71
2d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division	Oct 68 – Nov 69
1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Ambt)	Jan 68 – Apr 68
3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Ambt)	Jan 68 – Oct 68
173d Airborne Brigade	Mar 67 – May 67
196th Light Infantry Brigade	Aug 66 – Jun 67
199th Light Infantry Brigade	Dec 66 – Sep 70
1st Australian Task Force	Jun 66 – Apr 71
Royal Thai Army Volunteer Regiment/Force	Sep 67 – Apr 71
Capital Military Assistance Command/Team	Jun 68 – Apr 71
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment	Sep 66 – Jun 68
12th Aviation Group	Mar 66 – Apr 71
23d Artillery Group	Mar 66 – Apr 71
54th Artillery Group	Oct 66 – Nov 69
Company A, 5th Special Forces Group	Dec 66 – Apr 71

Also in the same article in the magazine, the Units were listed. It is great to see the Kangaroo leading the way.

The same magazine features US Army Combat Engineers clearing mines in Quan Loi. They were part of the 11th Armoured Cavalry Regiment.



Also pictured are US Army Engineers from 62nd Land Clearing Battalion working Rome Plows near the Cambodian Border.



Head Of Corps Challenge 2020

Fellow Sappers,

I am writing to you to make you aware of the inaugural **RAE Writing Prize**. Colonel Mostafa, Colonel Commandant Eastern Region has generously offered to sponsor this initiative into the future – thank you Ahmad on behalf of all of the Corps.

I also would like to thank Brigadier Wayne Budd and the RAE Foundation for their continued support.

The purpose of the Colonel Ahmad Mostafa RAE Writing Prize is to encourage excellence in writing and support future planning efforts for the Corps.

The HOC Challenge for 2020 is:

‘Advance new thinking about how the Royal Australian Engineers will tackle the diverse and difficult security challenges of the 21st century. No issue is too big or too narrow as long as it aims to make the Corps, Army and Joint Force stronger. Authors may be critical and challenge conventional wisdom, current policies, and practices.

Dare to write about the toughest and most difficult issues; the topics that everyone knows need addressing, but some are hesitant to acknowledge.’

- *Eligibility – Open to all contributors/ranks – Full-Time, Part-Time, Veterans, and Civilians.*
- *Length – 2,500 words maximum (excludes endnotes/footnotes/sources).*
- *Prior Publication - Your essay must be original, not have been previously published (online or in print) or being considered for publication elsewhere.*
- *Award – First Prize \$1500; Runner-Up \$300.*
- *Submission Guidelines. Email essay as a Microsoft Word attachment to MAJ Dave Spriggs (SO2 HOC/Corps Secretary) with RAE Writing Prize on the subject line. Include word count on title page of essay but do not include your name on title page or within the essay. Provide separate attachment to include biography and complete contact information—i.e. work, home, and mobile phone numbers; and home mailing address. Deadline: 01 September 2020.*
- *Selection Process. The RAE Corps Committee will evaluate every essay and screen the top papers to a special Essay Selection Team (HOC, RCC, Colonel Mostafa and the Corps RSM). All essays will be judged in the blind - ie. staff members and judges will not know the authors of the essays.*
- *Announcement of the Winners. Winners will be announced in Australian Sapper 2020 and prizes released shortly afterwards through the Office of the HOC, preferably during Engineer Week at SME.*
- *Sponsor. Colonel Ahmad Mostafa, Colonel Commandant Eastern Region.*

Please promulgate widely. The POC for any questions is Major Spriggs (SO2 HOC/Corps Secretary).

All the Best,
John

JOHN CAREY, CSC
Brigadier
Chief of Staff | Headquarters Joint Operations Command
Head of Corps, Royal Australian Engineers

One Vietnam or Two?

By mid 1954 the Viet Minh in its struggle against the French colonial power, controlled roughly three-quarters of Vietnam, including most of the area down to the 13th parallel and much of the area south of Saigon. It was in a strong position politically, being recognized nationalist and popular force. President Eisenhower stated later that all the Indo-China experts with whom he had talked or corresponded, believed that free elections, as at the time of the fighting, would have given Ho Chi Minh 80 per cent of the popular vote The most important points in the Final Declaration (Geneva Accords of 1954) were contained in paragraphs 6 and 7, which indicated that the military demarcation line was provisional and was certainly not a political or territorial boundary, and provided for free general elections, to be held by July, 1956, under the supervision of an international control commission. (Canada, India and Poland)-pp131-132. **As is known, those elections were never held.**

The Bulletin goes on with the title of The Defence of Free Men? the cost of the war must be measured against its possible gains. There is a danger that the war will reduce the long-term prospects of liberty in that it is smashing the political, social and institutional structure of the state, upon which its survival depends, and is destroying the stamina of the people. It is extremely doubtful whether free men, or a free society, will rise from the ashes. p140.

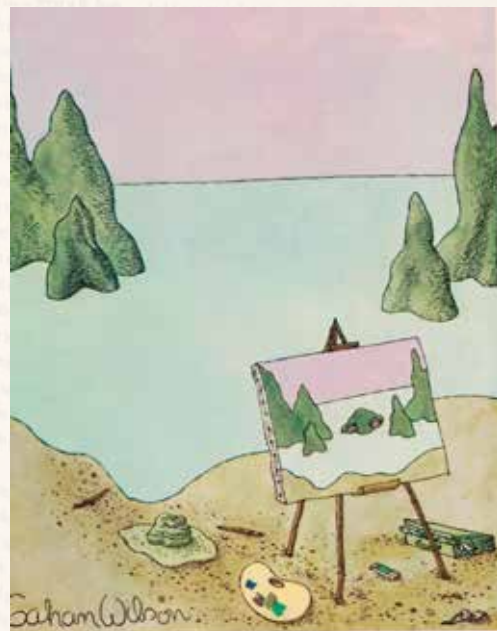
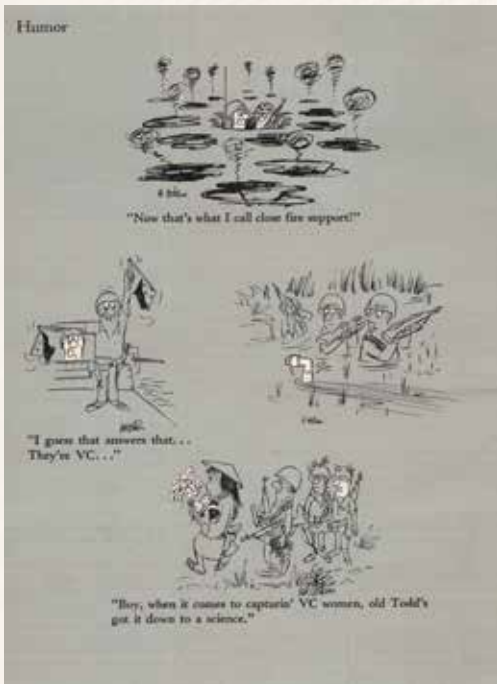
Then under the title of Falling Dominoes – The Vietnam war is not part of a general Chinese thrust through South-east Asia. It is the product of Vietnam’s own tensions and problems. In Vietnam the relationship between nationalism and Communism has been peculiarly close; where it was not so, as in Malaya and the Philippines, Communist-led insurgency movements failed to gain a similar dynamic The fate of Vietnam is much less relevant to the future of other nations in the area than is frequently supposed, and one cannot expect a Western victory there to “teach” guerrillas in other countries that their cause is in vain – p141

Source is Current Affairs Bulletin (CAB), Vietnam – Anti-Commitment, Vol 39, No. 9, March 27, 1967, Ambassador Press, Sydney.



He must be a Sapper!

Humor from US Army Infantry Magazine September-October 1969 & The Playboy Cartoon Album No 4 and 5 from 1969



Executive and Committee Members 2019 - 2020

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A GLANCE BACK IN TIME – MAY 1969

Most times were hectic for the Squadron. 1969 and in particular May, saw very interesting times. Entries in the 'Commanders Diary' during Major Rex Rowe's tenure as Officer Commanding made very interesting reading.

15th May

The whole of 9 RAR moved today to place an outer cordon around Dat Do whilst RF swept the village to remove an estimated two enemy companies who entered the town last night. This left the land clearing team without any protection. The engr comd (Lt COOPER) was ordered to move away from the work site and concentrate close to Route 44 in the vicinity of Long Than RF Post.

A composite group of 30 people were rounded up by 1 ATF and sent to Lt COOPER to assist him with protection for the night. This "and hoc" (sic) arrangement caused the OC some concern but in the event nothing happened and the small engr group was unmolested.

16th May

For the past 4 days the new Chief Engineer AFV (Lt Col JOHNSTONE) has had a study group examining a proposal of his to form an engr regimental HQ in Nui Dat to command both 1 Fd Sqn and 17 Const Sqn....The Chief Engineer discussed the matter with Comd 1 ATF and at a conference today attended by OC 1 Fd Sqn (Maj R. Rowe), OC 17 Const Sqn (Maj Werthiemer), DCRE (Maj Morphett), CO Cival Affairs Unit (Lt Col Gratton, RAE), the CE accepted the recommendations of the committee and decided to move HQ 17 Const Sqn to Nui Dat. Also both 17 Const Sqn and 198 Wks Sec would come under comd of 1 ATF. May was also a very sad time for the Squadron.

22nd May

There was a serious mine incident at DAT DO this morning resulting in casualties to 3 Sqn pers and many casualties to the local RF/PF forces. The Sqn personnel involved were Spr BRAMBLE, who died of wounds later in the day, Cpl HOLLIS and Spr Smith who were both seriously wounded. The incident occurred when a group of the local forces detonated a cluster of 4 x M16 mines which had been placed at the entrance of one of the holes dug for the bunkers. The local RF/PF forces were supposed to have ambushed the work area last night to prevent the enemy planting mines – investigation showed that they did not do so. Immediately after the incident the whole area was cleared for mines and this will now have to be done each day thereby slowing down work.

23rd May

There were more mine incidents at DAT DO today with some local force wounded but fortunately no Sqn members were involved. The Sqn personnel again cleared the area and found 4 x M16 mines which were destroyed in place. After receiving this information, Task Force decided to place an Australian group into DAT DO to protect the Sqn work force and the platoon from 6 RAR which had been protecting the Sqn plant detachment at SUOI NGHE moved to DAT DO.

The Plant detachment at SUOI NGHE was left under the protection of an RF/PF group. This was unsatisfactory and the detachment was brought back to NUI DAT this evening. They will have a maintenance day tomorrow and will probably move out again in the 25th by which time Australian protection should be available.

25th May

There was another M16 Mine incident at DAT DO today when a TD15 detonated a cluster of three mines. Two infantry personnel were wounded and Spr RICHARD received slight wounds and was medivac – condition satisfactory. The land clearing detachment at SUOI NGHE moved out again this morning to commence work. An Australian platoon moved out with them as the protection force.

DATE	EVENT OR INFORMATION
29 May	1. Early this morning the Task Force base received a few incoming rockets and 1 ATF stood to from 0610 to 0650. None of the rockets landed near the Sqn area. 2. A group of US engineers from MAUV, led by Capt ENGEL, US Navy, deputy engineer comd on MACV HQ, visited the Sqn for a short while. They were accompanied by the CE (LT COL JOHNSTONE). They were given a short brief by the OC, 2IC and Recce Offr and were then shown the dam project.
30 May	1. A quiet day with no significant activity.
31 May	1. Another mine incident at DAT DO – 7 Aust Infantry were wounded when a vehicle ran over a cluster of 4 x M16s. No Sqn personnel were wounded and equipment was not damaged. 2. An observation tower constructed by 21 Engr Sp Tp was erected today as part of the programme to improve perimeter defences.

Editor's Note: I was there on 25 May. I was part of a convoy heading to the Horseshoe. Our OC, Major Rowe was with us. We received a radio call advising of the mine incident so the OC split the convoy. Some vehicles continued on to the Horseshoe. The remainder of us headed for Dat Do. The TD15 was still in place. The casualties had been evacuated. I took the pictures. The picture on the right clearly shows the fence of the Barrier Minefield and the cleared area (minefield marking tape). Although it is hard to see, the soldiers are looking at a marked mine that was subsequently made safe. I recorded the events in my diary which shows that the wounded plant operator was Sapper Ricardo (not Richard as the Commanders diary records).



29th May

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31st May

Another mine incident at DAT DO – 7 Aust Infantry were wounded when a vehicle ran over a cluster of 4 x M16s. No Sqn personnel were wounded and equipment was not damaged.

So glancing back to May 1969 it can be seen that life for the Squadron members was very dangerous. Work around Phuoc Tuy Province but particularly around Dat Do and the Barrier Minefield, was extremely hazardous. It was known that the VC were pulling mines from the minefield and placing them indiscriminately so as to cause maximum damage/injury to our soldiers. One had to be constantly vigilant when operating in any capacity. Our men endured despite all the risks.

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One More Bit of Humor from Jim Weston

As a bagpiper I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery. I got lost and being a typical male I refused to ask for directions. I arrived an hour late. There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized for being late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place.

I didn't know what else to do so I started to play. The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family or friends. As I played Amazing Grace, the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept. As I left I heard one of the workers say, "I've never seen anything like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for 20 years."



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