

6 RAR
Alpha Coy



'A' NEWS

Vietnam
East Timor—Leste
Solomon Islands
Singapore
RCB—Malaysia
Iraq
Afghanistan



4/2011 EDITION

Editorial

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"A Veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank cheque made payable to Australia / NZ for an amount of 'UP TO AND INCLUDING MY LIFE'.

That is Honour and there are way too many people in this world who no longer understand it."



Welcome to the final issue of 2011. It is a fairly diverse newsletter as I normally try to make them and am running a little late again. Seems to happen in the last issue...must be getting tired.

I started out a couple of months ago to investigate the Awards and Medals quota system in Australia adopted from the poms some time after the 1st WW. The more I got into it the angrier I got and the mere thought of politicians and their bureaucrat cronies sent my blood boiling. Those on the net will have seen my disgust with these alleged servants of the people who elected them. Both sides of the house.

What it boiled down to was is this: In a set period of time (often six months), only a certain number of gallantry and meritorious service medals could be awarded, based on the number of personnel deployed or the number of operational hours flown.

In a report published by the Independent Honours and Awards Tribunal in April 2010 it is stated that the quota for Mentions in Despatches (a commendation rather than a medallic award) in the 2nd WW (and it didn't change until the 90's) was one commendation per 250 deployed persons over a 6 month period.....Think about that for a minute.....yes that's right, one commendation per 250 deployed persons.

According to the Australian Department of Defence, the purpose of this scale is to maintain control over the number of awards made to members during a campaign.

The quota system was intended to control the quality and standing of awards. It did this by ensuring that awards were not devalued by too many being recommended and served as a moderating tool by ensuring that a range of recommendations for the same award over a period of time could be compared and graded.

However, the quota also placed an artificial ceiling on the extent to which gallantry could be recognised—recognition of major engagements needed to be tempered by Commanding Officers in the knowledge that awards needed to be rationed over each 6 month period.

In the meantime, back in Australia, away from anything more dangerous than a paper cut or an ear full of abuse on the floor of Parliament these same politicians and bureaucrats were heaping knighthoods and all manner of awards on themselves or were selling them to those who promised to back them with donations and other favours. I'm getting cranky again.... Don't mention union officials.

Having said all this I have enjoyed being the A News Editor, but would like to hand over to someone else at the Adelaide reunion. I'd hate to be called a hog.

May you all have a wonderful Christmas and the happiest 2012.

A wounded G.I. came into an Australian field hospital and with typical yankee pathos, murmured to the Aussie nurse bending over him: "Did I come here to Die?"

"No luv, yer came here yesterdi," she reassured him. Thank you Danielle.

THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE VIEWED ON THE 6 RAR ASSOCIATION WEBSITE. VISIT; www.6rarassociation.com/alphacoy.htm

'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.

DFRDB

Charles Mollison asked me to include this letter in A News for you to consider.

14 July 2011

Dear Member / Senator

**DEFENCE FORCE RETIREMENT AND DEATH BENEFITS
AMENDMENT
(FAIR INDEXATION) BILL 2011**

I write in my capacity as President of the RSL-SA and NT, in order that I might be able to pass on the collective outrage of my membership and colleagues, of the recent Senate decision on the 16th June 2011 to reject the subject legislation.

There are many among the members of RSL who are dependent upon their DFRDB pension to make ends meet. More ominously, there is a very large number of ex-service personnel who have been thus far unaffiliated with ex-services organisations who will now be galvanised by the Senate decision.

I am not sure if you are familiar with the way the DFRDB system worked.

In essence, service personnel made contributions to the fund during the course of their service. It was designed with a retention and retirement benefit objective in mind. It encouraged service men and women to serve for 20 years, a tenure of service which generally extracted a good dividend and capitalised on the accumulated experience of the individual concerned for the training investment made in them.

However, in the event they left the service prior to the 20 year mark, they received nothing in return other than their contributions. In other words they furnished the Commonwealth with a compounding interest free loan for the tenure of their service less than 20 years!

Having served for 20 years, or to the notional retiring age for their rank (generally 42 years of age) they were supposed to be able to rely on the future indexation of their pension so that it at least retained its purchasing power. If they served 20 years but left prior to reaching their notional retiring age, they

were penalised 3% for each year short! So a Sailor, Soldier or Airman who enlisted at 18 and left after 20 years got docked 3% before he even started receiving his/her pension.

To add insult to injury – they thought the idea of CPI was to maintain the purchasing power of their pension!

That of course has proven not to be the case. Many having retired some time ago have seen the purchasing power of their pension diminish by 30% in real terms. By voting down the amendment Bill, the Senate has effectively and morally slapped tens of thousands of service men and women in their collective faces.

This situation lacks any notion of fairness or justice and will be exacerbated by increases in energy costs, water, vehicle registration, increasing food, petrol insurance and medical costs, and of course the much heralded carbon tax and

anything else governments of various persuasions choose to concoct in the future.

This is compounded for surviving spouses who only receive 5/8 of the DFRB/DFRDB superannuants' pension. This meagre sum also continues to be indexed against the CPI. It seems inequitable and immoral to the RSL-SA that the surviving spouse of a politician in receipt of a pension has his/her pension indexed against the increases to the salary of a back bencher. Does this mean that a politician's spouse makes such a huge contribution to our Nation that it is valued over the spouse of a Sailor, Soldier, or Airman who serves this Country at the whim of the Government? Where is the justice in this?

The decision in effect endorses the notion that the CPI remains the most appropriate method of indexation for military superannuants. If this is a legitimate argument, then please explain to the Veteran Community why **Parliamentary** pensions are not indexed against the CPI when you retire?

The Matthews Review suggested the use of an Analytical Living Cost Index and the Government introduced the Pensioners and Beneficiaries Cost of Living Index (PBCLI) the day after the Matthews Review was released. Why was the PBCLI not accepted as a fair indexation for military superannuants?

This is immoral and it lacks any notion of the principle of "a fair go" so readily espoused by all politicians. The sanctimonious posing of political leaders at the regular 'ramp ceremonies' for service personnel killed in action, belies the hypocritical and disgraceful manner in which service personnel are treated as a result of this decision. How do you explain this to Veterans who have gone where their country sent them, did what their duty demanded, all the while harbouring a belief that they were serving the best interests of this country and it was looking after theirs?

We have by and large taken life's exigencies as they come, thanks to a 'service above self' ethos which is an intrinsic part of the ADF culture. We have seen friends and colleagues fall in the course of their service, its aftermath, and in the natural course of things. In Queensland earlier this year, ADF personnel left their families to face cyclone Yasi in Townsville while they were deployed on flood relief operations further south. That's what we do. All that's required in return is respect.

It seems we have been mostly abandoned by those who profess to represent us. Perhaps that is because we have by the nature of our service been apolitical. What we do have though is a well developed sense of 'mutual support' towards our colleagues, and as such we will not let this lie.

I hope you are able to offer my members some solace in this because right now they don't see much. I have sent this letter to my membership and asked them to approach their local politicians with the same questions.

I thank you for considering this request and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Jock H Statton OAM
State President
RSL (SA/NT & Broken Hill)

Kyle McLachlan Vietnam Veteran's day 19th August 2011

I think it was Dusty Cameron who brought this article to my attention and after reading it I felt compelled to share it with all of you out there. It is refreshing to see there are young members of society out there who are so articulate and clear minded. Kyle Mclachan is certainly one of these youngsters who leave one humbled after reading his speech at Concord Repat Hospital Sydney 19.8.2011 Thank you Kyle and from all us veterans, best of luck in all your future endeavors. Ed.

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Kyle McLachlan and I am a student in Year 10 at St Patrick's College Strathfield. This year I had my eyes opened to a few things. In studying Australian history I have had to reconsider the way I view the past and the future of our country, and in particular the impact of the Vietnam War on the participants, their families and our society.

Prior to studying the War, I was ignorant to the many controversies which surrounded it and how people were affected. All I knew was that not everyone agreed with Australia's participation. In 2010 I travelled to Vietnam and witnessed firsthand some of the remnants of the war. I saw models of the traps the VC placed in the jungle and couldn't even imagine the pain these inflicted. I photographed the huge craters the bombs had left in the jungle floor, and a tank destroyed by a mine in 1970. From then on I began to understand some of the realities of the Vietnam War and what the diggers went through.



Kyle McLachlan on Vietnam Veteran's Day at Concord Hospital 19 August 2011

Then this year, I actually studied the Vietnam War at school. I learnt about the lead up focusing on the threat of communism in the Cold War through the Domino Theory and the Petrov Affair. I analysed the reasons for Australia's participation and for me it became apparent that there was popular support for the War. At school, we had an assignment to interview Australians who lived in this era about it and they confirmed this.

Australia sent its first troops to Vietnam in 1962. Prior to scaling up our involvement in 1965, one of the most contentious issues of the War began. Menzies established conscription in 1964. Call it what you will but beginning the birthday ballot or death lottery was a defining moment. The prospect of National Service had me in two minds when learning about it. I wondered whether its benefits to the campaign measured equally with the number of brave men who died serving their country because of it. I now see why it was so controversial and divided Australian society.

At my school, a visit from the Nam Bus was arranged and it was from listening to the vets that the effect of conscription really dawned on me as I gained a sense of the uncertainty that they felt as if their lives were no longer within their control.

1966 saw the growth of Australian independence in fighting the communist threat with the First Australian task force being created. This task force was made up of "regs" and for the first time in the war "nashos", but now in hindsight I can look back at these soldiers and say that all were brave Australians who

did their country and the spirit of the ANZACs proud. The taskforce was dispatched to Phuoc Tuy Province and set up the famous base at Nui Dat.

Not long after the establishment of the base at Nui Dat one of Australia's greatest military victories took place, The Battle of Long Tan. Now prior to learning about the Vietnam War, I hadn't much idea as to what actually happened at Long Tan. I soon learnt just how significant an achievement it was for Australia in the War.

On the 18 August 1966, at about 10 past 4, 108 soldiers from D company 6RAR, came under the attack of a 1500 to 2500 strong Viet Cong force in the Long Tan Rubber Plantation not far from Nui Dat. The battle went on until the early evening, in torrential tropical weather. D Company fought in the determined ANZAC spirit, but suffered 18

casualties and 24 wounded. The battle raged until an Artillery battery responded ensuring that the soldiers lives were saved. The Australians counted 245 Viet Cong dead, but there have been estimates of up to 800 as the Viet Cong buried many of their dead during the night. Lieutenant Colonel Bob Breen later documented that "the battle discipline and bravery of the Australians, the cover provided by the torrential rain and the effects of hundreds of artillery and mortar rounds falling among the Viet Cong attackers resulted in a stunning victory for the Australians and a further enhancement for the fighting tradition of Australian

infantry". I look back now on Long Tan and realise that yesterday's date signifies the heroism, the bravery, the mateship and the ultimate sacrifice that took place there, 45 years ago. I am deeply ashamed that the bravery shown by the soldiers at Long Tan was not immediately recognised. However, the Unit Citation for D Company received yesterday now completes their recognition and the work of campaigners like Major Harry Smith. I think it's fair to say that for some the Vietnam War will finally end when each veteran receives their belated and complete recognition. We are nearly there and I believe we will get there. In the meantime, we know in our hearts that every soldier who served throughout this conflict gave his all. Today, fills me with a sense of pride that I belong to a nation where our people in the face of such hardship and adversity will not back down. Instead, they rise and overcome. I have learned that this is an important part of our Australian identity.

The last thing, I studied was the political turmoil that was going on at home. The opposition to the Vietnam War and in particular how conscription had politically radicalised many Australians. The mass Moratorium Movements and Save Our Sons protests were important, but they caused people to forget what the Australian soldiers were going through. The ignorance and lack of empathy from those at home disappointed me.

To be honest, I was angry when I first discovered the extremely negative reception the Vietnam Veterans received

Kyle McLachlan

upon their return to Australia. What particularly struck me was that some Vets whilst being rejected by wider society were also refused service at RSL clubs. I could understand the ignorance of wider society, but the rejection they encountered from other veterans who were in the best position to understand their experiences, I found that hard to comprehend. I learnt about the experiences the vets had with alcohol abuse, the flashbacks, the impacts on families and the problems many had adjusting back into a society that wrongly didn't want them, falsely blaming them for decisions which came from higher up. Blaming them for being soldiers, blaming them for doing their duty for Australia and for just following orders. I was pleased to discover the formation of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and about the belated welcome home parade in 1987. From my point of view, it was long overdue and those who marched could not be more deserving. I believe that all Australians owe and will continue to owe a great debt to the Veterans of the Vietnam War. Their bravery and sacrifice for their country raised the spirit of the ANZAC to a new level. So because of the knowledge I now have I feel honoured and grateful that I can humbly say thank you to all those who served in the Vietnam War. My generation will always remember. Lest we forget.

Kyle McLachlan Year 10
St Patrick's College, Strathfield
Vietnam Veterans' Day
Concord Hospital Friday 19 August 2011

IN MEMORY OF PRIVATE WAYNE SUTHERLAND

In September 1971 Wayne was posted to 6 RAR in Singapore and allocated to 3 Platoon at the request of his father who was, at that time, the Battalion RQMS. He was a very enthusiastic young soldier, straight from corps training and ready and willing to take an active part in Platoon life in particular and soldiering in general. He fitted into his section very quickly and couldn't wait to 'go bush'. It was towards the end of his first deployment into the Malayan jungle a few weeks later when he was killed on Thursday 7th October.

His body was returned to Singapore where, on Thursday 15th October, 3 Platoon farewelled him with full military honours in services held in the chapel at Changi and afterwards at the crematorium.

His death was an unfortunate and tragic event which was felt deeply by all in 3 Platoon. It was the sad and sudden loss of a delightful young man.

EVENTS ON THE NIGHT OF 7TH OCTOBER 1971



Lest We Forget

2Lt Don McNaught, the Platoon commander of 3 Platoon, describes events as they unfolded on the night Wayne was killed:

3 Platoon was part of a Battalion exercise, Exercise Swamp Fox, and had deployed deep into the jungle in the mountainous region of the Tenggaroh Forest in the state of Johore in Malaya.

As darkness fell 3 Platoon deployed into a harbour/ambush position on an isolated narrow foot track on a high mountain ridge in dense primary jungle. Everyone was 'standing to' as a huge thunderstorm passed overhead saturating all to the skin. The combination of wet clothes and the high altitude in the mountains made everyone feel quite cold. It was an awful night.

At about 1900 hours as the storm passed over high above the 150 foot jungle canopy, the flashes of lightning could be seen and the roar of the thunder heard as it echoed through the forest. Suddenly, there was a bright flash and a sizzling crack and bang as the Platoon was hit by a huge bolt of lightning. The lightning hit the canopy top and ran down one of the many huge trees which grow in the dense jungle. When it hit the ground it forked out through the Platoon position through the rotting vegetation on the wet jungle floor. Wayne, who was lying behind his M60 Machine Gun, was killed instantly. Corporal Brian Mills, Privates Terry McGlone, Bob Brown and I were temporarily knocked out and semi conscious and Bob and Private Denis Grant suffered severe burns to their arms, legs and feet.

A party of medics including the Battalion doctor had a very difficult journey hacking their way in the dark through the dense undergrowth to get to the Platoon position. They then carried the wounded members and Wayne's body out to where they could be transported by helicopter the 70 miles back to Singapore at first light.

Vale

George Rosentreter

George passed away 3rd November 2011
George is survived by his wife Balmae and four children, Graham, Michelle, Gregory and Alison. Twelve grand children and one great grand daughter and sister Balmai.
The funeral will be held at 10.00 am Wed. 19th November at Mt Thompson Crematorium, West Chapel, Nursery Rd Holland Park.

Vale

Alice Larcombe

Wife of Lance Larcombe

Alice passed away from natural causes on 26th October 2011. Lance was one of the original members of 6RAR He deployed on both tours of Vietnam and Singapore.

Peter Adamis asking for a fair go

Alpha Coy rep Peter Adamis has some thoughts he would like you to ponder. Ed.

FAIR GO

There is a saying that “Old Soldiers never die, they just fade away”. Since the Rudd and Gillard Government has been in power there is a new saying, “Old service men and women don’t die, they are forgotten.” The Death Knell of ex servicemen and women – (The sound of a bell rung slowly, associated with solemnity or mourning, used to announce a death or funeral) This is very disappointing and points to a government that has neglected the needs and aspirations of its service men and women.

Ex servicemen and women who have worn the uniform of Australia and have served unselfishly in the interests of the nation over many years are being let down by the current Labor government of Australia. More importantly and to the point, it is the same Labor government that is responsible for failing to keep its promises from the last federal election and in doing so has angered not only veterans who have been let down but the vast majority of the wider Australian community.

Those who have not served in the Australian defence force readily acknowledge the fine efforts of everyone who has served and worn the uniform of Australia and enduring the disciplines and the arduous duties imposed up them. It is a very sad state of affairs when the public sees the Politicians and other sectors of industry being compensated for their work and one can say with some honesty that they are being paid for the work they have accumulated over years of duty to the nation.

It appears to this author that there is much to be said about the inadequacies of the current system and one wonders whether the current government is playing a waiting game so that many of those who have served sadly pass away, forgotten and neglected to the back streets of the nation’s poor house. Strong words, but then maybe even stronger language should be used at a time like this and complacency has never been a catch cry amongst those who served the nation. For many ex servicemen and women who served with distinction it is an aberration and an insult to their integrity, good name and credibility built over many years of diligent and loyal service. The new catchcry now being echoed in the homes of those who served is **“The Gillard Labor Government neglects ex Service men and women.”**

It is a complete and utter disgrace that such matters have been overlooked for so long and again, one wonders whether this is a deliberate plan designed to decimate the ranks of those who have saved this nation we call Australia. The song so aptly name, I Call Australia Home. The travelling, relocation of families, overseas duty, or in remote areas, long absences from home, the discipline, the endless training and simulated war games in preparation for war are easily forgotten by the politicians who may or not be inundated with other pressing matters.

Where are the independents and/or the other parties that are influential positions to sway and influence the government towards reviewing the ex service men and women remuneration packages and make amends? Australia at the moment is extremely fortunate that it has been in a position to weather the Global Financial crisis and as such be in a better than most to look after its own people with one hopes some

special consideration to those who have served the nation. It is a “bloody joke” and even the use of such language is being mild to what many of those in the veteran community feel about their needs being met. It is about time all politicians stood up and were counted even just for the record to see exactly where they stand on this issue. It is just as well that the veteran community does not forget their years of loyal service, arduous duties and discipline by taking a leaf out of the Unions who gate crashed the Australian parliament in Canberra. Heaven forbid that such action should be taken by those who have served the nation for it will demonstrate that even years of discipline and strong moral behaviour can have its limits.

We in Australia are the laughing stock of the world at the moment. We have lost track of what is important and we tend to forget those who have served in the interest of the Australian nation and look to plot how the Australian Prime minister can be toppled. Where is the loyalty, where is the guts and determination being demonstrated at the highest level of Australian society where it was once considered a privilege to serve the nation knowing that when one’s duty was over, a grateful nation would look after their interests? Shame and further shame on those who have the power influence and the means to make amends. This is not about being selfish, but giving those who served a fair go. It s the Australian way.

This intent of this article is to bring to light the inequity regarding the remuneration packages of ex servicemen and women who served this country and the poor treatment it is receiving from an ungrateful nation of political opportunists desperately clinging to power. It is un Australian to kick someone when they are down. If the message is not clear enough in this article, Australians who have the nations interest at heart and believes that it’s about time that Australia looks after its own, visit the following videos and website to obtain a better understanding of what is involved.

VIDEO:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7VJVXaaa4M&feature=channel_video_title

WEBSTE:

http://www.dfw.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42&Itemid=59

Source: Peter Adamis - Watsonia

This bloke was complaining to his mate about having his brother-in-law living with him, because the bloke was really lazy. He said to his mate: “Lazy as he is, do you think they’d take him in the army?”

His mate replied: “I don’t know.....how tall is he?”

“Dunno,” he said. “Never saw him standing up.”

Don McNaught

A couple of months ago I received a phone call from a fellow by the name of Don McNaught, (Don McZero).

Our conversation revolved around his time spent in Alpha in the Singapore days. He said "I'll send you some stuff about me". What you about to read is excerpts from an article about Don by Ross Eastgate from the Gold Coast News titled 'THE FLYING SCOTSMAN.'

From the moment young Don McNaught was taken for a flight cramped into the back of a tiny crop duster, he knew he wanted to keep flying.

His first attempt on his own however, was an unmitigated disaster. He climbed on to the cattle-yard fence at the family property near Sale in Victoria's Gippsland, flapped his arms and jumped off.

"I was extremely frustrated that I couldn't fly but I vowed there and then that one day I would be able to," says Don from his unit overlooking the golf course at Royal Pines Resort at Ashmore.

Since then he has logged 11,000 hours flying a variety of aircraft including 2,000 in helicopters from places as diverse as Irian Jaya and Saudi Arabia. He's even flown over some battlefields where his father served during World War II.

And when, while training as a flying instructor at the RAAF's Central Flying School at East Sale in 1978 he flew his first solo in a Macchi jet trainer, he made sure the family property was on the flight path.

"I went in as low and as fast as was permissible," he recalls. "The old man was not impressed. He said to me afterwards 'you put the bull straight into the heifers'."

As a farm boy he attended Gippsland Grammar School as a border from 1961 to 1966 before joining a stock and station agency to train as an auctioneer. He has certainly not lost the steady patten of that profession as he recalls his experiences. "I was determined to fly but I did humanities in year 12 and didn't have the requisite maths and physics. However I spent every spare penny I earned from my stock and station agents job gaining my civil pilots' licence."

McNaught is also one of the most prolific diary keepers and memorabilia collectors I have encountered, his study overflowing with diaries, photos and the million souvenirs of a life spent living around the world.

Perhaps the most influential moment in his life occurred in 1969 when he was called up for national service, a life-changing event for many young men of his generation. Rather than take the easy option, completing his two years and returning to civvy street, in typical McNaught fashion he looked at the avenues available to make the most his national service experience. "I was selected for officer training at the Officer Cadet School at Scheyville, near Windsor in NSW," he says. It was a six-month course specially adapted for national service rather than the 12-month course at Portsea in Victoria or the four-year one at Duntroon. "It was also where the army trained those officers who were specifically enlisted to become pilots. I joined with the fourth intake of 1969 and while it was tough, I made lifelong friends."

McNaught graduated to the Royal Australian Infantry and was posted to the 6th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, 6RAR, during which time he managed to qualify as an army parachutist, although his preference was still to fly aeroplanes rather than jump out of them.

At about this point he was due to complete his national service, 6RAR was also due to deploy to Singapore a part of Australia's commitment to ANZUK, the Commonwealth military presence in Singapore and Malaysia. McNaught extended his enlistment to deploy with the battalion.



A young McNaught in Jahare State Malaya

"An overseas deployment was too good an opportunity to miss and I still had it at the back of my mind that the army offered an opportunity for me to train as a military pilot," he says. You would have to say that our time in Singapore coincided with the last days of the empire,' says McNaught. "Selarang Barracks was also an incredible place to live and work given it' history."

Having returned to Australia in late 1972, McNaught managed a home posting at the 2nd Recruit Training Battalion at Puckapunyal in Victoria. We were training national servicemen until the election of the Whitlam government in December, 1972, "he says." "Although Whitlam ended national service , we continued our training role but with a significantly reduced temp. I still had my heart set on flying so I used the opportunity while I was assistant adjutant at 2RTB to improve my maths and physics through the army education system."

After a further staff posting, the opportunity McNaught had been waiting for presented itself in July, 1974, when the army called for volunteers to train to fly.

"Not that I knew it then, but for the next 12 years I would have a continuous succession of flying postings," he says. Although he held an unrestricted civil licence, Mcnaught had to learn to fly all over again.

We went to Point Cook which is the home of Australian Military aviation and did our basic flying training on Winjeeds, the aircraft introduced after the was to replace the Tiger Moth," he recalls.

"It was a demanding course and of the four who started, only two graduated.....a pretty high drop out rate."

In January, 1975, he arrived for the first of several postings at the School of Army Aviation at Oakey, near Toowoomba. After six months advanced flying on the fixed wing, Swiss-built Pilatus Porter, McNaught was awarded his 'wings', the army's flying badge and posted to 173 General Support Squadron also at Oakey.

"The next 18 months involved some of the most incredible flying of my career," he says. "You would be given a task like, 'your off to support the SAS for three weeks', so with an all trades mechanic you would fly to Perth to do whatever the SAS wanted and the squadron wouldn't see you for three or four weeks. We also did a lot of survey work in northern Australia, Papua New Guinea and in Irian Jaya."

(Cont over page)

More of Don McZero

In fact just six months after receiving his wings, McNaught was tasked with delivering the first Pilatus Porter to Irian Jaya via PNG to support the Australian Army's mapping exercise, Operation Cenderwasi, named after the Bahasa word for the bird of paradise.

On that occasion he was only there for a few weeks but on his return for a two month stint in June, 1977, things became decidedly more exciting, not to say dangerous.

"Irian Jaya is a beautiful, unspoilt country and the people are delightful," he says. "It was demanding work, sometimes flying at 200 feet (61m), others at 16500 feet (5km) on oxygen over The Glacier and where we could see the wreck of a RAAFR DC3 which crashed just after the end of the war. It was just four degrees below the equator and the sad thing is, the remains and the personal possessions of those killed were only recently able to be retrieved."

Then on July 29, 1977 a RAAF Iroquois helicopter supporting Operation Cenderawasi crashed near Wamena after experiencing difficulties maneuvering in dense clouds.



If you are going to put the bulls among the heifers...do it in style!

At the end of his posting at 173 Squadron, McNaught, now an experienced operational pilot, was selected as a flying instructor at the Central Flying School at East Sale near his family property. So near in fact that he, Liz and their two daughters stayed at the family property while McNaught trained first on CT4 trainers and ultimately the Maachi jet trainer, the aircraft he used to buzz the family property, upsetting both his dad and the bulls. "We went over the place at about 400 knots and 150 feet and then went vertical," he says as he laughs at the memory of his father's reaction.

In January, 1980, the McNaught returned to Oakey, where Don fulfilled a variety of postings, all of them requiring him to fly, until in December, 1984 he was to command his old unit, 173 General Support Squadron, which was then also operating Australian designed and built twin-engine N22 Nomad. Along the way he also qualified on the Bell 206 Kiowa, adding rotary wing to his qualifications.

In 1986 McNaught's dream run flying was brought to an end... perhaps gratuitous pause might be a better description....when

he was selected to attend Army Command and Staff College at Fort Queenscliffe, followed by a posting as a tactics instructor at the Land Warfare Centre at Canungra.

"Being posted to Canungra as an instructor meant that my flying ambitions were being frustrated but there was a significant plus, we enrolled our girls, Caroline and Fiona, at St Hilda's School in Southport and really began our love affair with the Gold Coast lifestyle."

Don found an outlet for his flying and adventurous spirit in a couple of major undertakings. The first was the inaugural west-to east crossing of Australia by ultra-light aircraft in 1987. With two other army pilots, Tony Overstead and Mike Arnold, the trio wrote themselves into the history books in an army-sponsored adventure-training exercise. They flew 7,500 nautical miles in two months from Perth to Sydney via Geraldton, Carnarvon, Port



Don, doing it tough at Shoalwater with his Kiowa runabout.

Headland, Ayres Rock, Alice Springs, Bourke and Tamworth before landing at Port Macquarie.

On the cusp of being promoted to Lt. Colonel it was now obvious to Don McNaught that his future military career was more likely to involve flying desks than aeroplanes, so while he considered himself young and fit enough to continue flying, in 1989 he resigned from the army and took up a job with British Aerospace UK from where he was seconded to the Royal Saudi Air Force for the next seven years as squadron commander in charge of air force pilot screening.

"We left the girls at school here and Liz and I headed off to Saudi Arabia", he says. Don McNaught never does anything half-hearted.

In typical fashion, he decided to fill in some of his spare time by exploring his Scottish heritage and thought the best way to do that would be to learn to play the bagpipes. "I bought a chanter and started to learn and Liz bought me a set of bagpipes when she was back here on a visit.

In July, 1990, after Iraq invaded Kuwait, the training in Saudi Arabia suddenly had a purpose. "Liz was evacuated back to Australia but we continued flying and could see from the air the vast armoured columns gathered to take on Saddam Hussein's forces," says McNaught.

McNaught's intention on his return to Australia in 1995 was to retire and manage his property portfolio but with in three years he was back in the cockpit.

Cont'd

"I performed a similar role for British Aerospace screening pilot candidates at Tamworth and also went back into the army reserve as an operational pilot flying fixed wing aircraft out of Darwin for my old squadron 173. I also worked as a commercial pilot flying helicopters for Sea World. Add to which his current role flying for Black Jet at Coolangatta."

I casually asked if there is anything he hasn't flown and Don pauses to think.

"Well I'm a qualified parachutist, I enjoy hang gliding, I can fly piston-engine and jet-engine fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. I've flown ultra-lights and the Black Jet Nanchangs are a dream for an old military pilot and instructor like myself."

"However the one thing I haven't been up in is a hot air balloon"

McNaught then suddenly remembers that one of his classmates from the Officer Cadet School at Scheyville runs a local hot-air balloon company. I might give Tony Parkes a ring", says the man for whom the next flight is always a delight and always an adventure.

Received a letter from Danielle Duncan a while back. She said that her dad was Barry Duncan and he was in Vietnam in Alpha Coy on the second tour. She mentioned that she was going through his Maurie Fields' joke books and was sending me some examples of Maurie's jokes and the picture below.

I immediately got the wind up and thought UH OH....here's



Barry Duncan from a few years ago. I bet just like me he hasn't changed one bit.

Barry's daughter going through his stuff.....He's carked it. ...Without telling anyone. I phoned his home number and it either rang out or went to message bank. I did this several times over the next few days and I also tried to call Danielle. No answer there either. So I began to panic a bit cause' I, same as everybody else, like Barry. They are all in mourning, and Barry's dead, interred, cremated and buried at sea.

Danielle phoned a couple of days later

and informed me that her dad was in fine health and on holidays. She did apologise but I told her it was my fault and that I was so pleased that Barry was still with us.

Danielle's jokes are the only ones this issue. Thank you Danielle, your dad is a good bloke.

Reminder on Op Bribie anniversary

Received an email today from our friends from Bravo Coy.

Would you please include in your newsletter as a reminder of the two days we are holding on Bribie Island for the 45th anniversary of Op Bribie.

The meet and greet is on the night of 16, February, 2011, at the Bribie Sports Club. Memorial Service next day (17th) commencing at 4.00pm sharp followed by the Anniversary Dinner in the main hall, RSL, Bribie Island.

A general invitation to all members of A Coy especially those who were on that battlefield that eventful afternoon 45 years ago.

The cost of the dinner is \$65.00 per head, drinks included. A cap is on the numbers that can be comfortably seated. After a certain date in January it will be on first in basis.

We would also appreciate someone from A Coy to lay a wreath at the service.

OP Bribie is usually well attended by a good cross section of the Old and Bold of 6 RAR and many memories are recounted and added to with the passing years.

Regards

Dave Thomas.

As a foot note to this item from Dave. A News purchased a wreath especially for this service last year and is in the possession of Terry Bell. Terry's contact details are in the database you all received recently. Ed.

I recently talked to Robert Noble, 1 Platoon 69/70, he lives in Adelaide and intends to call in at the reunion next year to catch up with his old mates.

Some of you may remember him as "Nobby" Noble. He tells me that he has moved on from that now and would prefer to be called Robert.

Look forward to seeing you Rob. Ed.

It was late at night and two drunk lost and far away from home, were walking along a railway line.

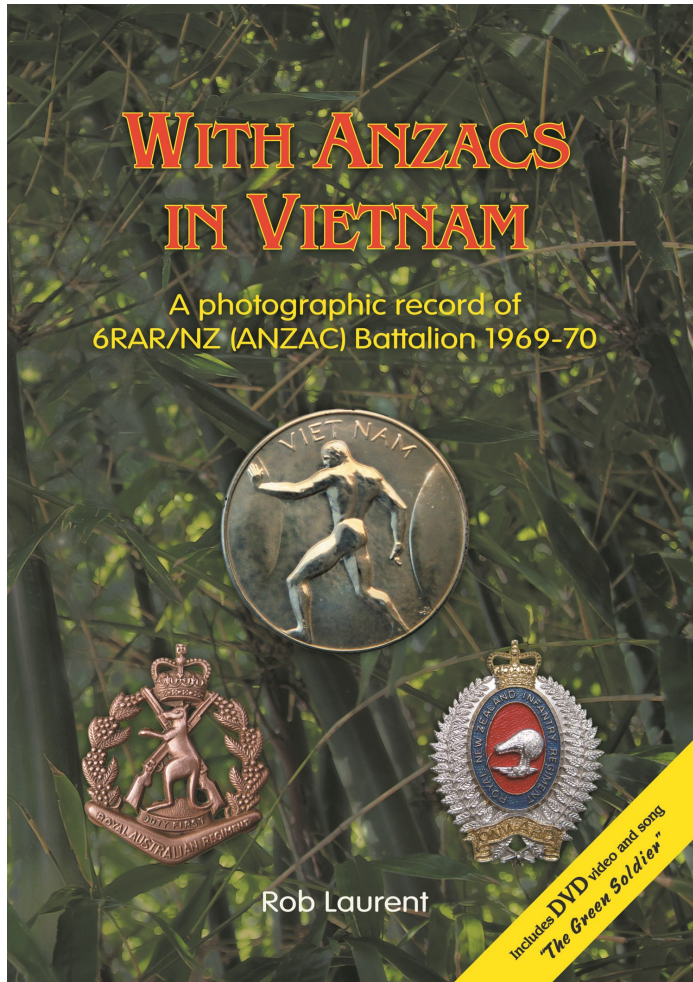
One said to the other: "I wonder when we're ever going to get to the top of these bloody stairs?"

The other bloke replied: "The stairs don't worry me. But the low handrail certainly does."

Rob Laurent's latest

ROB LAURENT

Has just published his latest book with the collaboration of Mal Nichols, Doug Tanner and Ian Lade. The later supplying photos and identifying those in the photos. I don't know how they do it, I have trouble identifying myself. The book deals mainly with Alpha Coy 1969/1970



I received my copy of the book on Monday afternoon and haven't had time to read it thoroughly. I have however looked at the pics and the memories flooded in when faces are put to names.

To say this book is comprehensive somehow seems inadequate. The wealth of information goes beyond anything I had envisioned Rob would put together. He has gone to a great deal of trouble and his subject research is impeccable. I can only suggest at \$60.00+\$10 postage it is cheap as chips.

BUY THIS BOOK

You won't regret it. Ed.

Contact Rob Laurent Ph. 07 4649 6108

MS 582 Donovan's Rd. Cabarlah Qld 4352

Email robl Laurent@blueflyer.com.au

ADELAIDE REUNION

There are a few members who have chosen not to stay at Adelaide Shores for the Adelaide reunion and are seeking accom. elsewhere. Not a problem of course, stay where ever you like, just be there.

The latest up to date bookings at Adelaide Shores are as below. It is early yet and we expect the numbers to ramp up next year. Ed.

Barry & Muriel Francis
Ernie Dare
Shane & Carroline Hines
Laurie & Helen Holmes
Alan & Lesley Kruger
Merv & Maureen Mc Innes
Malcolm & Nola Nicholls
Trevor & Jeanette Richardson
Neil & Linda Saunders
Kevin & Merl White
Peter & Betty Beauchamp
Bill & Liz Cane
Ray & Pat Corry
Alastair & Judy Jessop
Alan & Kay Abrahams
Mike MacNaught (3ad)
Jim & Dianne Nicholls
Sue Renehan
Richard Smith
Gary & Rita Christian
Heather & Graham Davis
Norm & Sandra Quarrell
Rhonda & Ted Jones
Peter Smith

An email from Mal and Nola Nichols.

Hi All,

Hope you are all fit and well and planning your trip to Adelaide for the next reunion which is now only 9 months away. As usual at reunions we will be running a raffle or two. We are hoping that everyone will be able to find something between now and then to donate to the "Pick A Prize" raffle that proved very successful at Airlie Beach. The idea is that everyone donates a prize or prizes to go into the daily draws. Your donation can be anything you choose - wine, beer, foodstuff, memorabilia, book, ornamental, useful, useless or just plain fun - what ever you want to about \$10 in value. The more prizes we have the more draws there will be and the better your chances to win!!!

At previous reunions we have also had a major raffle with prizes made or acquired by members of the group. This will be on again and we have already had offers from some of our very talented people but are always looking for more, so if you are willing to help in this regard as well your efforts will be most appreciated.

Look forward to catching up with you all in Adelaide.

Regards Nola and Mal Nicholls

Finances

DONATIONS

From 9/07/10 to 3/11/2011

Westpac working account.

Opening Balance from P. Fitzgerald	\$ 753.87
Proceeds from Airlie Beach Reunion	\$ 6,203.21
Donations and bank interest;	\$ 3,160.95
Grant	\$ 4,101.00
<u>Total received</u>	<u>\$14,219.90</u>
Transfer to Ubank	\$ 7,300.00
Capital items; Computer, printer, monitor software etc	\$ 3,378.90
Stationary, ink, postage, repairs, bank fees	\$ 3,151.17
<u>Total outgoings</u>	<u>\$13,830.07</u>
<u>Balance Westpac working acc</u>	<u>\$ 389.83</u>

Ubank Savings Account

Transfer from Westpac working account	\$ 7,300.00
Interest	\$ 269.00
<u>Total received</u>	<u>\$ 7,569.00</u>
Transfer seed funding Adelaide	\$ 3,000.00
<u>Balance Ubank</u>	<u>\$ 4,569.00</u>

Westpac and Ubank combined funds available \$ 4,958.83

Here is a sign posted at a golf club in Scotland

1. Back straight, knees bent, feet shoulder width apart.
2. Form a loose grip,
3. Keep your head down!
4. Avoid a quick back swing.
5. Stay out of the water.
6. Try not to hit anyone.
7. If you are taking too long, let others go ahead of you.
8. Don't stand directly in front of others.
9. Quiet please....while others are preparing.
10. Don't take extra strokes.

Well done...now, flush the urinal, go outside, and tee off.

K Squire

D McNaught

Ja & Jm Maughan

E & R Jones

F Alcorta

\$385

Thank you to the donors once again. If you would like to make a direct deposit, acc details are;

A News A Company Association
BSB 034 665
Acc 205 444

This is your newsletter and your input is encouraged. If you have a story that you think would interest others out there, send it in to me. In anticipation, thank you. Ed.

Contact the editor;

Chris Weigand
PO Box 234, Cannonvale Q. 4802
chrisw48@gmail.com
Ph 07 49483567 Fax 07 4946 1774
Mob 0418 771 260