

# 'A' NEWS

**'A' News is the newsletter of the A Company 6 RAR Association.  
The Association is dedicated to fostering comradeship forged in service to our country.**

Vietnam

East Timor

Solomon Islands

Timor Leste



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## Editorial:

As I prepare to assemble this issue of our newsletter – which will be my last; I have cause to reflect on the 60 or so issues I have prepared, the thousands of emails I have received and sent, and the hundreds of telephone calls I have made and received.

Generally the memories are good, even with my lack of computer skills, and frustration when the computer will not obey commands (and develops its own idea of what I am trying to do).

Just as an aside, I have had no reason to alter my opinion that the two greatest frauds imposed on the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century are 'The Stockmarket', and 'The Computer'.

That having been said, I have generally managed to wrestle with the machine to produce a reasonable article. It is now time to let someone else 'have a go'; and develop our newsletter to the next level.

I can see areas where a fresher mind can develop - such as better layout and production techniques, perhaps a website, and perhaps some more reliable financing structure. A company computer and printer should also be made available to the next editor.

When I started producing 'A' News, I used my own computer, paper, copying, envelopes and postage. When I was not able to continue this in 1998, I was lucky enough for Cheryl Macnaught of 'Whittacker Macnaught' to offer to copy fold and post the newsletter for approx. the next 18 months. Following that the copying and postage costs were covered by donation. Then the Government donated the paper and copying (not too sure whether they realize it yet !!). For almost the last 5 years we have been lucky enough to have colour copying which I believe has enhanced the look of the publication. We continue to have many generous readers who donate funds to enable the newsletter to continue at no cost to you – the reader. Donna and I still fold and post each issue.

When Bob Atkins started this publication more than 20 years ago, I'm not sure what he thought it would look like at this time – I hope he is happy. I have had a lot of input from others to achieve what I produce today, and I hope you will continue to give the new editor as much help as I have been given.

You may note the changed layout of this page compared with the previous one. Please note that the computer wants the last laugh.

During my 'era', I have applied only two rules for articles to be included in 'A' News:

- That the article is truthful.
- That the article does not malign another A Coy member.

Also, I have tried to apply the mantra of attempting to engage with the partners and families of members (they are as important as we are); and most particularly to include 'younger' members of A Coy – they are our future (at last count, more than 30% of readers are 'post' Vietnam). Also we need to understand that we are 'an EX service family' and not an Army Unit.

At the time of writing, I am not aware of anyone offering to take over the reins as editor. I hope this will be resolved at the Battalion Reunion in June 2010. The 'smoko' is the time to have your say and elect the new editor. I have said that I will assist anyone who is willing to try; and (as the advertisement says), if I can do it anyone can. I understand the Terry Bell intends to put himself forward as the A Coy rep. for the next 5 years, so if you are interested, contact Terry.

Finally, I would like you to understand that I sincerely appreciate the help given to me from all of you who wants the newsletter to succeed; and most particularly for the support and constructive criticism from my wife Donna. She is a very intelligent woman who can think for herself, and doesn't find it necessary to agree with me if she has a different opinion.

I could not have done it without her.

Peter Fitzgerald (Editor)  
[pdfitz@optusnet.com.au](mailto:pdfitz@optusnet.com.au)

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**From: A Coy Rep – Terry Bell.**

Giddy to All,  
Lots to cover, as lots has happened in the last few months.  
Firstly and most importantly I would like to Thank, on your behalf Peter and Donna Fitzgerald for the last 15/20 years of hard work and support to A Company both as the A Coy rep and A News editor for most of this time( whilst I was o/s Peter filled both jobs) A News is a great newsletter and in my short time working with Peter we have made it better and better. SO THANK YOU PETER AND DONNA FOR A JOB WELL DONE.

This gratitude was also reciprocated by all those who attended the Airlie Beach A Coy reunion  
Over the last few months we have lost some of our mates Stan Shea, Dale Lutvey and Vince Mitchell our thoughts and sympathy go to their family and WE WILL REMEMBER THEM Also my thanks to Bill Kane and Ray Showman for the coord of the A Company presence at the interstate funerals.  
NEWSFLASH PJ-Peter Phillips is still around, or I was drinking with a ghost at Airlie Beach, (Nice tan and all)

Going back a bit in February A Coy had a good representation at OP BRIBIE commemoration at Bribie Island see pic enclosed, myself now being a resident of Bribie found that its not that far to stagger home.

Recently A Coy members helped out with the first Family Day held for wives partners and children at Enoggera for current members of 6 RAR deployed in Afghanistan. The day was a huge success but it would be good to see more A Coy members help out on the 23 May same venue.

The next activity on the calendar is the Battalion reunion 4-7 Jun 10, I encourage all to attend. Numbers are not as strong as previous reunions, so even if you are travelling around please try and work your itinerary to hit Brisbane over that time. I am organising the Dinner and I assure you we(The Committee) have listened to the feedback from The Greek Club, I guarantee it, service, quality, value for money and a great setting/venue have been my priorities.

I am also organising a River Cruise on the Brisbane River for A Company (open to other delegates) Monday 7<sup>th</sup> 11-2pm. This includes a 3 course buffet lunch BYO drinks for \$45 but I need 50 to make it viable so please let me know asap by email otherwise I will need to cancel  
[terencejbell@hotmail.com](mailto:terencejbell@hotmail.com).

I must recognise ex CPL Wally Sokoluk A Coy 66-67, who has rejoined our ranks, Welcome Back Wally, Mate we have missed you and hope to see you at the Bn Reunion for a light shandy in June.

I would like to make special mention of the Atkins family for their wonderful support again, as it was when I was in Iraq. Mal, Cynthia and now Nicole. Nicole as a teacher in Tassie has encouraged her class to support those deployed and besides all the Care packages her Mum and Dad have sent. The students had an Anzac Biscuit working bee sending heaps to the guys o/s. Well Done Mal Cynthia and Nicole please pass our thanks to your students. Leaving the Best to Last, I attended my first A Coy Reunion with 140 others at Airlie Beach over the Anzac Day weekend, one of the Best I have ever attended Thank You to all. Special thanks goes to the little bloke with a big heart Ian Lade ably assisted by Jan, Weigo and Wendy. A Great reunion mate now you can go fishing.

I would also like to acknowledge our thanks to the Patron of the 6 RAR Assn MAJGEN David Butler (Retd) and his wife Ann for attending, we know MG Butler was having health problems earlier and all those at the Reunion really appreciated your attendance.

Weigo has put up his hand to take on A News assisted by Terry Mellington and others to design a website for those who have internet, those that don't you will still get hardcopies. So please keep your email addresses up to date.

I have put up my hand as Treasurer on the 6 RAR Assn and will continue as A Coy rep if voted in.

I also overheard during the reunion Lou Langebeer is off to hospital soon, Lou and Bev our thoughts and support are with you. ( Lou still looks pretty good at 70)

The next reunion was voted on at AB and will be held in Adelaide 2012 run by Peter and Helen Hoskins ably assisted by our other Sandgroper brethren.

The books aren't closed off yet from AB but I believe an amount of \$3000 was mentioned on top of the handover of the initial \$3k will go into the A News bank towards the cost of A News.

I would also like to recognise Phil Zeuschner for his wonderful gift to the A Company family, a beautifully presented book, which is a collage of photos and honour rolls of those who have paid the supreme sacrifice within A Company 6 RAR. Phil it is an amazing tribute to those who have fallen and their families. It will be held by the current OC of A Coy for safe keeping and displayed in the A Coy HQ and brought to each Reunion by the A Coy rep.(I will enclose photos next edition.)

Peter Fitz also mentioned to me an A Coy member recently donated \$500 to A News and wants to remain anonymous, We Thank You.

Over the reunion and a few light shandies a few of us were talking about future reunions after Adelaide. A suggestion was the A Coy Love Boat cruise, leaving Brisbane via Syd/Melb stopping in NZ for Anzac Day, what do you think?, Bill Cane has put up his hand to apply for a grant through Vet Affairs for Adelaide. If we did the same for the Cruise whatever the remaining cost to those attending it would give all 4 years to save some biccies.

That's enough from me, Thanks Again to the Airlie Beach family

Terry Bell A Coy rep.

[I am test driving putting this newsletter on the Bn website as an idea prior to Weigo's design. Log onto \[6rarassociation.com\]\(http://6rarassociation.com\) then go to Company news A Coy etc etc](#)

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**Computers for Oldies:**

**You have to be old enough to remember Abbott and Costello, and too old to REALLY understand computers, to fully appreciate this. For those of us who sometimes get flustered by our computers, please read on...**

**If Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were alive today, their infamous sketch, 'Who's on First?' might have turned out something like this:**

**COSTELLO CALLS TO BUY A COMPUTER FROM ABBOTT**

**ABBOTT:** Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?

**COSTELLO:** Thanks I'm setting up an office in my den and I'm thinking about buying a computer.

**ABBOTT:** Mac?

**COSTELLO:** No, the name's Lou..

**ABBOTT:** Your computer?

**COSTELLO:** I don't own a computer.. I want to buy one.

**ABBOTT:** Mac?

**COSTELLO:** I told you, my name's Lou.

**ABBOTT:** What about Windows?

**COSTELLO:** Why? Will it get stuffy in here?

**ABBOTT:** Do you want a computer with Windows?

**COSTELLO:** I don't know. What will I see when I look at the windows?

**ABBOTT:** Wallpaper.

**COSTELLO:** Never mind the windows. I need a computer and software.

**ABBOTT:** Software for Windows?

**COSTELLO:** No.. On the computer! I need something I can use to write proposals, track expenses and run my business. What do you have?

**ABBOTT:** Office.

**COSTELLO:** Yeah, for my office. Can you recommend anything?

**ABBOTT:** I just did.

**COSTELLO:** You just did what?

**ABBOTT:** Recommend something..

**COSTELLO:** You recommended something?

**ABBOTT:** Yes.

**COSTELLO:** For my office?

**ABBOTT:** Yes.

**COSTELLO:** OK, what did you recommend for my office?

**ABBOTT:** Office.

**COSTELLO:** Yes, for my office!

**ABBOTT:** I recommend Office with Windows.

**COSTELLO:** I already have an office with windows! OK, let's just say I'm sitting at my computer and I want to type a proposal. What do I need?

**ABBOTT:** Word.

**COSTELLO:** What word?

**ABBOTT:** Word in Office.

**COSTELLO:** The only word in office is office.

**ABBOTT:** The Word in Office for Windows.

**COSTELLO:** Which word in office for windows?

**ABBOTT:** *The Word you get when you click the blue 'W'.*

**COSTELLO:** *I'm going to click your blue 'w' if you don't start with some straight answers. What about financial bookkeeping? You have anything I can track my money with?*

**ABBOTT:** *Money.*

**COSTELLO:** *That's right. What do you have?*

**ABBOTT:** *Money.*

**COSTELLO:** *I need money to track my money?*

**ABBOTT:** *It comes bundled with your computer.*

**COSTELLO:** *What's bundled with my computer?*

**ABBOTT:** *Money.*

**COSTELLO:** *Money comes with my computer?*

**ABBOTT:** *Yes. No extra charge.*

**COSTELLO:** *I get a bundle of money with my computer? How much?*

**ABBOTT:** *One copy.*

**COSTELLO:** *Isn't it illegal to copy money?*

**ABBOTT:** *Microsoft gave us a license to copy Money.*

**COSTELLO:** *They can give you a license to copy money?*

**ABBOTT:** *Why not? THEY OWN IT!*

**(A few days later)**

**ABBOTT:** *Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?*

**COSTELLO:** *How do I turn my computer off?*

**ABBOTT:** *Click on 'START'..... ..*

**From: Alan Abrahams.**

I may be of some interest to some of our members that they can look up on the internet at [www.thecasualtylist](http://www.thecasualtylist) and see the list of Casualty's 6RAR had on both tours of duty in Vietnam.

Regards,  
Alan Abrahams

**From: Many of our readers who pause to remember a mate.**

### **A Poem Worth Reading**

He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the RSL,  
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in

And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies:  
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbours  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer  
For ol' Bob has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Soldier died today.

He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife..  
For he lived an ordinary,  
Very quiet sort of life.  
He held a job and raised a family  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing  
'Tho a Soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.  
Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young  
But the passing of a Soldier  
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution  
To the welfare of our land,  
Some jerk who breaks his promise  
And cons his fellow man?  
Or the ordinary fellow  
Who in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his country  
And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Soldier  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.  
It's so easy to forget them,  
For it is so many times  
That our Bobs and Jims and Johnnys,  
Went to battle, but we know.

It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.  
Should you find yourself in danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some cop-out,  
With his waffling stand?

Or would you want a Soldier—  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common soldier,  
Who would fight until the end.

He was just a common Soldier,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his like again  
For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Soldier's part  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honour  
While he's here to hear the praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days..

Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say  
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING  
A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."

**A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank cheque made payable to 'Australia' for an amount "up to and including my life."**

That is honour, and there are far too many people in this WORLD who no longer understand it.

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**From: Charles Mollison.**

### **'Terror Alerts'**

- The English are feeling the pinch in relation to recent terrorist threats and have raised their security level from "Miffed" to "Peeved." Soon, though security levels may be raised yet again to "Irritated" or even "A Bit Cross" The English have not been "A Bit Cross" since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies all but ran out. Terrorists have been re-categorized from "Tiresome" to a "Bloody Nuisance." The last time the British issued a "Bloody Nuisance" warning level was during the great fire of 1666.
- The Scots raised their threat level from "Pissed Off" to "Let's get the Bastards". They don't have any other levels. This is the reason they have been used on the frontline in the British army for the last 300 years.
- The Welsh are presently at the alert level of "someone is out of key". Should things get more serious they'll issue an injunction to bring back Aled Jones. The highest level is a "choral muster of Men of Harlech".
- The Irish remain at the long standing security level "Provisional". The next step is to cordon off the Guinness brewery with armed Garda. Assuming the Guinness holds out, the highest level is "whoever you are you're asking for a fight - begorrah".
- The French government announced yesterday that it has raised its terror alert level from "Run" to "Hide". The only two higher levels in France are "Collaborate" and "Surrender." The rise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France's white flag factory, effectively paralysing the country's military capability. It's not only the French who are on a heightened level of alert.
- Italy has increased the alert level from "Shout loudly and excitedly" to "Elaborate Military Posturing." Two more levels remain: "Ineffective Combat Operations" and "Change Sides."
- The Germans also increased their alert state from "Disdainful Arrogance" to "Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs." They also have two higher levels: "Invade a Neighbour" and "Lose".
- Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual, and the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels.
- The Spanish are all excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.
- Americans meanwhile are carrying out pre-emptive strikes, on all of their allies, just in case.
- The Canadians have been unable to define their threat levels for lack of agreement over the translations from English to French. However, having already won two World Wars despite hindrance from their allies, they

are not unduly concerned, and if necessary will bail out the Americans, British and French again regardless of sentiment in Quebec.

And at a local level.....

- New Zealand has also raised its security levels - from "baaa" to "BAAAA!" Due to continuing defence cutbacks (the air force being a squadron of spotty teenagers flying paper aeroplanes and the navy some toy boats in the Prime Minister's bath), New Zealand only has one more level of escalation, which is "Shit, I hope Australia will come and rescue us".
- Australia, meanwhile, has raised its security level from "No worries" to "She'll be right, mate". Three more escalation levels remain, "Crikey!", "I think we'll need to cancel the barbie this weekend" and "The barbie is cancelled". So far no situation has ever warranted use of the final escalation level.

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**'A' Company Deployed:**

Just a reminder that you can send packages to the troops via Aust Post FREE so long as the total weight is under 2kg. (no perishables or liquid items). Send to:

**8234548  
WO2 Tas McGinley  
MTF-1 MT-A  
OP SLIPPER  
AFPO 13  
AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCES  
SYDNEY NSW 2890**

I'm sure that all of us wish these men and women the very best for their deployment, and that we can welcome them home at the end of their tour in good health.

I'm also sure that we wish all of their families the very best while waiting for the troops to return. I'm sure our families can recall some anxious waiting moments for a safe return.

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A 'Families' day was held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April at Enoggera and the 6RAR Association joined other agencies to try to support the families of the deployed troops. A Barbecue lunch was provided as well as a 'Pampering' room, childrens' play areas, face

painting, ASLAV rides, kids in cams; as well as just giving the families a chance to talk and support each other.



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**From: Arthur Willemse:**

Hi All,

If you would like to send a message to the troops of 6 RAR in Afghanistan on Facebook, you can do so by going to Facebook, register (if not already registered) and type in the search box, SUPPORT THE TROOPS OF 6 RAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

Regards  
Arthur Willemse  
Secretary  
6 RAR Association  
[www.6rarassociation.com](http://www.6rarassociation.com)

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**From: Ross Smith.**

**(Apologies from the Editor.)**

Peter,  
I noted that this particular request may have slipped by in last edition of A NEWS!

Realise that it may have come about by too many such articles etc? However, it is extremely important in our latest endeavour to seek justice via the GG Australia!

Many thanks - yours in soldiering on,

Ross E. Smith, OAM, JP  
Men of Alpha Company 6th of Foot and Foul Mouth (6 RAR),

A simple test of the memory banks for a lot of you. Some memories may be pickled, but we never forget some things associated with war especially a mates courageous act of bravery!

I would like those members of A Company (+) who were present on the Horseshoe Feature on 02 May 1967 who were witness to the incident when two (2) US Army soldiers ventured into minefield, just below 3 Platoon A Company 6 RAR, and were blown up! One soldier was instantly killed and thrown out of the minefield by the blast; and the other badly wounded soldier was still inside the minefield!

What is required is a simple statement, as you recall of the said incident, concerning the unselfish act of bravery (or stupidity) of the two (2) soldiers who entered the minefield in order to save a wounded American soldiers life.

I would appreciate your efforts no matter how sparse the exact recollection may be of the given incident. If I may place a deadline I would suggest by end May 2010.

Write, email etc to me at the following points of contact:

Ross E. Smith  
PO Box 353  
ERINDALE CENTRE ACT 2903  
email: [rsmavn1@tpg.com.au](mailto:rsmavn1@tpg.com.au)

Up the old red rooster and mooore piss!!  
.....

**From: Jason Groat (OC A Coy):**  
**(Report from Afghanistan)**

Mentoring Team-Alpha (MT- A aka A Coy) have certainly hit the ground running since the 6th Battalion took over the reigns in mid February. The Coy has experienced a very high level of patrolling activity within the Green Zone and continues to put the insurgents on the back foot. Tasks have been many and varied since I arrived in the Area of Operations (AO) in mid January and our training has kept us ahead of the curve. Though dominating the terrain through constant patrolling has been the main effort in our neighbourhood, the soldiers have been required to call on all their skill and ability in mentoring the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) every day. Working with the ANA has been difficult but incredibly rewarding. The men of the ANA are an extremely proud, brave and humorous bunch and have provided all of us with a feeling of achievement and self worth. After all, the ANA will be here long after MT-A have departed Afghanistan.

The climate over the last few months has ranged from a bitter -17 degrees to a balmy 30 degrees plus with everything in between. The terrain is quite barren in nature away from the Rud (River) and is dominated by towering snow capped mountains and deep valley passes. The Green Zone comprises a maze of water courses, aqueducts and broad acre cropping that includes poppies, wheat and corn. The ground is very wet underfoot and river crossings are proving particularly difficult in the colder periods of the day. Patrolling has been all dismounted in nature with the blokes experiencing many of the issues, complications and dangers that I'm sure many of you experienced in Southeast Asia not so many years ago.

Overall, the morale of MT-A is high with the soldiers revelling in the difficult conditions. On behalf of MT-A, we thank you all for your thoughts and support during our tour of Afghanistan and look forward to sharing a beer or three with the A Coy Association back in Australia.

Our address over here is:

Mentoring Team Alpha  
6 RAR BG (MTF 1)  
OP SLIPPER  
AFPO 13  
Sydney NSW 2890

Kinds regards and all the best for ANZAC Day 2010. Have a beer for us!

**(Just to be sure, I had one for every member of the team. Ed.)**  
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**From: Nicole Sydes:**

Hi, Terry. Nicole Sydes here- the teacher from Deloraine High School who spoke to you re: Care Packages (the one you can't remember!). Your email was forwarded to me by Mum, Cynthia Atkins.

I have done as you have asked. One of my lovely grade 10 girls has written you the following 'report' on why we started sending care packages to the troops. I have snapped a quick class photo of my delightful class- the photo isn't great but they were not keen to stand still, let alone smile!!

My guys like being in the background!! My class has sent off two boxes so far and we have three more almost ready to go- not bad for a public school where the kids and I are buying everything ourselves !! This idea has taken on a life of its own. My class have been on the Australian Defence Forces website and looked up Op Slipper to see what sorts of conditions the guys in Afghanistan are living in. They are keen to show support and learn more about what our troops have been involved in, in the past as well as now.

They even convinced our grade 9/10 Foods class (aka Cooking), to make them a batch of ANZAC biscuits that they have included in their care packages.



***“As a part of our Society and History work, Year 10B at Deloraine High School, Tasmania is putting together Care packages to send to Australian troops serving in Afghanistan. Students have been generously bringing in items to put in these packages. At first some students were not very excited but now most of the class is participating and loving it. Several of our class have decided to fill a single box by themselves while others work together to fill one. A handful of students even walked to our local shops to buy items we believe would make a difference in the lives of these soldiers.***

***We believe that the Australian soldiers who are serving are doing a wonderful job and this is a way we can show how much we care. Our generation is seen as being selfish but we really do care about what we are doing- we are helping people who are helping us.***

***A few students have got their families involved and are sending care packages from home. One student even chose to send boxes with items for the explosive detection dogs who are also serving for our country.***

***In our boxes we have included items for Easter, ANZAC biscuits and Australian merchandise to remind them of home, hygiene items as well as some poetry from our class work and letters telling these soldiers a bit about ourselves- we included our teacher's email in the hope that they may have a chance to send a message back to us.”***

**Written by Chelsea, (student) 10B Deloraine High School, Tasmania.**

(Great effort from our younger Australians ‘Well Done’ – also further commitment from the Atkins of Deloraine. Ed.)

**From: Chris Brown:**  
**(Via RAR Assoc & Arthur Willemse).**  
Hey Greg,

Mate I've just got a quick question for you, I've started a Lawn Bowls Club at 8/9 RAR and I was wondering if any of the old members of the battalion play lawn bowls and do you think they would be interested in having a bit of a Current members versus Old members game one day??

Even if blokes don't play, as with most of our fellas, they only just started playing themselves and it would be a great day to get the old members back interacting with all the new ones!!! We'd make a day of it.

Your feedback on this would be great mate.

Cheers,

Chris Brown

LCPL Chris Brown  
8/9 RAR  
Rehabilitation PL  
Long Hai Lines  
Gallipoli Barracks

Ph: (07) 3332 7628  
Mob: 0412089948  
E-mail: [christopher.brown11@defence.gov.au](mailto:christopher.brown11@defence.gov.au)

**From: Peter Adamis.**

G'Day,

Just a short note to let you know that the article on Willie Killick has been completed  
To get a better understanding of how it looks, please go to <http://abalinx.com> in your web browser.  
Select veterans and you will see the article amongst others on veteran information.  
If you can add any more, then I am more than happy to make corrections.

Please advise me on your thoughts.

Regards,  
Peter.

(I held this article over from the last issue, because I had intended to publish the complete article on Willie 'Blow Fly' Killick. Having now viewed the full article, and I realize that it will make this issue exceed the 55c postage limit of size. Therefore, I suggest that you go to the link above, select Veterans forum, select 6RAR; and you can view excellent articles on Willie and Bonnie Wasiu.  
If you are unable to access the internet and would like to read the articles, please contact me and I will print and post a hard copy. I apologize to Peter Adamis for this delay).  
Ed.

The following poem has been taken from 'The Phantom Notes' (B Coy 6RAR Newsletter – originally from SYDNEY TIMES (paper published on the "Rust Bucket" on the trip from Vietnam 1967:

#### POET'S CORNER

Out of the rubber one dark night,  
Ran a hygieneman half dead with fright,  
His buckets clanging, his broom hung foul,  
Willie kept running with a scream and a howl,  
Not many know what happened that night,  
Willie sure does. The Phantom might?  
Signed "Pants"

.....

#### **From: Arthur Willemse.**

#### **The Partners of Veterans Association**

An Extract from Hansard HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Tuesday, 16 March 2010 CHAMBER

**Mr IRONS** (Swan) (8.30 pm)—To celebrate International Women's Day last week, my office organized a morning tea for a group of women who have for most of their lives taken a back seat in order to support their husbands. These women have not had an easy ride in their lives and face the day-to-day challenges of caring for a loved one who could have been affected mentally or physically or both by being a soldier in Vietnam.

The organisation I am talking about is called The Partners of Veterans Association of Western Australia and its mission statement is:

... to improve the lives of members by providing care, support and information in a participative social environment. We aim to ease the isolation, despair and loneliness from the lives of partners of veterans through being helpful, uplifting and non-judgemental friends.

While the association basically has partners of Vietnam veterans, it is not exclusively for the partners of Vietnam veterans. The group of women I met last Friday, though, did all fall into this category. The women who came to see me were: Sandra Cross, Anne Holtom, Ivy Phelps, Carole Matthews, Sally Warner, Kerryn McDonnell and Janet Gilders. We had a very interesting discussion about the challenges and issues faced by Vietnam veterans and, consequently, how partners and their children's lives have been affected. I will share some insights with you now.

The group support each other because only they know and understand what the other is going through.

All of the women agreed alcoholism and depression are big problems for a large number of veterans and it was important for them as partners of veterans to

acknowledge that the difficulties were directly related to the traumas their partners had experienced in the past. The morning was insightful and there certainly was not any 'poor me' discussion—in fact, quite the opposite.

The sense of humour these women have about their lives and experiences has helped them through the toughest of times. The group organise social events throughout the year and talked about a trip in 2008 to Vietnam. The reason for the trip was to try and gain a deeper insight into the landscape and the experiences their husbands had had in Vietnam. They explained that not only was the trip enjoyable but it also helped their husbands by giving them new memories of Vietnam rather than replaying the traumatic memories of the past. One of the benefits of belonging to the group was that everybody knew what it is like to have a bad day. One of the women said, 'Sometimes when you were going through a particularly difficult patch, and couldn't make it to a meeting or social event, you didn't need to explain why.'

Another major concern discussed was the fear of suicide, not only among the veterans but also among the children of the veterans. This is an issue close to my heart. I have spoken about youth suicide on a number of occasions. On Friday I attended a fundraiser for the Youth Focus group who are based in my electorate. I recently held a youth suicide roundtable in my office with the Health and Ageing Committee.

During our discussion there was talk of a veteran who had committed suicide and also the son of a veteran who had committed suicide recently. Suicide is a tragic event, and the more we can do to support those in need, the more chance we have of saving people's lives.

Despite only being fully operational in Western Australia since 2003, The Partners of Veterans Association of Western Australia have touched the lives of many in different ways. They would also like to encourage the partners of our younger generation of current serving forces to become members and gain the support, experience and wisdom of women who understand what they are going through. The association originally started out holding meetings in people's houses but, due to the illnesses of the veterans, this did not work very well. After moving a couple of time, they now share premises with Carers WA in east Perth. There is a drop-in resource centre that is manned by volunteers, and monthly meetings are held where guest speakers are invited to talk on various issues.

The Partners of Veterans Association are a not-for profit, non-government organisation and rely heavily on grants and donations. I speak of them today for a couple of reasons. One is my admiration for the commitment shown by these women and also to acknowledge the difference they are making in people's lives. People like Secretary Kerry

McDonnell and President Sandra Cross are at the heart of the association. Mrs Sandra Cross was included in the 2009 edition of the *Who's who of Australian women* on the theme of 'Lessons we learn.' Interestingly, the book was released on 27 March in celebration of International Women's Day. Sandra made a pledge to herself to help as many partners as she could after receiving many setbacks when her own husband became ill. I would also like to thank all of the ladies who attended the morning tea last Friday and hope to continue to receive the support from government and the community to carry out their very important service for all partners and their families.

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**A little levity:**

**(At least until Donna reads this!)**

A husband and wife are shopping at Coles supermarket. The husband picks up a case of VB beer and puts it in their cart. 'What do you think you're doing?' asks the wife. 'They're on sale, only \$20 for 24 cans,' he replies. 'Put them back, we can't afford them,' demands the wife, and so they carry on shopping. A few aisles further on along the woman picks up a \$40 jar of face cream and puts it in the basket. 'What do you think you're doing?' asks the husband. 'Its my face cream. It makes me look beautiful,' replies the wife. Her husband retorts: 'So does 24 cans of VB and it's half the price.'

On the PA system: 'Cleanup on aisle 25, we have a husband down.'

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**VALE:**

Sadly, as time goes on, more and more of our members are succumbing to the final Bugle Call. Since the last issue, I have been notified of three of our members who have passed away;

**Stan Shea**

**Dale Lutvey**

**Vince Mitchell**

Our heartfelt commiserations go out to family and friends of these men. Following is a photograph of Stan Shea's two sons, with A Coy members at his Melbourne funeral.



**ALSO: Condolences sent for Vince:**

*"....sad news regarding our A/6 'VW' Mitchell!  
- typical Aussie Digger and a proud to have him in 3/A/6!  
- my sincere condolences to his family and extended family A/6!  
- I'll shout ya a beer next time we meet 'VW'!  
Yours in soldiering on,  
Ross E. Smith-  
Sadly I will be unable to attend , but please pass on my condolences to his family, another good man gone.  
Regards,  
Murray Martin.*

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**FROM: Charles Mollison:**

**MORE US SOLDIERS HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE THAN FALLEN VICTIM TO BATTLE**

Posted By: The\_Fox <Send E-Mail  
<<http://www.rumormillnews.com/cgi-bin/forum.cgi?bem=170993>

Here is a shocking statistic that you won't hear in most western news media: over the past nine years, more US military personnel have taken their own lives than have died in action in either the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. These are official figures from the US Department of Defence, yet somehow they have not been deemed newsworthy to report. Last year alone, more than 330 serving members of the US armed forces committed suicide - more than the 320 killed in Afghanistan and the 150 who fell in Iraq (see wsws.org).

Since 2001, when Washington launched its so-called war on terror, there has been a dramatic year-on-year increase in US military suicides, particularly in the army, which has borne the brunt of fighting abroad. Last year saw the highest total number since such records began in 1980. Prior to 2001, the suicide rate in the US military was lower than that for the general US population; now, it is nearly double

the national average.

A growing number of these victims have been deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan. What these figures should tell us is that there is something fundamentally deranged about Washington's "war on terror" - which is probably why western news media prefer to ignore the issue. How damning is it about such military campaigns that the number of US soldiers who take their own lives outnumber those killed by enemy combatants.

What is even more disturbing is that the official figures only count victims of suicide among serving personnel. Not included are the many more veterans - officially classed a civilians - who take their own lives.

Most likely, these deaths are reported in some small-town newspaper in "a brief" news item with no context or background as to what drove these individuals to take their own lives. It is estimated that the suicide rate among veterans demobbed from fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq is as high as four times the national average. The US Department of Veteran Affairs calculates that over 6,000 former service personnel commit suicide every year.

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**From: Dianne Nichols.**

**AUSTRALIAN LETTER OF THE YEAR**

"This is an actual letter sent to the DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) Immigration Minister, The Rudd Government tried desperately to censure the author, but got nowhere because every legal person who read it nearly wet themselves laughing!"

Dear Mr. Minister,

I'm in the process of renewing my passport, and still cannot believe this.

How is it that K-Mart has my address and telephone number, and knows that I bought a television set and golf clubs from them back in 1997, and yet the Federal Government is still asking me where I was born and on what date.

For Gods sakes, do you guys do this by hand?

My birth date you have in my Medicare information, and it is on all the income tax forms I've filed for the past 40 years. It is also on my driver's licence, on the last eight passports I've ever had, on all those stupid customs declaration forms I've had to fill out before being allowed off the planes over the last 30 years, and all those insufferable census forms that I've filled out every 5 years since 1966.

Also... would somebody please take note, once and for all, that my mother's name is Audrey, my father's name is Jack, and I'd be absolutely astounded if that ever changed between now and when I drop dead!! SHIT!

I apologize, Mr. Minister. But I'm really pissed off this morning. Between you and me, I've had enough of all this bullshit!

You send the application to my house, then you ask me for my address!! What the hell is going on with your mob? Have you got a gang of mindless Neanderthals working there!

And another thing, look at my damn picture.. Do I look like Bin Laden? I can't even grow a beard for God's sakes. I just want to go to New Zealand and see my new granddaughter. (Yes, my son interbred with a Kiwi girl). And would someone please tell me, why would you care whether I plan on visiting a farm in the next 15 days? If I ever got the urge to do something weird to a sheep or a horse, believe you me, I'd sure as hell not want to tell anyone!

Well, I have to go now, 'cause I have to go to the other end of the city, and get another copy of my birth certificate, and to part with another \$80 for the privilege of accessing MY OWN INFORMATION!

Would it be so complicated to have all the services in the same spot, to assist in the issuance of a new passport on the same day?? Nooooo.. that'd be too easy and makes far too much sense. You would much prefer to have us running all over the place like chickens with our heads cut off, and then having to find some high-society wanker to confirm that it's really me in the goddamn photo! You know the photo.. the one where we're not allowed to smile?! ....you morons

Signed - An Irate Australian Citizen.

P.S. Remember what I said above about the picture, and getting someone in high-society to confirm that it's me? Well, my family has been in this country since before 1850! In 1856, one of my forefathers took up arms with Peter Lalor. (You do remember the Eureka Stockade!!)

I have also served in both the CMF and regular Army for something over 30 years (I went to Vietnam in 1967), and still have high security clearances. I'm also a personal friend of the president of the RSL.. and Lt General Peter Cosgrove sends me a Christmas card each year.

However, your rules require that I have to get someone 'important' to verify who I am; You know... someone like my doctor - WHO WAS BORN AND RAISED IN PAKISTAN!!!!..... a country where they either assassinate or hang their ex-Prime Ministers, and are suspended from the Commonwealth for not having the 'right sort of government'.

You are all F.....g idiots!

(It would be funny if it wasn't so believable. Ed.)  
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## **The current state of Journalism:**

A Harley biker is visiting the zoo in Calgary, Alberta when he sees a little girl leaning into the bars of the lion's cage. Suddenly, the lion grabs her by the cuff of her jacket and tries to pull her inside to slaughter her, under the eyes of her screaming parents.

The biker without hesitation runs to the cage and hits the lion square on the nose with a powerful punch.

Whimpering from the pain the lion jumps back letting go of the girl, and the biker brings her to her terrified parents, who thank him endlessly. A CBC reporter has watched the whole event.

The reporter addressing the biker says, 'Sir, this was the most gallant and brave thing I've seen a man do in my whole life.'

The Harley rider replies, 'Why, it was nothing, really, the lion was behind bars. I just saw this little kid in danger and acted as I felt right.'

The reporter says, 'Well, I'll make sure this won't go unnoticed. I'm a journalist, you know, and tomorrow's paper will have this story on the front page... So, what do you do for a living?'

The biker replies, 'I'm a soldier in the Canadian military.' The journalist leaves.

The following morning the biker buys the paper to see if it indeed brings news of his actions, and reads, on the front page:

CANADIAN SOLDIER ASSAULTS AFRICAN  
IMMIGRANT AND STEALS HIS LUNCH

**That pretty much sums up the media's approach  
to the news these days.**

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## **New Members:**

Larry COX  
9 Simpson Crescent  
Bundaberg East QLD 4670

Ph: 07 4153 3389  
Email: [lco64081@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lco64081@bigpond.net.au)

(3PL 1969-70)

Wally SOKOLUK  
198 Dowding Street  
Oxley QLD 4075

(1<sup>st</sup> Tour Vietnam)

## **Returned Emails:**

[gcutter@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gcutter@bigpond.net.au)  
[glackland@bigpond.com](mailto:glackland@bigpond.com)  
[trishian@bigpond.net.au](mailto:trishian@bigpond.net.au)  
[billandhillary@yahoo.com.au](mailto:billandhillary@yahoo.com.au)  
[owencorrey@optusnet.com.au](mailto:owencorrey@optusnet.com.au)  
[lloyd@ca.com.au](mailto:lloyd@ca.com.au)

[tracysmithbb@dodo.com.au](mailto:tracysmithbb@dodo.com.au) (full)  
[prfraser@iprimus.com.au](mailto:prfraser@iprimus.com.au) (full)

## **Changed Email Addresses.**

Bill Wallace  
[wallace46@bigpond.com](mailto:wallace46@bigpond.com)  
Gary McMahon  
[garymcmahon1@gmail.com](mailto:garymcmahon1@gmail.com)  
Alan Abrahams  
[alan\\_abrahams@bigpond.com](mailto:alan_abrahams@bigpond.com)  
Col Renahan  
[rena1@hotmail.com](mailto:rena1@hotmail.com)  
Tony Henshall  
[thenshall1@gmail.com](mailto:thenshall1@gmail.com)  
Mick Levin  
[deesea1@westnet.com.au](mailto:deesea1@westnet.com.au)

## **New Contact Details.**

Tobias GIBSON  
30 Hazel Vale Road, Tecoma VIC 3160  
[tobiasgibson@live.com.au](mailto:tobiasgibson@live.com.au)

Ray MOLONEY  
PO Box 612, Burleigh Heads QLD 4220  
[rm618535@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rm618535@bigpond.net.au)

**Terry Bell**  
**Unit 2 – 14 Hall Avenue, Bongaree QLD 4507**

Ian CROMPTON  
6/25 Barber Avenue Penrith NSW 2750  
Ph: 0428 414 984  
[iancrompton@bigpond.com](mailto:iancrompton@bigpond.com)

## **'A' News 1-2010 Returned.**

John CECH Sheidow Park SA  
Graham Williams Yarraville VIC

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**From: Donna Fitzgerald.**

I know some of you will know me from past issues of this great newsletter. Peter (as editor, printer, folder and poster) and I (general dogsbody and listener to bad language during printing stage) have been doing this job now for about fifteen years on and off.

For the most part we have enjoyed our time. Two years ago I would have started this letter with "It is with much regret". Unfortunately due to recent events beyond our control, I now have to say it is with great pleasure that I now see Peter writing his last "A" News.

Over the years I have had a great many of you to either stay at our home or partake of one of our many barbecues, first under the mango tree, and afterwards at wherever we put down stakes. I have enjoyed all of these times. I have enjoyed all the stories (all be it some of them a bit tall) and all the laughter and sometimes tears.

I have enjoyed many reunions and made many friends.

I have taken many phone calls at odd hours from fellows who have just found out about the good work that the editor does and have loved listening to their life stories.

This is where the usual happy letter falls apart. A lot of friends that I thought I had made turned out to be acquaintances, something I always said I only found in the "real" world (aka civilian world). I naively thought that the veteran community was one that stood for all the truly worthwhile attributes of "mateship".

In the past two years leading up to the last reunion at Airlie Beach, I found out that the veteran community was just as fickle and, in some ways, more hurtful than the "real" world. I watched my husband and best friend of over forty years being dragged through the wringer and left out to dry. My naïve dreamings of a world full of mates just waiting to look out for each other came crumbling down.

Without going into any more detail I will only say that like any other crap that has been thrown at us as a couple, this has only made us stronger.

I take it back, it is with much regret that I write this, my last letter to the editor of "A" News, because it is not what I had hoped for. I had hoped to go out on the high that we took it on with fifteen years ago. I had hoped to be crying tears of regret not heartbreak.

A word of advice to our younger readers. Work on your friendships both in the military and in civvie street. Don't take them for granted and know the difference between friendship and usership.

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**Battle of Bribe Commemoration.**

The following photograph shows the A Coy men who supported the Battle of Bribe commemoration 2010.



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**From: Terry Bell.**



I am waiting for a few more registrations for the river cruise during the Battalion Reunion (Monday 7-06) before confirming with the cruise company. Please email me ASAP if you are interested in taking part.

Terry.

## From Nola Nicholls--- Airlie Beach Reunion

As each day brought the arrival of familiar faces the circle quickly grew and the noise level and laughter increased. New faces arrived and were quickly welcomed in and the handshaking and back slapping mixed with peals of laughter. Airlie Beach stores began doing extraordinary trade in midgee repellent and mosquito coils and after 3 or 4 wet days umbrellas became a must have accessory. The park wildlife came out in all of its glory with lorikeets - who were very partial to Dianne Nicholls scone with jam and cream as we all were- goannas, curlews and the morning alarm clock of kookaburras. The fishermen among us soon found the best spots for mud crabs although some fishermen risked life and limb to no avail in their fruitless search – ask Alan Abraham for details and then check that story with Laurie Holmes. Laurie is still speechless with fear!! Nightly draws of “Pick-a Prize” raffle brought everyone to the camp kitchen and the prize pool seemed to grow rather than reduce as new comers bought in more prizes.

Prizes for the major raffles came from some members of our very talented group and special thanks must go to the following people. Sue Renehan has again put in a magnificent effort to make another quilt. Even with Col's recent diagnosis and treatment preventing them from attending the reunion Sue has still found the time and commitment to complete and donate the quilt and get it to Airlie Beach. At the Mildura reunion Sues' quilt was won by Shirley and Peter Watson. Shirley rang me a while after that reunion to offer to make a major prize for the next raffle in appreciation. As Shirley took up woodturning after being diagnosed with what can be a debilitating illness this was a very generous offer which was readily accepted. Shirly has produced a clock from a jarrah burl that any of us would be very proud to display in our homes. Jim and Di Nicholls have had 4 photos from Vietnam days reproduced into 3 large mounted prints ready to hang. The men have been busy picking themselves out at the boozier print or the Horseshoe. Unfortunately the women struggle to pick some of them out as they are all of fit, healthy young men with hair in khaki uniforms in the prints unlike today's bodies. Ian Lade made a boxed pen set comprising of fountain pen, ball point and letter opener in a turned wooden presentation box complete with ICB, Skippy badge, colours and bullets. A very big thank you to everyone for their efforts and support.

Phil Zeuchner made us all name tags so we could remember who we were and also brought along a superb reunion banner for all future reunions. The brilliant memorial book he has produced will be held at A Company headquarters at the battalion and should be viewed by all.

Finally the official start of the reunion arrived on the 21<sup>st</sup> April. Due to cyclone damage the venue had to be changed and we had Meet and Greet at “The

Cookhouse Restaurant” at the caravan park. It was a very cosy affair with limited space and very wet although no one bothered when the fresh prawns arrived in plentiful supply and we each received our reunion mementoes. The men received a pen made from a 7.62 shell casing with medal ribbons set in resin. The ladies each received a turned wooden bowl. These gifts were made by Ian Lade and were exceptionally well received and very much appreciated by all recipients. Jan Lade has obviously banished Ian to his shed for thousands of hours to manufacture so many items which will bring happy memories of our time in Airlie Beach. Thursday morning the majority of the group went sailing to Hamilton Island and Whitehaven Beach. The bus was to leave at 0720 and as I am a very poor sailor Mal and I opted for a rest day. I went to the departure point for the bus at 0715 with the hope that I might get a photo of an “orderly line” as I had yet to see such a thing here but alas the first bus had left and everyone else was eagerly on the bus awaiting departure. The sailors returned at around 5pm amidst much laughter and tales – some photos of people in stingers suits are worth millions. Charles Mollison amazed many with his batting and bowling ability at beach cricket – well done Charles. Mal and Graeme Chisholm headed into Proserpine to meet with the president of the RSL and visit Bloomsbury state school with photos and medals and attended the service for Anzac Day. Merv McInnes, Alf Lamb, Jim Kelly and Michael Storen attended other school services on Friday and all expressed their amazement at the wonderful response and effort the schools displayed. We mainly had a rest day on Friday with golf being cancelled due to the weather and cyclone damage at the course but some of the ladies caught the bus into Airlie and reeked havoc on the shops for many hours. Some Airlie Beach shop keepers have since retired to the Greek Islands while others are seeking psychiatric counselling. Friday night saw us all again try to form an orderly line to board the buses to Proserpine RSL for the civic reception dinner. What a fantastic night with the local Lions' catering and serving. The food was excellent; the drinks service outstanding and the company the best in the world. Major General David Butler and his wife Ann were the guests of honour and the Mayor of the Whitsundays welcomed us to the district. Each of the men was presented with a certificate from the Whitsunday Regional Council in appreciation of their contribution to Australia. There were a few late risers on Saturday morning after an excellent night out. Saturday at last brought a rest day. The caravan park was a hive of activity well before dawn on ANZAC morning as the buses ferried us to dawn service in Proserpine. It must be that army training that gets everyone on time still all these years later. The service was very poignant as usual and we were treated to the excellent unaccompanied voice of Pom Jessop as he sang Advance Australia Fair at the conclusion of the service. I really wanted to clap it was so good. Back to Proserpine RSL for gunfire breakfast and the odd rum or two. Again the local Lions came to the fore and amazingly filled the empty tummies. As the men formed up to march we were so

pleased to see young Isaac Hines proudly carrying the RSL flag towards the front of the march. It is always wonderful to see the big group of our men so proudly marching along and hear the comments from other spectators of "who is that big group" and be able to proudly say "they are the men from 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion". Pom Jessop again sang this time accompanied by the local band and this time the whole crowd applauded – well done Pom. Major General (Ret) David Butler took the salute for the parade and later expressed his delight at being part of such a wonderful group during the reunion. Back to the RSL for lunch – those people from Lions came up trumps again and a wonderful day was had by all. The buses brought us back to Airlie and an early night capped off a great day. Monday brought the meeting to decide the venue for the next reunion and we have decided to boost the Adelaide economy in 2012. Peter and Helen Hoskins in conjunction with Michael Storen and Lee Floyd have taken on the task and will keep us all informed via A News. We drew the final raffle prizes at the camp kitchen with the winners being Shane and Carolyn Hines winning the A company quilt, Adele and Doug Sorenson winning the jarrah clock and Alan and Jo Hughes winning the fruit bowl. Chris Weigand won the pen set with George and Edna Atkinson, Barry and Muriel Francis and Bob Stumer winning one each of the pictures. Bob chose the picture of Kim Jones standing in the gun pit at the Horseshoe and presented it to Kim – well done Bob. A total of \$1790 was raised from the raffles to go to the reunion fund for Adelaide. Thank you so much to everyone who bought tickets – your support is very much appreciated.

Mike McNaught organised a retro night and played 60's and 70's music with many of the group donning some very amusing outfits and really getting into the groove. Carolyn Hines showed her dancing skills and won the best dancing award. Best costume went to Alf (Alfreda) Lamb. Bill Cane embraced Alfreda Lamb at every opportunity and another night of frivolity and fun was had by all. Sleepy eyes and croaky voices everywhere on Tuesday morning just proved we are not as young as we think we are. The rain returned with a vengeance as some started packing to head for home but there were still a lot of us to enjoy the farewell night. More prawns, more steak, plenty to parch the croaky throats and lots of laughter were the order of the night. Many said their farewells as they were heading out early the next day with happy memories of a great time in Airlie Beach vowing to meet again in 2012 in Adelaide. New friends mixed with old and the wonderful feeling of being part of such a fabulous family was everywhere. During our time here many of the men have written a line or 10 in support of the young 6RAR soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan which we will send in our next package to one of the soldiers so he can hopefully share with all over there.

There are many stories to tell of great things that happened at this reunion but most of it you just had to be here for.

In closing – Long may this wonderful tradition of catching up with your mates every two years continue.

#### **From Kev and Merle**

Firstly we would like to say a very big thank you to Ian & Jan Lade and Chris & Wendy Weigand for a superb celebration & organization for "A Coy" 6 RAR 2010 Reunion. We understand all the hard work it takes to organize a Reunion to this standard. Also we would like to say a big thank you to Phil & Joy Zeuschner for all the exceptional Name Badges (big enough for all us oldies to read) and especially the huge Banner with photos.

It was really great to see MG David Butler AO DSO (Retd) and his wife Ann who gave us all a laugh at her humor. (whilst ladies photo was being taken, Carolyn Hines put her arm around her) and her comment was " Watch it dear, they will be talking about us". Another Hines gave us lots of laughs and tears (Issac Hines) when he carried the RSL flag in the march and he bought many to tears when he wrote a speech on behalf of his Dad and read it with the help of Merve & Ian at the Retro night, thanking everyone for accepting his family into our Big Family. We also had two additions to the Big Family whilst the Reunion was happening. Ian & Jan Lade became grandparents of a boy, born in NZ and Glen (Dusty) & Ann Cameron became grandparents to a girl born in QLD congratulation to all.

Another happy time was had by all and also lots of new faces, hopefully to be seen again at the 2012 reunion in Adelaide.

Thank you, to all concerned,  
Kev & Merle



