

# THE DUNTROON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 2/2016

SEPTEMBER 2016

## The First Centenarian

*On 15 August 2016 John Grant Sedgley became the first graduate of the RMC to reach the age of 100 years. For the last 35 years he has been a very active member of the Duntroon Society. He was a well known attendee of the meetings and functions of the Victoria Branch and was present at almost all the Duntroon Society's biennial reunions. Over many years he contributed articles to the Editorial Team. Some were published and all were deposited with his personal file in the RMC archives. With his quite unique achievement it was deemed right and proper for his last writing to be published here.*

*Having written the above, it is now with ineffable sadness and poignant irony that the report of his death 14 days into his 101<sup>st</sup> year needs to share space in the same issue of the Duntroon Society Newsletter as the celebration of his historic achievement.*

## Active Service Moments of a Young Infantry Officer, 1943–1945

**John (J.G.) Sedgley (1938)**

War is just a great waste of the treasure of a nation, its manpower and its economic wealth. In a perfect world there would be no need for a government to keep a defence force, but the world is not perfect. Even as a schoolboy I considered that when I was old enough I should join either the Army or the Navy to do my part in defending our country. I enlisted in the Army.

Many books and articles have been written about Australians at war; when my family asked me how I felt during my active service, I explained that in war you spend a lot of time in training, much of it monotonous, and a short time in action with terrifying moments. There were moments when I felt that my heart was in my mouth, usually brought on by unexpected events, but my training helped me to overcome these feelings and show strength to those around me. I shall try to record for you a few of these moments.

I was transferred to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1942 and was allotted to 1 Armoured Division and later to 3 Armoured Division. Both remained in Australia but, at last on 17 August 1943 I was transferred away to a theatre of active operations. I was to be a General Staff Officer, Grade III (Intelligence) at Advanced Land Head Quarters, Port Moresby, New Guinea. My post was in the Battle Room and two of my tasks were to mark on a wall map the locations of enemy sightings throughout the last 24 hours and to maintain a file of the details relating to them. There were frequent

visitors to be briefed and that was perhaps the more interesting part of my job.

One morning an officer of the Australia and New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) came to be brought up to date with the evidence we had of enemy activity in the Sepik District as he was about to go there to collect information of enemy intentions in the area and to find out the present attitude of the locals to us and to our enemy. He had been a patrol officer there before the War. He was looking for a companion for the trip, but I regret that he turned down my offer because I had no experience of moving through the jungle and I did not speak Pidgin English or Motu. What seemed only a few days later he walked into my room again so I enquired about his preparations. He surprised me by saying that he had just returned, that he had travelled on his own and that he had achieved what he had set out to do. I asked him what he did to escape being captured. He said that he had been taken by air behind the enemy lines, and then walked through the jungle avoiding any contact with the locals until he reached those people whom he wished to interrogate. Once his task was accomplished he enjoyed meeting old friends again as he walked back to the rendezvous. He knew that the enemy would have found out about him but he felt safe because they would not be able to catch up with him before he was flown back to Port Moresby.

One hot and steamy afternoon in October 1943, General Sir Thomas Blamey walked into the Battle Room with Lieutenant General Berryman. Whilst talking about the patrolling of our troops and other contacts with the enemy I mentioned that I was a regular soldier and I felt I needed the experience of active service if I were to continue in my profession after this war. General Blamey turned to one of his staff officers and said "Send him off". What astonishment and excitement that was for me! A few days later I received a posting order to 2/23 Australian Infantry Battalion, 9 Australian Division, which was in action in the Finschhafen area of the Huon Peninsula.

I was concerned about my fitness for active service and how I should travel to join my new battalion. To help with this I decided to walk across the Kokoda Track to a staging camp at Cape Endaiadere, then travel by barge to Lae where I would take whatever transport was available to Finschhafen to report to Headquarters 26 Infantry Brigade (HQ 26 Inf Bde) for further directions. On about 20 September 1943 I was taken to the start of the Kokoda Track by jeep and was horrified by what I saw ahead of me: an extremely steep and muddy series of steps reaching up into the mist. I knew that this was just the start and that there was much tougher country ahead. Decision Time! Should I go on or go back? I returned to Port Moresby and arranged to fly across the Owen Stanley Range to Dobodura. I was taken to the Army Staging Camp

nearby at Buna. There I was allotted to a tent with two other junior officers who were returning to their units.

During that first night there was an enemy air raid. Searchlights were swishing around the sky, anti-aircraft guns were firing with enemy planes circling low overhead and bombs exploding near the airfield. Vehicles were racing around and there was activity everywhere. The noise was intense. We three remained in our bunks, listening. I said, more or less to myself: *This is my first experience of action against our enemy. I must see what is happening.* Immediately there were two streaks of white as my companions, naked, dashed to the slit trenches outside the tent line. After the raid we three spent some time talking about the raid and I realised that I was now on a new learning curve in changing from a junior staff officer to a regimental officer.

From there I travelled on a barge which motored up the coast at night and was hidden during the day in a creek or under trees to protect it from enemy air attacks. About 25 November 1943 we eventually reached Scarlet Beach just south of the Song River mouth where I was told that HQ 26 Infantry Brigade was located at Jivevaneng up the road, named 'Easy Street', to Sattelberg. When I started I wondered how soldiers had ever staggered up that track to fight. Here was I, climbing up a ladder-track leading to the sky, fully clothed, and carrying a huge pack with much gear which was useless for an infantryman in the jungle. I was soon saturated and half blinded by sweat and short of breath. Soon I was exhausted and felt dreadful. When I arrived at the Bde HQ I was delighted to find my old Duntroon friend, Ken Mackay, the Brigade Major.

Ken took me to the Brigade Commander, 'Torpy' Whitehead, who told me that I was to get patrol experience with 2/4 Cavalry Commando Squadron which was operating in the Finisterre Ranges to the North-west of Finschhafen before going to my Battalion. I spent some time with them toughening up and learning the skills for moving silently in the jungle. One patrol is worth recalling. We went down into the valley of the Song River to see if a 'Quick Boy' track was clear of the enemy. It was extremely steep and we hung on to trees and bushes to steady ourselves as we scrambled down. We were almost at the bottom when a light machine gun opened fire on us. We all dived for cover before racing up that valley-side so fast that not one of us touched a tree or a bush until we reached the top. I was last in the patrol going down and I was last racing back! Our task was to get information but not to fight so our mission had now been completed.

About 10 December I joined my Battalion at Wareo which is on the northern bank of the Song River and adjacent to Sattelberg. I took command of B Company for the advance up to Sio which is at the northern end of the Vitiaz Strait, the seaway between the Huon Peninsula and the Island of New Britain. It is about 100 km north of the Song River. There our 9 Division was relieved by other troops and we were sent back to Australia. We arrived in Brisbane in January 1944 and most of the Battalion were given three weeks leave. As I was the last company commander to join the Battalion I was detailed to take the stores and the rear party by train to Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tableland, Queensland. I had not been with Mary and our two children for twelve months so you can imagine my depression at this decision, especially as Anne had been born whilst I was in New Guinea. Here the Battalion spent the next 12 months resting and retraining in preparation for what became the Borneo Campaign.

Living in tents or in bivouacs in the rain forest became boring. We were beginning to feel that the Americans had decided that they no longer needed us as they had recaptured the Philippines and were moving north. It seemed that the War would soon be over and we were depressed by thinking that our efforts in New Guinea were forgotten. It was to be an all-American victory. Morale improved considerably however when we moved down to the coast north of Cairns to train for beach landings. In one exercise my company of over 100 men had to dash across a swamp. We came across a crocodile. In a flash that crocodile went from being a ferocious one to a fearful one. I am sure that all my men were as afraid of him as I was as we waded across. He just disappeared—apparently afraid of us too!

Early in the New Year of 1945 we were moved to Townsville where we found that we were to be taken overseas again. We were to sail in an American troop ship but to where we did not know. Rumours were flying thick and fast. The wharf labourers refused to load our ship so we had to do it ourselves. Can you imagine our anger with these fellow Australians!

One incident occurred in Townsville which comes to mind. All leave was cancelled on the night before we sailed. You can imagine how unpopular that was so you can also appreciate that a number of soldiers went absent without leave. I was ordered to take a small group of men into the city and arrest those of our Battalion that I could find. None of us, including me, wished to do this task. I think I collected about 20 and as I found them I had them put in the Army Detention Centre. You can imagine their comments to me when detained—they were not complimentary. When it was time to return to camp I collected them all and took them with me, telling them let us forget about those arrests, go to your tents and just be on parade in the morning. There were no recriminations but I hope these men were relieved and developed some respect for the authority which had to place unpalatable restrictions on them.

We disembarked from the troop ship at Morotai where we found that 26 Infantry Brigade was to capture Tarakan Island which is on the east coast of Borneo. After some further amphibious training my battalion embarked in American Landing Ships (Tank). We were to land on Green Beach which was to the west of the Tarakan jetty. Because the sea was shallow off the island we were launched in our amphibious tanks (buffalos) well out to sea which meant a long run into the beach and a long time to be vulnerable to enemy fire. Dawn was just breaking when our buffalos formed up in line and, as planned, I and my company were to lead in the first landing wave. Whilst we moved to the shore we were escorted by American rocket ships and supported by both American aircraft bombing the beach and American warships shelling the beach and high ground beyond. The noise was intense. The swish of rockets being fired over our heads was both terrifying and exhilarating. My buffalo was the first ashore. We had to jump out at the water's edge because of the mud and a bank which was too high for the vehicle to climb. The air was full of dust and smoke and the noise of bombs and guns still firing was still deafening.

I quickly gathered my Company around me and ran towards my first objective, the high ground beyond the beach. We had gone only a short distance when we were forced by enemy fire to seek shelter. I looked at my men and saw 100 pairs of eyes looking at me for guidance. I realised that this was one of those critical moment for which I had spent four years of training at Duntroon. In a few moments I had given

them the necessary orders to move across to the spur on our left, move up to where it joined the enemy's feature then, whilst one platoon attacked them from behind, another would give them fire support. This was successful and we captured our objective. My ability to lead had been tested and I now knew I could confidently lead them anywhere. I also knew that we had become a group of men bound by bonds of great confidence and trust.

In a few days the three battalions of the Brigade drove the enemy back to the centre of the island. We captured the hospital, the town and the airfield and then moved on to protect the engineers who were working to make the airfield operative. A number of us were drawn back to the flat ground near the airfield for a rest. Although the enemy had been driven away into the jungle there were rumours that at night individuals would creep into our rest area and stab sleeping men. One night, no moon and it was pitch black, a young soldier screamed out "He's got me; He's got me!". Normally, I slept above ground with my boots off. In less than a second I was in our slit trench, beside my batman, trying to look over the sights of my pistol toward the scream. Fear taught me another lesson that night. I slept in a trench with my boots on and shared it with my mate, my batman, from then on.

Once I came under enemy fire I realized that there are degrees of fear. First, apprehension, catch your breath and take cover. Second, scared stiff but make sure that those around you are aware of the danger too. Third, so scared that it is difficult to think clearly and that is when your training will carry you and your group through to dominate the situation.

There were many incidents of interest to me during the campaign, such as when my hat which I was wearing, had its brim cut by a piece of shrapnel; my batman, standing near me, had a bullet pass through his haversack; a Matilda tank coming up to help us ran over a land mine. Its four startled soldiers shot out of it like a cork out of a bottle of fizz; a jeep running over a mine just outside my company perimeter and being blown many feet into the air killing the four occupants. However there are three other serious incidents and two happy ones which are worthy of further comment.

My company was holding the most dominant feature on the island known as Margy. We had just accepted the surrender of about a hundred natives who had been working for the enemy and were released to us but we were still being shelled by the enemy. I had asked for an air strike on where we thought the gun was located in the jungle. An Australian Artillery officer who had spent the campaign back near the beach came to my HQ just before the bombs were due to be dropped. He had no idea of the effects of bombing close to our own position so I told him to take cover in a slit trench until he saw me stand up. Then he could look for the damage done to the enemy. I had not told him that when a bomb explodes some distance away first there is the noise and the heat wave followed a second or two later by the shrapnel from the bomb casing. I stood up as soon as the heat wave had passed and so did he. I never worried about being wounded by shrapnel but to my horror a large piece of metal came hurtling toward us and crashed into the spot where he had been crouching. He had no idea how close he had been to ending his war then. Worse; I would have held myself responsible for his departure.

I had been directed to make contact with a company from another battalion which was clearing a track known as Snags Track. With two soldiers for protection I joined them. The Company Commander had planned to clear an enemy post

with napalm delivered by the Royal Australian Air Force. To mark the area smoke mortar bombs were fired into the target just before the planes arrived with their belly tank bombs ready to attack. But a wind had blown up and the smoke came back on to us. We signalled to the planes to stop but for two planes it was too late. They were on their approach runs. One bomb landed in the target area the other hit a tree above us. It burst but did not explode and we were saturated. Soon some RAAF officers came forward to inspect the shattered bomb. We were indignant because their only interest was in why the detonator had failed and the bomb had not exploded. Blow them we thought, so our escape meant nothing to them!

I had been instructed to take my company out along a track to the east of the airfield which ran through to the sea to ensure it was cleared of enemy posts. We had travelled about half way along it when an enemy soldier crossed. We decided to capture him if possible so a platoon spread out along the track and on my command we raced into the jungle where he had gone. We had penetrated about 20 metres when he stepped out from behind a tree with his sword to cut ME down. Fortunately my two coverers were quicker and despatched him. I felt sorry for the man. He did not have a chance to escape or surrender. We searched his pack to find he had a large number of wrist watches and a small bar of gold. We thought he must have been an orderly in a hospital or a dressing station because of this. He had nothing which could be of intelligence value so we decided to keep these things for ourselves. Of course we reported this on our return. I still have his sword. It is not a beautiful Samurai one. When my executors are going through my estate they may find it and know why I kept it.

My company was given the task of clearing another track between the airfield and the eastern side of the island. It was over undulating country and we were held up by enemy fire from a knoll about 100 metres ahead. I tried to drive them off with mortar fire rather than risk having a casualty at this stage of our war. We knew that in Europe the fighting had ended and that our war could not go on for much longer, hence my decision. We took up a defensive position just before dusk on a knoll covering the track with three booby traps along it. A booby trap consisted of a trip wire across the track attached to a hand grenade. Just after dark there was a burst of enemy fire confirming their presence but we soon settled down for the night. In the early morning the first booby trap went off. We were awake! Then the second went. All weapons were ready to fire! Then the third exploded. Fire!! Magazines on all weapons were reloaded immediately and there was no more sleep that night. What do you think we found next morning? A dead orang-utang and the enemy had left. Orang-utangs were not endangered species then but we were. I went back to Borneo after the war and found them to be gentle and friendly creatures.

Our task in Tarakan was over. We were waiting for the next operation when we were told that Gracie Fields (a popular English singer) with her entertainment group would visit us. This was great news. Our engineers built a stage in a valley with adequate lighting because her performance would be at night when it was cooler. We took along our ground sheets and a box for a seat. I think that there must have been at least 2,000 happy soldiers there and afterwards I was told that a number of our enemies came as well. They watched from the hill behind us. It was a marvellous performance and we really appreciated it. They were to be on for an hour but Gracie and her husband (Monty Banks) sang for over two hours.

The soldiers made 'Jungle Juice'. To help pass their long evenings, beer and spirits were not permitted on the island. I held the fermenting liquid in my hut for my company in an endeavour to control its consumption. Sometimes we had film nights as well. During the evening of 15 August we had a film to which most of us went. Whilst it was running, the searchlights near the beach came on and their beams were flashed around the sky in great circles. There were some loud explosions too. We knew what that meant. There was a great shout from us all as we raced off to celebrate elsewhere. The War was over! A number of officers gathered in the Medical Officer's hut and we drank a toast to 'Victory'. Our spirits were high and our drink was ethyl alcohol with some green toe nail paste to give the appearance of Absinthe. When I returned to my company lines all the 'Jungle Juice' had gone and there were many happy young soldiers.

Fighting had ended on 15 August 1945 and within a month I was transferred back to HQ Southern Command Victoria which meant that I was back with Mary and our two children Michael and Anne. All the heartaches which I had lived with during the War disappeared.

Being a volunteer soldier (AIF) can give you comradeship, adventure, security and purpose. But this must not obscure the horrors of war.

*My sincere thanks to my friends Yvonne Learmonth and Sue Day for their help and suggestions, and to my daughter Anne who edited this for me.*

## The Corps Spirit

### Ross (R.R) Harding (1948)

The 1948 Class first met him as Captain Norman Wesley Woodrow Wilson (1939) when he taught us, for a brief period in 1946, as the Instructor in Map Reading and Field Sketching. While instructing he always wore a smart officer pattern uniform rather than the jungle greens and canvas gaiters worn by some who had been recently posted from New Guinea. He sported a dark trim moustache setting off a dapper appearance that earned him the sobriquet of 'Slick Mick'.

Norm entered the RMC as a member of Special Course 2C of 31 staff cadets with ages ranging from 20 to 36—25 graduated. This course was the shortest ever conducted for graduates from the Corps of Staff Cadets being just 5½ months from 1 July to 11 December 1939. He was allotted to the Australian Tank Corps which was redesignated the Australian Armoured Corps on 9 July 1941. His first posting was for regimental duties in Melbourne, then a short staff posting before joining HQ 1st Armoured Division in October 1941. This Division had been formed during the previous July with the intention of it being trained in Australia until its move to the Middle East—a plan that was discarded when the threat of a Japanese landing on Australia became a distinct possibility. During April 1943 Norm joined 2/8 Armoured Regiment, then in Port Moresby. He returned to Australia during February 1944 to attend a course at the Command and Staff School, then also at Duntroon. It was a short journey to the RMC to become the Instructor in Military Law on 5 April 1945. This ceased on 3 February 1947 when he became the Personal Assistant to the Vice Chief of the General Staff before his role as Brigade Major of 1 Armoured Brigade. As a squadron commander in 1 Armoured Regiment from 1 January 1951 he was in his element but, for reasons noted

below, he transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 23 October 1951.

While he was an instructor at the RMC he met a lady on the staff of the USA Embassy. He later remarked that he had to watch out as the cadets kept a good eye on his dating. They were married in October 1948 and, on leaving the Australian Army, they settled in Minneapolis, Minnesota where, after some early difficulties and hard work, he became a very successful businessman, mostly within the insurance industry. Norm quickly fitted in to the American way of life and doing business there, which meant tackling it with the intensity that mostly attends in that country. Norm and his wife, Della, did visit Australia a few times but, essentially, for the next 60 or so years he was absorbed in his commercial pursuits and the raising of a relatively large family of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He still found time to take a very active role in sport, particularly tennis and golf, both of which he played at a high grade into his 70s.

Given the varied call on his talents and time during the 40 years after his staff cadet days, it is of note that there remained within him a latent but strong attachment to his time as a staff cadet. When the Duntroon Society was established in June 1980, Norm lost no time in becoming an early member with the number 109. Following his retirement, the first of his letters landed on the desk of the Newsletter Editor in October 1986. For the next 28 years there came a constant flow of letters and then emails recalling his time at the RMC and what his classmates meant to him as well as numerous queries about what was happening at the RMC and to the Duntroon Society, together with reminiscences about those associated with the College. In a number of his missives the word 'spirit' was used.

At the 1985 Graduation Dinner, Roy (R.W.O.) Pugh (1948), then the Registrar of the Faculty of Military Studies, in proposing the Toast to the Corps of Staff Cadets, spoke strongly and emotively of the Corps Spirit. At that time the RMC was facing radical changes as it took over the role of the Officer Cadet School when it closed at Portsea. The RMC courses would then be normally shorter and the staff cadets would be older and include a significant female component but, in Roy Pugh's firm view, the Corps Spirit would overcome all these and more, of the difficulties then looming over it, and not be diminished by them. Norm also wrote of that 'spirit' and he did so after a course of just 5½ months. And, judging by the tone and numbers of other letters written to the Editor in earlier times, he was not unusual. Indeed, Major General Sir Charles Gwynn, in a letter to Colonel J.E. Lee (1914) in September 1946, writes of his time at the RMC as a lieutenant colonel and its first Director of Military Art, and notes in particular the importance of the spirit displayed by the first classes.

The essence of the Corps Spirit is generated by the personal bonds formed at Duntroon and much strengthened over time. It is further strengthened by respect and gratitude for particular members of the staff and also by the latent and embedded values passed down by those who have gone before. These are tangible elements that fostered and strengthened the Corps Spirit over the earlier years, but does that spirit continue to exist among the more recent members of the Corps? There are those who opine that it does not or, if it does, it is sadly attenuated—with shorter courses possibly being a factor. But there is plenty of evidence that the length of the course is irrelevant. Norm Wilson and his classmate Rex Roseblade are fine examples from the 5½-month course

in 1939. A strong supporter of the Society right from the start in 1980, Rex was later followed on the ACT Branch Committee by his son Michael (1971). And the strong spirit within OCS Portsea classes (especially the six-month courses) from the 1950s to the 1980s is readily apparent.

Corps Spirit is strong today, but it is not confined to the RMC alone. Mingle amongst the Corps of Staff Cadets today and you will feel it—as strong as ever. There is also kinship among those who spent three years at the Australian Defence Force Academy together. Attend a formal dinner within any Corps of the Army and you feel the very strong Corps Spirit there. Binding it all together is an intense loyalty to the Army and its many internal tribes, including the Corps of Staff Cadets.

## The 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial Duntroon Society Reunion—Adelaide 2016

The South Australian branch hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reunion of the Duntroon Society in Adelaide from 6–8 May 2016—the first time the event was held in a capital city. Although some may argue that Adelaide is just a large country town, interstate delegates enjoyed the many contrasts that come with a visit to the world’s fifth most liveable city. Experiencing the new and old, the city and the rural, 50 Society members and their partners spent the weekend engaged in a wide range of activities while catching up on old friendships and stories of Army life.

Starting on Friday, a small group of early-risers explored the wineries of the Barossa. Making a more relaxed start, a second group began a city cultural tour with a behind the scenes tour of the revamped Adelaide Oval. After crossing the River Torrens, the group followed the trail of the newly opened ANZAC Centenary Memorial Walk to view its striking interpretive black granite wall. Moving to the older parts of Adelaide, the group visited the Mortlock Library, recognised in 2014 on a list of the 20 most beautiful libraries in the world, before gazing on old and new in the Art Gallery of South Australia. The day was capped off with members gathering for drinks at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club of South Australia with some class groups, particularly the well-represented Class of 1978, continuing on to experience Adelaide's impressive restaurants.

For those who missed the Barossa trip, or just couldn't get enough of the acclaimed South Australian wines, a second opportunity came on Saturday when David Litchfield (1978) hosted a trip to McLaren Vale. Visits to Hugo Wines and Samuels Gorge, where the views were stunning, were followed by a magnificent lunch at the S.C. Pannell Winery—just a warm up for the formal dinner a few hours later.

The Reunion Dinner back at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club on Saturday night, sponsored by KPMG, was attended by graduates of RMC, OCS, WRAAC OCS, and NZ OCS and their wives, husbands, and partners. Remarkably, eight decades of graduates were represented on the night with Ross Harding from the RMC Class of 1948 through to Ben Hall from the RMC Class of 2010. Senator David Fawcett (1985) was the guest speaker for the evening, recounting his past service and how it prepared him for his life in politics.

After some fine weather over the weekend, a light drizzle set in and a hardy core of members visited the Army Museum at Keswick Barracks, guided by Museum Manager, Major Chris Roe (1987) and his team.

Many thanks to the members from all around Australia for attending and we throw out the challenge to another State Branch to host an even better event for the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reunion in 2018.

For more photos, join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DuntroonSocietySA/>.

Organisers: Doug Strain (1978), Peter Neuhaus (1975) and the SA Branch Committee.



*McLaren Vale Tour. From left to right: Peter Taylor (1978), Marty Alsford (1978), Jan Bade, Ron Bade (1963), Scott Johnston (1978), Doug Strain (1978), Trudi Shine, Alan McDonald (1951), Waltraud McDonald, Sonja Osborne, Alan Osborne (1978), Sue Alsford, Margaret Appleton, David Litchfield (1978), and Chris Appleton (1978).*



*McLaren Vale Tour. From left to right: Trudi Shione, Scott Johnstone (1978), Doug Strain (1978), Alan McDonald (1951) and Waltraud McDonald.*



*Reunion Dinner. Left to right: Chris Appleton (1978), Ross Harding (1948), Ben Hall (2010).*



*Reunion Dinner. Left to right: Chris Appleton (1978), Senator David Fawcett (1985), Doug Strain (1978).*



*Drinks Function. Left to right: Kristin Roe, Chris Roe (1987), Marty Alsford (1978).*



*Reunion Dinner. Left to right: Geoff Fry (1955), Neville Bergin (1956), Dennis Harverson (1956).*



*Mortlock Library Tour. Left to right: Peter Neuhaus (1975), Peter Hamilton (1963), Doug Strain (1978), Marty Alsford (1978), Alan McDonald (1951), David Litchfield (1978).*



*Lunch at SC Pannell Winery.*



*Drinks function. Left to right: Neville Bergin (1956), Ron Bade (1963), Peter Hamilton (1963).*



*Reunion Dinner. Ross Harding (1948) and Chris Burns (OCS 79).*



*Drinks Function. Left to right: Margaret Appleton, Alan Osborne (1978), Sonja Osborne, Doug Strain (1978).*



*Drinks Function. Left to right: Ian Smith, Peter Neuhaus (1975), Ross Harding (1948).*



*Reunion Dinner. Left to right: Melissa Cave, Tim Hanna (1980), Emily Young (1999), James Kmet (1993), Tyson Yew (1999), Leoni Muller (1997).*

## Another Piece of Portsea at Duntroon

**John Bullen (1958)**

The RMC of today takes its traditions from four separate Australian Army officer training institutions—RMC Duntroon, the Officer Cadet School at Portsea, the WRAAC Officer Cadet School at Mildura and later at Georges Heights, and the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville.

Current traditions such as the Harrison Memorial Lecture to First Class and tossing of caps into the air after Graduation Parade have come from Portsea. Memorabilia from all four institutions are scattered all around the Duntroon of today, prominent examples being the Portsea Memorial facing the Military Instruction Block across Harrison Road, the Kathleen Best Memorial Gates from Georges Heights which are now the entrance gates to the Commandant's residence, and the big bronze Scheyville crest above Casey's Bar in the Corps of Staff Cadets Mess. And there are ever so many more.

Another piece of Portsea history came to Duntroon recently in an unusual way. In 2014 an off-duty Duntroon cadet in a Brisbane market came across a collection of grubby and heavily tarnished pieces of table silver which appeared to have some sort of crest on them. Examining them more closely, Colour Sergeant Brendan Xenos (June 2014) thought

he could recognise the OCS Portsea badge under the grime. So he struck a deal with the stall holder and bought the lot.

Bringing it all back to Duntroon, he handed the whole box over to the Chairman of the RMC Heritage Committee, saying "You'll know what to do with this, sir." Investigation proved that this was a set of table silver from the Cadets' Mess at Portsea. Around 1960, these sets had been provided on every table in the Mess, each set consisting of teapot, milk jug, sugar bowl, bread box (with two lids), butter dish (with space underneath for ice) and jam dish, all in silver with brass OCS badges.

When the OCS closed in 1985, the silver went everywhere. Some was souvenired, some was sold, and some just disappeared. We have no way of knowing what path this particular set followed on its circuitous route to Duntroon via a Brisbane market.

The Chairman of the RMC Heritage Committee took the silver home and examined it more closely. Beneath all the tarnish and dirt it looked quite sound. Relishing the opportunity to apply his hard earned military skills of an earlier era, he hauled out his tins of Silvo and Brasso and got started in earnest on a test item. It came up beautifully, so he tackled another piece—with the same result. It was now apparent that this silver, and especially its OCS badges, had been highly polished by hand in the past.

He then got together with another Committee member, Major 'CJ' Bellis (1995), who was also the Supervising Officer of the Corps of Staff Cadets' Mess. Together they looked at ways of using or displaying this silver in the CSC Mess. But the Duntroon cadets of today dine very differently from those of yesteryear. Really, there was no way or place in the CSC Mess to use or display this set of silver.

But CJ Bellis then had another idea. She felt that this silver would be ideal for the Blue Room in Duntroon House where it would enhance the period atmosphere of this charming room. The plan was now formed. The silver would be polished properly and would be displayed on the nineteenth century sideboard in the Blue Room. CJ Bellis suggested she obtain and provide a pair of suitable lace doilies on which to place the silver. This was duly done and the silver was put in place.

It is twentieth century silver in a nineteenth century room, but it looks the part. More importantly, it is a lovely link with the OCS Portsea which is such an important part of the history of the RMC of today.

Brendan Xenos refused to accept reimbursement for his purchase. He said he bought this neglected set because he could not bear to leave it there to be bought, piece by piece, by whoever might want some cheap silver and not be interested in its history. His reward was the pleasure of knowing that he rescued it from an uncertain fate.

The RMC course of today is very intensive, with cadets in the field for much of their time at Duntroon. Amidst all this, some effort is made to teach cadets a bit about their heritage, but there are limits to what can be achieved and much is necessarily left to learning by absorption in the now historic CSC Mess.

But Brendan Xenos (now Lieutenant, Royal Australian Engineers) showed what can be done. Under all the grime, not only did he recognise the badges of an institution which had ceased to exist before he was born, but he then went further still and bought the lot for handover to the College where it is now cherished.

Well done, that man!



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*Lieutenant Colonel (retd) John Bullen (1958) has been the Chairman of the RMC Heritage Committee since 2008. At Duntroon formal mess functions he is usually the only person present who wears hand polished brass badges.*  
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## THE LAKE GEORGE TRAGEDY – 60 YEARS ON

### John Bullen (1958)

8 July 2016 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the tragic day at Lake George which saw the sudden loss of 10% of the RMC 1955–58 class.

Third Class Staff Cadets Ian Colquhoun, Brian Jorgensen, David Noble, Ron Pritchard and Jim Reilly all died from hypothermia or drowning in a winter storm on Lake George. All were members of the Corps of Staff Cadets Sailing Club which had its little boatshed on the lake shore just below Geary's Gap. In those days Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin did not yet exist.

Initially Ian Colquhoun and Brian Jorgensen were on Lake George in a VJ sailing dinghy when a sudden squall pushed them further from the shore and tipped them over. David Noble, Ron Pritchard and Jim Reilly hastily assembled a Folboat (a collapsible kayak used by commandos in World War Two) and set out to rescue them. They too finished up in the water. There were now only three cadets left on shore – Fourth Class Staff Cadets Frank Alizzi, David Ford and Kevin Gosling, all members of the 1956–59 class. David Ford and Kevin Gosling took to the water on an improvised rescue craft—a VJ dinghy hull with improvised paddles—and

attempted to rescue the five in the freezing water.

But the wind was too strong. All seven were now in the water and in a desperate situation late in the afternoon.

Frank Alizzi initially paddled out in yet another improvised VJ but, with the RMC truck now coming in sight to take them back to Duntroon, he decided that it was more sensible to raise the alarm and summon help. This was less simple than it would be now. Canberra then had a population of barely 30,000 and traffic on the Federal Highway was very light, especially on a Sunday. And phone communication was a far cry from what it is today.

But with most RMC staff in camp on a winter Sunday, help was forthcoming. The amphibious DUKWs (“ducks”) were (with some difficulty) rushed to Lake George where, miraculously in the weather conditions that night, the rescue crew encountered the upturned VJ hull and its survivors. But by now only two, David Ford and Kevin Gosling, were still alive. The other five had been lost. The entire Corps of Staff Cadets searched the bleak and freezing shores of Lake George all night long for any possible survivors, but there were none.

David Ford and Kevin Gosling were subsequently each awarded the George Medal for their brave rescue attempt which nearly cost them their own lives.

A funeral service was conducted on the RMC parade ground in July 1956 for Brian Jorgensen whose remains were taken home to Kalamunda, WA. His was the only body found immediately after the tragedy. In September a similar service was held for the other four when their bodies were all recovered at much the same time. Ian Colquhoun, David Noble, Ron Pritchard and Jim Reilly are all interred in the military section of Woden Cemetery in Canberra. Their graves are maintained by the RMC under the College's graves maintenance policy.

While this tragedy had a profound effect on the 1955–58 class as a whole, its effect was utterly devastating for the five bereaved families. Over the years, the 1955–58 class has kept in touch with the Colquhoun, Jorgensen, Noble, Pritchard and Reilly families, treating them as part of the class. At every class reunion, at least one of the families has been represented. And each reunion always includes a brief remembrance gathering at Woden Cemetery.

In December 2015 the 1955–58 class celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of their entry to Duntroon in 1955. At Woden Cemetery, Michael Jeffery (1958) gave a brief address to his assembled classmates and families to remind everyone of the sad events and the heroism at Lake George in 1956, and a floral tribute was laid on each of the four graves. A fifth floral tribute was laid at the end of the row in memory of Brian Jorgensen. Lysbeth Gould laid the floral tribute on the grave of her brother David Noble and Margaret Kassulke did likewise for her brother Jim Reilly.

The story of this Lake George tragedy is very effectively told in two places. One is in Darren Moore's *Duntroon 1911–2011*—a comprehensive published history of the RMC. Darren Moore devotes 11 pages to his account of the tragedy, based on detailed study of official records. The other is the framed epic poem by Chaplain Jim Cosgrove, illustrated by photos and prominently displayed in the ante-room of the Corps of Staff Cadets Mess.

But the full role of Staff Cadet Frank Alizzi has never been fully told. When a member of the 1955–58 class informed Frank Alizzi of Michael Jeffery's address in December 2015, this led to fresh discussion of the 1956 tragedy. Frank Alizzi was invited to add to what was already known and wrote the following notes.



“You referred me to the book *Duntroon: A History of the Royal Military College 1911–2001* by Darren Moore. This book was new to me but I was able to get a copy via an inter-library loan as you suggested. You indicated an interest in any matters in my memory of the day that were at odds with those in the book.

“His basic outline is much in accordance with my memory but there are a couple of errors. As well there are other matters that could do with a different explanation.

“I am reported as not coming back to the College with the driver and the driver making attempts to contact the College en route. This is not the case. (Note that the author refers to drivers coming to collect us. There was only one 2½ ton GMC truck and only one driver). I was with the driver telling him what to do and eventually I had the driver drop me at the Officers’ Mess where I reported to the Duty Officer who was Major Reg Williams. I briefed him of the happenings. It is ironic that he was the officer responsible for the extracurricular activity of sailing. After this, as directed by him, I reported to Frank Cross, the BSM. It is worthwhile knowing that, at the time Reg Williams was briefed, it was quite early. There was full daylight despite it being winter. I have no idea why he did not ensure I was made available to the crew of the rescue DUKW.

“The author does not refer to the delay in getting the DUKW on the road. Probably he did not know WO2 ‘Tex’ Bahr was in charge. In starting the DUKW there was an engine problem. My understanding is that there was an electrical fault and small fire. Quick repairs were undertaken.

“It is written that the water was cold enough to deter other members taking part in sailing. This is not the reason. Ian Colquhoun and Brian Jorgensen were counselled by their three classmates not to take to the water – not because of the water temperature but because the rules were ‘no sailing at that time of the year, and that we were there only for equipment maintenance.’

“The first VJ sailed out of sight and about time for lunch it swept past the shore at great speed about 10-20 metres out. As they passed us the sailors ignored the calls of their classmates to come in for lunch.

“When they did not sail back the three Third Class chaps on shore got out a folboat. (You no doubt know of their use in the disastrous Operation Rimau by the Commando Z Special Unit in WW2.) I could not understand why all three boarded this kayak. They filled it completely leaving no room for anyone else to be in it and no doubt it was overloaded with the weight of three persons. I guess no one wanted to be left out of a rescue. They had two proper wooden oars.

“When they disappeared from view the three of us remained on shore. When no one came back we eventually got a VJ out, filled its holes with 4x2 flannelette, and picked up some old fence palings to use as oars. So Kevin and David arrived first at the shore. I had been carrying lifebelts and their trailing ends had been caught on the barbed wire that was everywhere and so I arrived last. So Kevin and David set out. Note none of us knew how to rig a VJ, let alone sail it, even if there were masts and sails available.

“Eventually I could see Kevin and David on the lake, not moving, and I could not understand why. So I launched another VJ using a paling as an oar and flannelette to fill the holes at the rear of the boat. When I was about 400–500 metres from shore I could see the outlines of Kevin and David about the same distance out from me. I still could not understand why they were not moving. It was not until our 1999 class reunion that I found out why. David informed me

that if I had gone just a little bit further out I would have been caught in the horrific offshore wind from which at this stage I was shielded. It was impossible for anyone rowing to make headway against the wind.

“At this stage I saw the truck return to pick us up. I then had to make a decision. Did I continue to row out and trust that the driver would have the sense to realise our problem and seek help or should I go back and make sure help could come? I mulled over this decision for decades and it was not until our 1999 Class reunion that I was informed that David Ford, who was at the reunion, let it be known that he firmly believed that all of us would have been lost if I kept on rowing. He thanked me for saving his life.

“Mention was made that in the sailing season a rescue vehicle was on site at the lake. My memory is this was not the case until its recommendation by the Military Board of Inquiry.

“Some mention could have been made of the fact that when the lake was dry it was cut up for Soldier Settlements post WW1. So there were barbed wire fences underwater and these would have caught the bodies of the drowned cadets so contributing to the delay in their being found.

“All in all this is a sad story. The bravado and impetuosity of youth contributed as much to the tragic outcome as the weather conditions and actions of all those involved.”



*Former Governor-General Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffery addresses his classmates and their families at Woden Cemetery.*



*Lysbeth Gould lays a floral tribute on the grave of her brother David Noble.*



*Margaret Kassulke lays a floral tribute on the grave of her brother Jim Reilly.*



*Floral tributes laid on the four graves. The fifth floral tribute in the foreground is in memory of Brian Jorgensen.*

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*Lieutenant Colonel (ret'd) John Bullen (1958) was among those cadets in the fruitless search of the shores of Lake George throughout the night of 8/9 July 1956. As Class Orderly of the RMC class which lost 10% of its strength that night, he is in periodic touch with the bereaved families.*  
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## **WRAAC 65<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the Formation of the Corps**

**Merrie Hepworth (WRAAC OCS 16/67)**

Graduates from the first to the last WRAAC OCS classes were among former members of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) who converged on Canberra and Duntroon over the weekend 12–15 February 2016, celebrating the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Corps. Lieutenant Colonel Kathleen Best (a former AANS matron) commenced duty on 12 February 1951 as the first Director of the newly raised WAAC, the title 'Royal' being granted by King George VI four months later in June.

The anniversary began with the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial and, as no WRAAC member lost her life on war service, Sister Mary Eleanor Glade, killed at Banka Island, 16 February 1942, was remembered. WO1 Michelle Griffith, a currently serving former WRAAC read her story. An RMC Band jazz ensemble then provided the

music for a Meet and Greet evening which followed in Anzac Hall.

The Corps' 'Sapphire Dinner' took place the following evening at the QT Hotel, attended by nearly 400 former members, husbands and partners. Official Guests were Major General Liz Cosson, AM, CSC (Retd) (WRAAC OCS 28/79), now Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Brigadier Jane Spalding AM (WRAAC OCS 32/83), currently Director General Explosive Ordnance. Both spoke on the history of the Corps as well as the role and contribution of women in the Army today. A graduate of the first WRAAC OCS in 1952, Lieutenant Colonel Di Lobb, MBE (Retd), was a special guest and the honour of cutting the birthday cake went to Marise Laybutt, a member of first recruit course and Secretary to the Commandant RMC in the mid-1950s.

On Sunday, RMC became the focus of activities thanks to the Commandant, Brigadier Mark Brewer, CSC and Bar and his predecessor, a graduate of the last WRAAC OCS in 1984, Brigadier Diane Gallasch, AM, CSC. The day began with a special commemorative Church Service conducted in the RMC Chapel by Chaplain Catie Inches-Ogden, Principal Chaplain, Anglican, and was followed by lunch at the RMC Golf Club. The Kathleen Best Memorial Gates from WRAAC School, now standing at the entrance to the Commandant's (Cavanagh) House, then became a site of 'pilgrimage', with much reminiscing and stories told. Tours of Duntroon House conducted by a generous band of Duntroon Society Guides—Dinah Morrison, Robert Morrison, George Salmon, Ian Smith and Steve Hart—organised by Lieutenant Colonel John Bullen (Retd) added to the anniversary experience. Capping the day off, the RMC Museum, with the assistance of Carol Marane (WRAAC OCS 15/66), provided a wonderful collection of WRAAC OCS memorabilia and was open thanks to reserve members staffing it under the direction of Major David Bucholtz (Retd) (OCS Jun 1978), acting Manager of the Army Museum of Officer Training.

A farewell lunch and talk at the National Portrait Gallery on Monday set our ladies and partners on their way to homes around Australia and New Zealand. Special thanks go to the WRAAC Association (ACT) organising committee, ably led by Merrie Hepworth (WRAAC OCS 16/67) as Chair, Ginny Graylin (WRAAC OCS 17/68) Secretary, and Denice Woods OAM (NSW Association) Treasurer.



*Major General Liz Cosson AM CSC (Retd) and Brigadier Jane Spalding AM.*



*Celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, members of the class 15/66: Carol Marane (Nicholson); Jacqueline Lanigan (Cates) and Judy Hinton (McCallum-Mohr).*



*Merrie Hepworth (16/67) with Margaret Flett (former WRAAC) and fellow 16/67 class members Irene Seivi, Dale Reynolds and Margot Harness.*



*Anniversary cake.*

## Kathleen Best Memorial Gates



On 6 November 1959 a memorial gateway to the first director of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) was erected at the entrance to WRAAC School, Georges Heights, Sydney and was opened by His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Lieutenant General Sir Eric Woodward, KCMG, CB, CBE, DSO (1920).

The design chosen for the gates was submitted by an Australian Regular Army Sergeant, Juanita Feltham BEM. The design was symbolic of the life and work of Colonel Kathleen Best. After the closure of WRAAC School on 5 December 1984 the gates were eventually relocated to the Royal Military College, Duntroon and rededicated on 6 November 1994, exactly 35 years after their official opening.

The overall background is composed of a pattern of the Red Cross, which is symbolic of the life and work of Colonel Best's early associations with the medical professions. The main gates bear the lozenge, which is the heraldic women's emblem. The left hand gate symbolises her associations with the medical service during World War II and the right hand gate is symbolic of her service with the WRAAC. The centre of the main gates form a cruciform synonymous with the Red Cross which symbolised her Christianity and humanity.

The spikes above the gates are in the form of gum leaves and represent the 47 years of her life. The gates were wrought at the Army Apprentices School, Balcombe, Victoria and hung from piers made of natural sandstone.

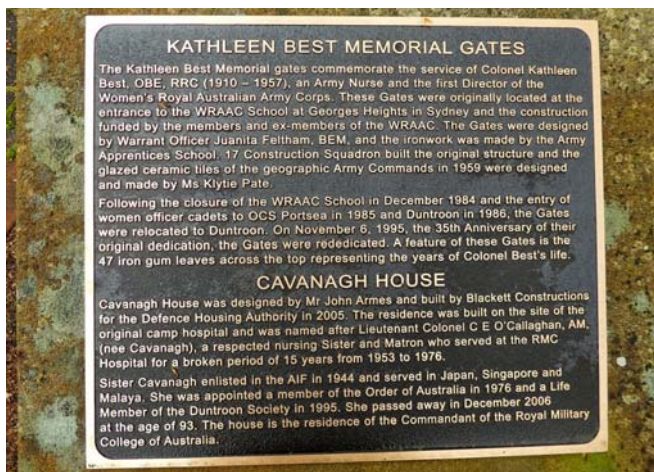
A commemorative panel bearing ceramic tile Command Formation signs is on the right of the gates while to the left of the main gates is a foot gate bearing the Corps badge in bronze. Moneys raised for the gates were donated from serving and ex-service women.



*Kathleen Best gates in their original position.*



*Kathleen Best gates in their current position in front of Cavanagh House, the Commandant's House. (Photo courtesy of Chris Appleton)*



*Plaque describing the Kathleen Best gates in their current position. (Photo courtesy of Chris Appleton)*

## Long Tan Class of 1978—Bangkok Reunion

Since graduation, the RMC Long Tan members of the Class of 1978 have held a number of reunions around Australia, and whilst almost everyone eligible had attended at least one of these, there had been one conspicuous but understandable absence, this being the former Staff Cadet Komklit “Art” Soonthorndham of The Royal Thai Army. In light of this, and to help in facilitating the resolving of this anomaly, it was decided to hold the next company class reunion in Thailand.

This culminated in March 2016 with five members, most with wives, travelling to Bangkok to celebrate the special bond which had been forged at RMC for most starting in 1975.

Everyone gathered from around Australia at the Novotel on Siam in Bangkok on the evening of Friday, 11 March 2016 for a welcome drink with Komklit. Whilst all had matured, Komklit remained much as we all remembered him—slight of build and stature, though still a bundle of energy, with a shock of dark hair—though there was one big change, he was General Komklit Soonthorndham.

It was truly special to share in a weekend hosted by Komklit touring the special tourist and community sites of Bangkok and its environs. Many old times were relived and all were humbled by the warmth of Komklit’s welcome and his retelling of his fond memories of his class group and wider class mates.

The generous hospitality of Komklit, his wife Janet, and their two children, Eve and Ice, extended even to the hosting of a special celebration dinner on the Saturday evening at their home in suburban Bangkok. At this occasion, his company class mates elected to present Komklit a commemorative RMC Cadet statuette and Janet an Australian opal brooch. Janet had arranged for a special Thai menu, which concluded in the serving of a specially baked cake iced to recognise the special gathering.

The next day the hospitality continued with Sunday markets and concluded with the official reunion dinner, held in the Vertigo Restaurant atop the Hotel Banyan Tree. This was a breathtaking al fresco dining experience set atop the roof terrace overlooking the glittering cityscape of Bangkok—set 61 storeys above the city.



*The party gathered in the forecourt of the Soonthordham’s home. Front left to right: Lieutenant Ice Soonthordham, Ms Eve Soonthordham, Mrs Janet Soonthordham, General Komklit “Art” Soonthordham, Mrs Susie Williams, Ms Trudi Shine. Rear left to right: Mrs Julie Furtado, Roy Furtado, Bill Clarke, Mark Fairleigh, Craig Williams, Doug Strain.*

Sadly, the reunion had to draw to a close on the Monday evening after another special dining experience and everyone started their journeys home. Some had the opportunity to remain in Bangkok and further enjoy Komklit’s hospitality—given so freely and much appreciated.

This was a truly wonderful experience recalling those times so long ago and finding that our special classmate still remembered us with fondness. It allowed us to recognise just how special he was, and is, and how special the cultural experience was for us all.



*The Celebration Cake. L to R: Craig Williams, Mark Fairleigh, Roy Furtado, General Komklit “Art” Soonthorndham, Doug Strain, Bill Clarke.*



*Mark Fairleigh presenting Komklit with his RMC Cadet Statuette on behalf of his Long Tan classmates.*



*Komplit, his wife Janet, and their children Eve and Ice posing with the RMC Cadet Statuette.*

## Army Museum of Officer Training—Manager’s Update

**Major David Bucholtz (OCS Jun 1978)**

A quick recap .... in August 2014 responsibility for the RMC Museum and Archive was transferred from RMC-A to the Army History Unit. In the months that followed a unit establishment was created and staffed (five reserve positions), a strategy developed and issued, and planning began for the new narrative-based Army Museum of Officer Training (AMOT).

### **Mission:**

*To record, maintain, preserve and promote the history and moveable cultural heritage of the Australian Army’s officer training institutions, in order to educate, train, and inspire Officer and Staff Cadets. It is also to enhance broader Defence and Community awareness of the development and history of these institutions.*

### **Vision:**

*AMOT will be nationally recognised as a vital source of learning and inspiration for current and future Army leaders and to showcase the achievements of the Australian Army’s officer training institutions and their graduates.*

### **Goals:**

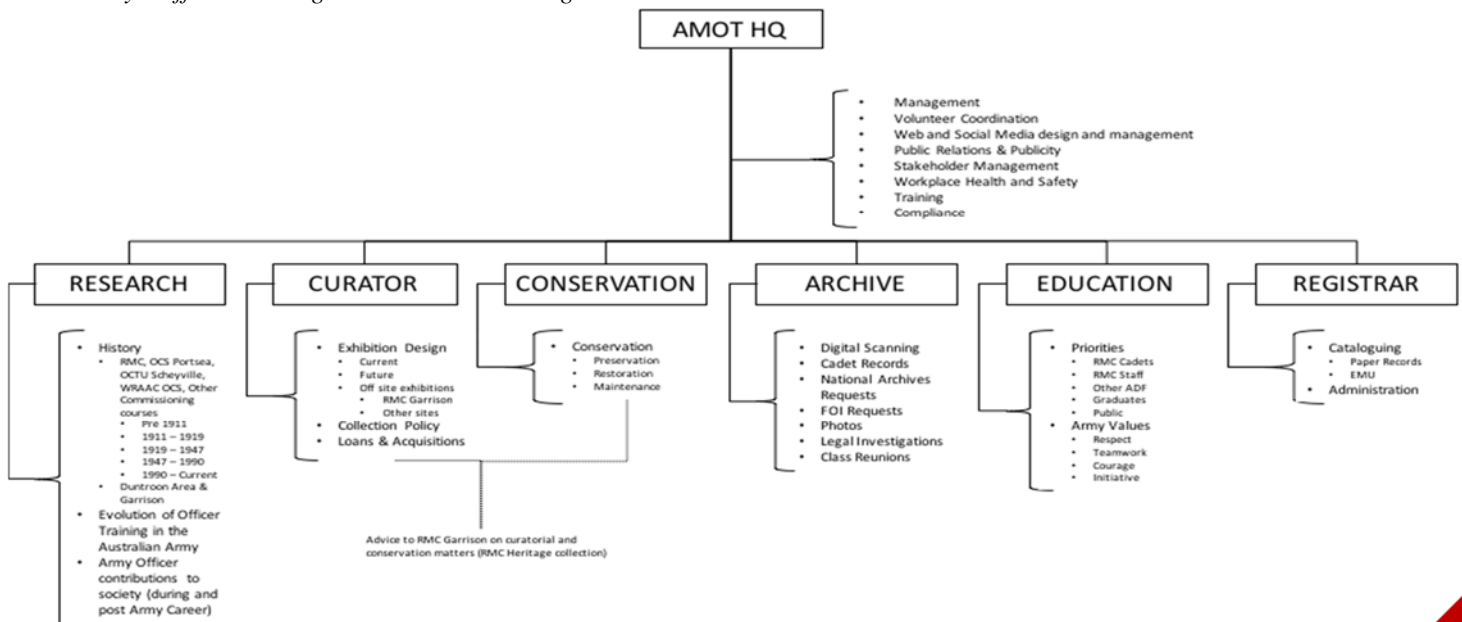
- support RMC’s ability to learn from, and be inspired by, the history and heritage of current and past Australian Army officer training institutions;
- provide RMC with tangible evidence of its history and heritage;
- promote esprit de corps within RMC; and
- promote a positive image of RMC to the public.

In January of this year the museum was closed and the main exhibition space (which I’m told was the chemistry lab) cleared and the existing collection placed into storage. When this was done the generally poor condition of the space became evident and that a professional refurbishment would be required to bring it to the standard befitting its subject. A works request for a complete refurbishment has since been raised and we will know in the coming months whether it can be funded sooner rather than later.

Despite being closed the museum’s small team, including volunteers, has been active on a number of fronts. We continue to support reunion groups by making available individuals cadet records, class scrapbooks, reports and the like. A conservation program for the existing collection of uniforms has been started and so too work on a display for the Cadets’ Mess showcasing the story of the first RMC graduating class. Steady progress also has been made in the Archive with more than 5,000 individual cadet records registered and a project initiated to digitise the records of RMC and OCS cadet records, and if they can be located, those of OTU and WRAAC OCS.

So what’s next .... POSITIONS VACANT!

For AMOT to achieve its Mission and Goals and to be able to realise its rather lofty Vision, it needs people with the time, interest, experience and skills, with a shared commitment to preserve and showcase the history and heritage of the Australian Army Officer—perhaps someone like yourself, or someone you know. With this in mind, if any of the following activities sparks your interest please drop me a note or call to discuss how you may be able to contribute to:



- research—anywhere from the brief (such as display label) to the not so brief (such as paper or book on the history of officer training);
- archive and/or records—including scanning and cataloguing of records and imagery (may just be your own classes scrapbook/or photos);
- administration—such as policy development, and process documentation;
- curatorship—collection and development for/of displays;
- conservation and preservation of the collection—uniforms, medals, paper, artefacts;
- communications—including social media and web presence;
- oral history—collection, preservation and/or exploitation; and
- fund raising.

Please note that, although AMOT is at Duntroon, much of the work can be done elsewhere, you can work individually or in groups, and lead and/or participate in any of the disciplines shown above.

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## The Return Home of Lieutenant David Brian

**John Bullen (1958)**

Thursday 2 June 2016 saw a massive repatriation effort, possibly Australia's biggest ever, bringing the remains of 33 Australians home from Malaysia to Australia. 25 of them were soldiers who had lost their lives in Malaysia and Vietnam. All but one of them had been buried in Terendak Cemetery for half a century.

Among them was a former RMC Duntroon cadet who had later graduated with distinction from OCS Portsea. He was the first OCS graduate to be killed on operational service.

This was Lieutenant David Brian (OCS Dec 1958). David Brian entered Duntroon in 1956. Initially he did well, but in his second year he ran into serious trouble with his academic studies, thanks to being a very skilful but overly brave rugby player who sustained head injuries on many occasions. All too often he succumbed to the strong peer pressure to return too soon to the rugby field before he had fully recovered, thereby receiving further heavy knocks to his brain. Not able to maintain the required academic standard, he was discharged from Duntroon at the end of 1957. Recommended for Portsea because of his undoubted leadership and military talent, he attended Portsea in 1958. He was highly successful at Portsea where he was promoted to Colour Sergeant, holding the second highest appointment in his class in the Company of Officer Cadets.

Four years later in 1962 David Brian married Sara (Sally) Chapman and they settled in Brisbane. By now he had been promoted to lieutenant and was a platoon commander in the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. 3 RAR moved to Malaysia in 1963 as the Australian combat battalion in the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade, based at Terendak Garrison in Malacca. Wives and children were accommodated in married quarters at Terendak Garrison and the surrounding areas. Sara Brian was now pregnant.

Special operations along the border between Malaysia and Thailand were still being conducted and 3RAR was sent on operations in February 1964. On 5 March 1964 Lieutenant David Brian was killed while leading his patrol. He was then aged 25.

The shock of her husband's death sent Sara Brian into premature labour. She did not consent to the initial proposal for David to be buried on the Thailand border, but instead wanted to take him home to Australia and would pay. She was told that this was not an option so, deeply upset, she settled for the compromise of David being buried in the newly established Terendak Garrison Cemetery. His was the first grave in Terendak Garrison Cemetery.

Due to her advanced pregnancy, Sara was unable to attend her husband's funeral. Nor could she view him, due to the severity of his wounds. She did visit the cemetery shortly afterwards and was distressed at the sight of the solitary grave there. As a 21-year old widow, she relinquished her married quarter and was returned to Australia.

On return to Australia, Sara started to rebuild her life with her new son David who was born in May. The trauma of her husband's shock death and her inability to attend the funeral or to see him before she left Malaysia haunted her. She was advised she should return to Malaysia, which she did. But a repeat visit to Terendak did little to take away the hurt that remained throughout her life.

Late in her return visit to Malaysia Sara met Lieutenant David Ferguson (1962) whom she married in 1966 shortly before he served in Vietnam for a year. David returned safely in 1967 and together they raised their family of two sons and a daughter. David Ferguson (senior) retired from the Army as a Major General in 1997. From Sara's first marriage their eldest son David Charles Brian Ferguson graduated from Duntroon in 1988.

In April 2014 Sara and her husband returned to Terendak. Amongst other things they were shocked at the difficulty of access to the cemetery which is now tucked away inside the largest military base in Malaysia. Again facing David Brian's grave in this depressing inaccessible place Sara has since said that the hardest thing she had ever done in her life was to walk away. The hurt was not just for her but for all the families who had loved ones interred in a Garrison Cemetery that is not a War Graves Cemetery. Sara and her husband made the decision to make representation to the Australian Government to repatriate all of the Australians home from Terendak. The first emails were sent that day.

On return to Australia Sara and David Ferguson's first formal representation was sent to the Australian Government in May 2014 under the catch-phrase of 'Bring Them Home'.

Months of work followed in concert with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and with Lieutenant Colonel Graham Walker (1962), Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia. In November 2014 the final submission was sent to the Government, to all political parties and to fifty prominent Australians. It identified the issues and provided a plan. With some minor exceptions the support was overwhelming. In December 2014 positive meetings by Major General Ferguson with the then Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson, and the two principal Veterans organisations followed.

On 25 May 2015, with the strong support of the then Prime Minister the Honorable Tony Abbott, the Australian Government announced that, with the agreement of the families concerned, the servicemen and their dependants in Terendak Cemetery would finally be brought home.

Not all families agreed to the return of their family member from Terendak, so three still remain there. Among them is Major Peter Badcoe, VC (OCS Dec 1952).

It had taken a full year to gain approval for repatriation, but the end was not yet in sight. What still lay ahead was by no means a simple matter of just going to each grave, packing up what was there and bringing it home. This was a specialist task requiring the high skills of a little known military unit – Unrecovered War Casualties - Army (UWC-A).

UWC-A is the Australian Army's investigative unit responsible for matters associated with the identification and recovery of Australian servicemen from all wars who remain unaccounted for. Recent work by UWC-A has identified remains in France (WW1), PNG (WW2), Vietnam, Timor Leste and very recently Malaya and Singapore. Whenever human remains are discovered and it is suspected that they may belong to an Australian serviceman, UWC-A is called in to investigate.

The remains are first forensically examined to determine age, sex, height, ancestry, and any pre-existing injuries. Any military or personal artefacts recovered with the remains are also examined.

This information is then cross-referenced with documentary records of servicemen reported missing in that location. A short list is drawn up, families of are sought out, potential DNA donors are identified and DNA samples obtained. Family DNA is then compared with the DNA profile of the recovered remains.

Additional identification aids include artefacts, anthropological data, dental records, and the location of the remains.

The UWC-A field team consists of specialists in different professional fields. One member of the team which worked recently at Terendak is Lieutenant Donna MacGregor RAAMC (RMC SSO 2016) who is a forensic anthropologist. She is also a highly experienced Sergeant in the Scientific Section of the Forensic Services Branch, Queensland Police Service. With a B.Sc. degree in anatomy, an Honours degree in forensic anatomy and the best part of 20 years practical experience, Donna is one of the most highly trained officers in human and forensic osteology (study of bones) in Australia. She is also a Lecturer in Anatomy at the Queensland University of Technology. In 2014 she received the Bev Lawson Memorial Award—the Australasian Council of Women and Policing's most prestigious award for Excellence in Policing across Australia and New Zealand.

Donna MacGregor is the only Army member of the tri-service UWC-A team which worked in Terendak. She is the bone specialist while her colleagues specialise in forensic dentistry and other skills in identifying human remains.

Their painstaking efforts ensured that all remains exhumed from 32 graves at Terendak and from one grave in Kranji (Singapore) were correctly identified, piece by piece, and allotted to their correct coffin for return to Australia.

A year after the decision to bring them home, all 33 coffins were ready. A ceremony was conducted in Malaysia when the coffins were loaded into the two RAAF C17 transport aircraft for the flight to Australia. The coffins contained the remains of 22 veterans of the Vietnam War, three other soldiers who died in Malaysia, three wives and five children.

Awaiting their arrival at Richmond RAAF Base on Thursday 2 June 2016 were two special groups of people. The primary group consisted of the families of those who had died overseas and who were finally being brought back. The

second group consisted of fellow veterans and friends who had been granted permission to attend this occasion which meant so much to the families.

The ceremony at Richmond was carefully stage managed to ensure that the families had complete privacy during what was an emotional event for many of them. The families were inside a hangar and totally out of view, while the veteran contingent of about a hundred was out in the open beside the airfield. The vast majority of the war veterans had been infantry soldiers in the Vietnam War.

The two aircraft landed at about 10.20 am and the ceremony began with the slow ceremonial procession of the coffins from each aircraft in turn to the memorial area where the families waited. Inside the hangar and after a personal reflection and grieving period, the memorial service was then conducted.

Master of Ceremonies was Major General Paul Stevens (1967), former Director of Australian War Graves and a Vietnam veteran himself. The only others to speak were (in sequence) the Army's Director-General Chaplaincy, the President of the War Widows' Guild of Australia, two Principal Chaplains, the Governor-General, and the RSM of the Army.

The Governor-General and Commander in Chief of the Australian Defence Force, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove (1968), as Chief Mourner delivered the Commemorative Address, followed by the RSM of the Army, WO1 Don Spinks, who recited the Ode to the Fallen.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the coffins were moved from the memorial service area to the 33 hearses waiting outside. The route was lined on one side by the war veterans with the Governor-General among them. Also among them was the smart looking UWC-A team in uniform. The other side of the route was lined by those families who felt comfortable to meet with others outside.

The hearses departed in stately procession between the two lines of people. Those who had lined the route on both sides then mingled. Outside the RAAF Base, the hearses drove in convoy from Richmond to Parramatta where they travelled in procession through the centre of the city at lunch time. They then dispersed, with the coffins now being moved to their final destinations throughout Australia, as chosen by their families.

Lieutenant David Brian's remains went to Brisbane where he had joined 3 RAR before deployment to Malaysia. Reinterment was on 10 June 2016, 52 years after his shock death in Malaya. Sara Ferguson and her husband met with a close group of members of David's platoon a few days before the ceremony. The ceremony was attended by a strong military contingent including Lieutenant General John Grey (1960), Major General Murray Blake (1960), Major General David McLachlan (OCS Dec 1959), Lieutenant Colonel Ron Ducie (OCS Dec 1958) who read the Eulogy, Lieutenant Colonel Giles Cornelia (1999) (Commanding Officer of 3 RAR) and his RSM together with a number of members of David's platoon and company at the time. It was conducted with dignity and pride. Following the very impressive ceremony Sara said simply "I could not have asked for more".

The return and reinterment of all the Australians has meant a great deal to the Ferguson family and, within that, the return of David has been very special to Sara and her first born son.

Sincere thanks from the families go to former Prime Minister Abbott and to Senator Ronaldson for their undying

support once the facts were known. The understanding and support from Malaysia and Singapore will also be etched in the memory of all.

For the implementation of this initiative, sincere thanks also go the Department of Veterans Affairs especially Mr Simon Lewis, Major General Mark Kelly (1978), Major General David Chalmers (1980), Brigadier Chris Appleton (1978), Lieutenant Colonel Ken Corke (1980) and the dedicated and very impressive team of Public Servants who worked tirelessly, becoming emotionally involved and achieving an outstanding result.

The Australian Defence Force contribution including the UWC-A role cannot be overstated. The dedication and emotion of those involved became clear when the wheels of the C17s touched down at Richmond.

The joyful feelings of all the families are best reflected in the words of one widow who said “I am now at peace. Thank you all.”



*LT Donna MacGregor on the job at Terendak, accompanied by a RAAF chaplain.*



*David and Sara Brian at Terendak, 1963.*



*The UWC-A team at Richmond, June 2016, with the Chief of Army, LTGEN Angus Campbell (1985) in the centre and the Director of the Office of Australian War Graves, LTCOL Ken Corke (1980), at left. LT Donna MacGregor at right.*



*David Brian's funeral at Terendak, March 1964. Pallbearers are (L to R) LT Mick Bindley (1961), LT David McLachlan (OCS Dec 1959), LT Brian Goodwin (OCS Dec 1959), 2LT Colin Brewer (OCS Dec 1961), LT Andy Mattay (OCS Dec 1960). CO 3 RAR LTCOL Bruce McDonald (1944) is visible at rear, walking behind the gun carriage.*



*War veterans gathering at Richmond, June 2016.*



*The start of the procession at Richmond, slow marching from the aircraft to the memorial area.*



## From the Commandant

**Brigadier M.A. (Mark) Brewer (1987)**



*The Ferguson family outside after the Memorial Service. (L to R) Sally-Jane and David Ferguson (junior), Sara and David Ferguson (senior).*



*Sara Ferguson and her son David at Richmond, June 2016.*



*The 33-hearse cortège departs for Parramatta. Families are lining the route along the left, war veterans on the right.*



*LT David Brian's final resting place in the ANZAC Section in Pinnaroo Lawn Cemetery on the northern outskirts of Brisbane, 10 June 2016.*

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*John Bullen (1958) was a close friend of David Brian's in the same section in Alamein Company at Duntroon in 1957. Also a friend of the Ferguson family, John attended the repatriation ceremony at Richmond in June 2016.*  
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Firstly, I would like to announce that our current Director of Military Art, Colonel Richard (R.A.) Vagg (1993) will be leaving RMC in late September to take up a Command appointment on operations in Iraq. I thank Richard for his hard work and dedication to the College, in particular to the development he has made to the officer training curriculum. The new DMA will be Colonel Leonard (L.) Oei (1995).

In late May the College supported Canberra Grammar School's (CGS) Year 11 Leadership Development Program. The purpose of the program is to expose students to leadership in a stressful environment, in preparation for their senior roles within the school community during 2017. The students participated in a leadership presentation, arduous physical training activities and the Majura Range Leadership Reaction Course. The current coordinator of the CGS Leadership program is Stuart (S.L.) McNeill (1987).

On a beautiful winter's day on 11 June, the College celebrated the Queen's Birthday with the annual Queen's Birthday Parade at Rond Terrace. A large crowd was treated to an impressive display of drill and the parade was supported by the Gun Troop from the Australian Federation Guard, who provided the 21 gun salute. The parade was reviewed by the Chief of the Defence Force, Air Marshal Mark Binskin, AO.

The first semester of 2016 has been completed with 97 cadets graduating. A new III Class has entered the college, comprising 118 cadets. They have completed their Initial Cadet Training and their first battle block at Majura range. Their Lanyard Parade was held on 3 September.

During July RMC had the privilege to host a visit by the Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, General Dalbir Singh Suhag. This was a great opportunity to showcase RMC and the robust training regime we provide to cadets. This visit culminated with a luncheon at Duntroon House.

Vietnam Veterans / Long Tan Day was commemorated on 17 and 18 August and was well supported by members of Duntroon. On 17 August, RSM RMC-A, Warrant Officer Class One Wayne Le Lievre and I attended a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reception at Parliament House, this official function was well attended by veterans, with the College providing transport. 18 August commenced with the Vietnam Vale at the Australian War Memorial (AWM), which involved members of Bridges Company and AFDA reading the names of those lost during this conflict. During the morning the RSM and I attended the Stand-to ceremony at the AWM and the day culminated with the Last Post Ceremony, which was dedicated to Second Lieutenant Gordon Sharp (PI Comd 11 PI, D Coy, 6 RAR) killed in action during the Battle of Long Tan. I Class cadets from Long Tan Company attended the ceremony and laid a wreath on behalf of the College.

We have commenced discussions with a film producer John McAvoy, regarding the filming of a documentary series covering the 18-month course at RMC-Duntroon. We expect the series to track progress of a cohort of cadets throughout their time at the College. We expect filming to commence in 2017.

Finally, at the June 2016 graduation, the Corps Battalion Sergeant Major, Senior Under Officer Richard Mitchell graduated to the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps, and was the recipient of the Sword of Honour. Under Officer Emma Randall who graduated to Australian Intelligence Corps was awarded the Queen's Medal.

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## From the Chairman, Duntroon Society Committee

Chris Appleton

The Society's highlight of the year to date has been the very successful Biennial Reunion in Adelaide, held over the weekend of 6–8 May. Well done to Doug Strain and his team for a terrific reunion. There is a full report elsewhere in this Newsletter *{see p5. Ed.}*.

On 18 August the nation commemorated Vietnam Veterans' Day and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in 1966. The Society is very proud of its many members who are Vietnam veterans—theirs is a proud record of service in the best tradition of ANZAC. I am delighted that as part of the reconsideration of honours awarded for the battle of Long Tan, Colonel Adrian Roberts, OAM (OCS June 1963) has been awarded the Medal of Gallantry "for acts of gallantry in hazardous circumstances" on 18 August 1966, when he was a lieutenant commanding an Armoured Personnel Carrier Troop. Congratulations Adrian.

Our Society's Elder, John Sedgley (1938) celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends and family at Metung (Victoria) on 15 August. John passed away just two weeks later; to Anne and his family go our condolences. I am pleased that Bob Slater arranged that I call John to offer him the Society's congratulations on his Centenary.

The June graduation parade on 28 June was a fine ceremony in brilliant Canberra winter sunshine, albeit chilly. I had the opportunity to speak to the graduating class a few days before their graduation to inform them of the Society. The support of the Commandant, Brigadier Mark Brewer CSC and Bar (1987) for the Society and his agreement to serve as our Patron is much appreciated.

As reported elsewhere in this Newsletter *{see p15. Ed.}*, I was pleased to be able to present the Duntroon Society Award to Hugh Kirk at the College's Prizes and Awards Ceremony on 27 June, the day prior to his graduation from RMC.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at Duntroon on Thursday 17 November 2016. A key matter for consideration will be the proposed updating of the Charter of the Society to reflect the changes involved in the 2014 Incorporation of the Society in the ACT, and to clarify the objects and membership of the Society.

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## From the OTU Association

Frank Miller (OTU 4/67)



It is pleasing to note that membership of the Association reached its highest level in recent years over the past twelve months. This is thought to have been brought about through several factors. Firstly reunions of individual classes are on the increase. Secondly, more are being attracted to the regular luncheons held in different capital cities. Thirdly, more of our number have now retired thereby giving them time to join in our activities.

Members of the Association marched proudly under the Scheyville banner in the Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth ANZAC Day commemoration parades. Melbourne had a record number (over seventy) in our

contingent thanks to the Class 1/70 members, who were in town for a reunion, joining in.

Victoria's annual dinner was also brought forward to the Friday of the long weekend to allow the 1/70 people and their partners to attend. Altogether there were over one hundred and ten at this function—and a great night was enjoyed by all. One of the features of our formal dinners is the singing of the unit's song which is based on the tune 'Road to Gundagai'. This time the rendition was professionally recorded. What it lacked in finesse was made up by enthusiasm.

Each year the Association has a national Council meeting. This provides a formal platform whereby the main executive can hold a dialogue with all of the state and territory chapters together. This year's was the first time it was carried out electronically using Skype. After a few minor teething problems this proved an overwhelming success.

The latest edition of the Association's magazine—*The Scheyvillian*—came out in August. Always a fascinating read, this is of great interest to Scheyvillians and non-Scheyvillians alike.

Victoria's eleventh annual Geddes Dinner was held at the Toorak Services Club in July. Named after OTU's founding Commandant, Brigadier Ian Geddes, this is always a popular event. Our guest speaker was Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Tony Larnach-Jones. Tony had been on the military staff at Scheyville setting up the course prior to the first intake of national servicemen then serving there as a senior training officer for two years. He gave a most interesting insight into those very early days. His talk was very much appreciated by all.

18 August this year was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. Two OTU 1/1965 graduates, Second Lieutenant David Sabben MG and Second Lieutenant Gordon Sharp took part in this historical action with Gordon being one of the seventeen who paid the ultimate sacrifice on that day.

In recognition, the Last Post Ceremony, held each evening at the Australian War Memorial, was dedicated to Second Lieutenant Sharp on this anniversary. Over sixty Scheyvillians and partners, along with members of Gordon's family, old school colleagues, friends and Channel Seven workmates attended. Gordon had been a cameraman with Seven prior to commencing National Service. His Life Story was delivered by Corporal Mark Donaldson, VC. Following the ceremony they adjourned to the Mercure Hotel for a gathering in his honour.

It is fitting that Gordon was recently awarded a Commendation for Gallantry recently recognising his service at Long Tan.

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## Duntroon Society Prize, June 2016

The President of the Duntroon Society, Brigadier Chris Appleton (1978), was pleased to present the Duntroon Society Award to Corporal Hugh Kirk at the College's Prizes and Awards Ceremony on 27 June 2016, the day prior to his graduation from RMC. The Society's award is "Awarded to the graduate who has demonstrated extraordinary commitment and dedication to training". Originally from Sydney and later a resident of Canberra, Hugh is a graduate of the Australian National University (BA Psych (Hons)) and has been allocated to the Royal Australian Corps of Transport. Hugh's first posting is to HMAS Adelaide (home port Sydney). Well done Hugh!



Brigadier Chris Appleton presents the Duntroon Society Prize to CPL Hugh Kirk. Photo: Phill Vavasour, Defence Publishing—Audio Visual.

## From The Podmore Foundation

[www.podmorefoundation.org](http://www.podmorefoundation.org)



All members of the Duntroon Society are grateful to past generations for the inheritance of our great nation after their sacrifice and hard work. But they have bequeathed unfinished business that the Podmore Board felt needed to be attended to before handing Australia on to coming generations.

### How can Duntroon Graduates or Class Groups Help?

You can help us educate and encourage the next generation of Indigenous Australian leaders through donations, mentoring, and fund raising in good fellowship, either as individuals or as a Class group. Why not think about your Class group donating to Podmore and establishing a scholarship for your Class?

Please see the link to our donations as a Class group you can all website for more information on how to donate <http://podmorefoundation.org/how-you-can-help/>

For more details on the Podmore Foundation and on any events, please visit: <http://www.podmorefoundation.org.au> or contact the Secretary David Retter at: [secretary@podmorefoundation.org.au](mailto:secretary@podmorefoundation.org.au), or the A/President, Mike Goodyer (1976), at: [president@podmorefoundation.org.au](mailto:president@podmorefoundation.org.au), or Katherine Meagher, Director, Communications and Public Relations: [communications@podmorefoundation.org.au](mailto:communications@podmorefoundation.org.au).

## From the Branches

### Australian Capital Territory

#### Branch Office Holders

Convenor: Brigadier Chris (C.G.) Appleton (1978)  
 Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel John (J.E.) Bullen (1958)  
 Treasurer: Lieutenant Colonel Mike (M.J.) Ryan (1980)  
 Members: Dr Moreen (M.P.) Dee (WRAAC OCS 1966);  
 Brigadier George (G.T.) Salmon (1959); Colonel M.J. (Mike) Ford (1957); Major Stuart (S.B.) Althaus (RMC & OCS 1982)

### Change of Command

Command? Never mind about the semantics. The important thing is that Chris Appleton CSC (1978) has taken over from Peter Evans (1958) as President of the Duntroon Society and also as Convenor of its ACT Branch.

This is a good time to reflect on the fact that during the 36 years of the existence of the ACT Branch, we have only ever had three convenors—Alby Morrison, Peter Evans and Chris Appleton. We attribute this leadership longevity to committee reluctance to hold elections and also to membership reluctance to mutiny.

As many of us know, Chris is a very familiar face at Duntroon, having previously been here in four different capacities—as a cadet, as a company commander, as the Director of Military Art and as Commandant. He is also a Duntroon Guide and a long-time Society member.

We are all greatly indebted to Peter for his long, loyal and hard-working service to the Society. A Society member from the outset in 1980, he joined the ACT Branch Committee in 1985 and became its Convenor in 1989, an office he held for 27 years. In addition Peter became Society President in 2008 when the Society structure was changed and the Commandant ceased to be the *ex officio* President. Thank you Peter!

### Autumn Lunch, June 2016

Our lunch on 9 June was attended by 40 members and friends. The Commandant, Brigadier Mark Brewer, CSC and bar (1987) was officially welcomed by the ACT Branch. He then addressed the convivial gathering and brought us up to date with the Corps of Staff Cadets today.

Those present included three women who had grown up at Duntroon—Margaret Frisch and Patricia Laird (daughters of Associate Professor John Laird), and Sheryl Lipczynski (daughter of Major Cec Starkey) who came from Sydney for the lunch. Also there were Richard Caesar-Thwaites (a 1955 graduate of RMA Sandhurst) and four from the Class of 1982—Martyn Hagan, Jeremy Logan, Steve Thompson and Michael Woods.

After lunch, some were drawn by the sound of band music to the nearby parade ground where a rehearsal for the following Saturday's Trooping of the Colour was under way. The bleak weather was such that no-one lingered—with two notable exceptions—the Duntroon Adjutant of more than 60 years ago, Jim Shelton (1946) and his wife Caroline. Also a former Colonel-Commandant of the Australian Army Band Corps, Jim had a double incentive for braving the weather.

### Annual Dinner and Speech, Thursday 17 November 2016

This year sees a major change. The event will be an evening dinner on Thursday 17 November 2016 instead of a midday lunch. Originally, we used to hold dinners, but we changed to lunches because our older members were having difficulty with evenings. But we didn't realise that this move excluded many of the hard working younger generation who are important for the Society's future, so we are now switching back to evening dinners once again.

Our speaker this year is the Australian Electoral Commissioner, Tom Rogers (1983). As we all realise, 2015 and 2016 have been very busy years for Tom at the Australian Electoral Commission. Tom is ably supported by his Deputy Electoral Commissioner—Kath Toohey (1990). Tom Rogers is known as an entertaining speaker. All ACT Branch dinners are open to Society members and friends.



*Paul Stevens (1967), Chris Appleton (1978), Garth Hughes (1956) (obscured), Mark Brewer (1987), Peter Evans (1958), Shirley Evans, Ann Tedder, Peter Tedder (1955).*



*Clockwise around near table: Peter Tilley (1957), John Sheldrick, Robert Morrison, Dinah Morrison, Bill Crews (1965), Paul Kitney, Barney Gosman.*



*Paul Stevens, Chris Appleton, Garth Hughes, Mark Brewer.*



*Yvonne Bullen, Sheryl Lipczynski (née Starkey), Lorraine Cooper, Jim Shelton.*



*Clockwise around near table: Martyn Hagan (1982), Michael Woods (1982), Sandra Tilley, Peter Tilley (1957), John Sheldrick (1956), Robert Morrison, Paul Kitney (1953), Barney Gosman (OCS Dec 1952), Steve Thompson (1982), Jeremy Logan (1982), Bob Breen (1973).*



*Clockwise around table: Jim Shelton, Margaret Frisch (née Laird), Tim Bailey, Patricia Laird, Moreen Dee (WRAAC OCS 1966), Caroline Shelton, Stephen Harding.*



*Kerry Smith, Col Swinbourn (RMC RSM 1974-76), Tony Hall (1952), Caroline Shelton.*



*Near table: Tony Hall (1952), Caroline Shelton, Stephen Harding, Ross Harding (1948), Mike Ford (1957), Richard Caesar-Thwaites (RMA Sandhurst 1955).*



*Corps of Staff Cadets rehearsing for Trooping the Colour two days later.*



*The Adjutant inspects the parade rehearsal—Jim and Caroline Shelton sheltering beneath Harry Hutton's Tree beside the Parade Ground, accompanied by walking wounded—or is it an armed guard?*

## New South Wales

### Branch Office Holders

Convenor: Bob (R.L.) Guest (OCS Dec 1959)  
 Secretary: Peter (P.M.) Reid (1964),  
 peterreid2@bigpond.com (02) 9460 0741, 0417 274 090  
 Treasurer: Ian (I.R.) Taylor (1965),  
 ita01@ozemail.com.au, (02) 9953 9441, 0407 539 441.

### RMC December Graduation Lunch 2016

The annual graduation week lunch will be held on Friday, 16 December 2016. Please note the change of date and put it in your diaries now. The lunch this year will be held at the Imperial Service Club at the Royal Automobile Club building at Circular Quay. Members and their partners will be able to catch up with old friends and enjoy the high standard of catering offered by the Club at a very reasonable price. Further details on booking for this event will be promulgated.



*Nola Bertram, John Bertram (1959), Ian Mackay (1955), Tony Larnach-Jones (1959).*



*George Ball (OCS Jun 1952), Sandy Guest, Bob Guest (OCS Dec 1959), Dawn Duncan, Ken Duncan (OCS Dec 1952).*



*Gwen Haynes, John Haynes, John Neenan (OCS Jun 1957), Rob Senior (OTU 2/1969).*



*Peter Reid (1964), Don Grant, David Duffall (OCS Dec 1963), Scott Johnston (1978).*



*Ian Mackay (1955), Tony Larnach-Jones (1959), Maggie Hodge, Don Gillies (1959), Jill Gillies, John McDonagh (1946).*



*Daniel Fock (OCS Dec 1952), Mike Peters (1958), Jill Wright, Laurie Wright (OCS Jun 1952).*

#### *Monthly Lunches*

Many Duntroon Society members meet at the Imperial Service Club, now incorporated in the Royal Automobile Club at Circular Quay. They meet on the second Friday of each month at 1200 for 1230 and have an excellent two course lunch and wines for \$60 per head. These lunches are conducted under the auspices of the Regular Army Officers' Luncheon Club and it is hoped that more Duntroon Society members could join their fellow officers on these monthly occasions. Out-of-state visitors are most welcome but should advise office holders or the Club (02 8273 2320) of their intention to attend.

A mid-year luncheon was held on Friday 10 June for Society members and their partners at the Imperial Service room of the Royal Automobile Club. This was a most enjoyable function with excellent food and fine wine. Although there were no 'new' attendees from the Society there were a few new faces among the partners, and many fond memories were shared from the past. Some photos of the luncheon are below.

## **New Zealand**

### *Branch Office Holders*

Patron: Major General R.G. Williams, CB, MBE (1952).  
 Convenor: Colonel Clive (C.P.) Sinclair (OCS June 1969).  
 Secretary/Treasurer: Major Peter (P.J.) Skogstad (1964).

### *Branch Social Functions*

*Auckland Sub-branch Lunch.* On Friday June 17, forty one Auckland members, their wives, partners and friends gathered at The Northern Club for the annual lunch hosted by Clive Sinclair. The guest speaker was Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Red Beatson who talked about his return to Vietnam as a tourist and his impression of life there compared to his time in the Vietnam War. His illustrated talk included Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi cities both of which are now thriving. Of particular interest, to those present, was his visit to sites of importance to New Zealand veterans. They were able to compare the current state of these sites with the memories that they had from their time in Vietnam. Generally there was agreement that these sites were no longer recognizable other than through GPS coordinates or site markers. For many present it was a walk down through memory lane.



*Auckland Lunch: Mike (M.J.) Dudman (1959), Margaret Chippindale, Brian (B.D.) Chippindale (1958).*



*Auckland Lunch: Facing Camera: Clive Sinclair (OCS Jun 1969), Margie Dudman, Graeme McKay (1953).*

*Wellington Sub-branch Lunch.* Fifty eight members and wives and guests of the Wellington Chapter of the NZ Branch were privileged to be guests of the Governor-General, Lieutenant General The Right Honourable Sir Jerry Mataparae (OCS Dec 1976), and Lady Mataparae, at Government House Wellington on Sunday 10 July. Given that the last military incumbent in the office (Brigadier Sir Bernard Fergusson) was in the 1960s, such an occasion is not likely to be repeated in our life times. We lunched in the

ballroom in an unforgettable setting. It was a memorable occasion

*Coming Events.* The annual golf tournament combined will be played at the Helensville Golf Club on Thursday 24 November.

*Membership.* Membership of the New Zealand Branch is 143 including 19 spouses of deceased members.



*Wellington Lunch.*



*Wellington Lunch.*



*Right Honourable Sir Jerry Mataparae.*



*Major General Ken (Scotty) Gordon.*

## Queensland

### *Branch Office Holders*

Convenor: Graeme (G.J.) Loughton (1956).

### *Branch Social Functions*

A small group of us meets monthly for lunch at United Service Club on the second Wednesday, the classes of 1955, 1956 and 1957 being best represented. All members with email addresses receive a monthly reminder and the others a calendar update by snail mail about twice a year. In 2016 we upgraded the monthly lunch to a very enjoyable 'lunch with partners' event in May and again in August. And we will do it again as a Christmas lunch in November, probably on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>. A notice will go out 2–3 weeks ahead. If you think you have missed out, contact Convenor, Graeme Loughton, on 3378 7376 or [loughton@bigpond.net.au](mailto:loughton@bigpond.net.au). The accompanying photos show most of those who enjoyed each other's company in May.



*Left to right: Allison Gilmore, Dulcie Brumfield (WRAAC OCS Mildura Dec 1952), Ailsa Stein, Jack Chipman (1956), Sue Loughton, Graeme Loughton (1956), Vilma Swan, Val Sanders, Jeff Sanders (1958), Anna Loughton, Ron Morris (1956), Sue Knight (standing), Jock Jenvey (1956).*



*Left to right: Graeme Loughton, Sue Knight, Ron Morris, Paul Jones (OCS Dec 1956), Marguerite Jenvey, Leigh Hickey (daughter of John Simson), John Simson (1956), Laurie Hall (OCS Jun 1957), Annette Hall, Jan Jones, Jock Jenvey, John Stein (1957), Allison Gilmore, Dulcie Brumfield, Ailsa Stein, Jack Chipman.*

## South Australia & Northern Territory

### *Branch Office Holders*

Chairman / Convenor: Doug (D.D.) Strain (1978)

Deputy Chairman / Convenor: Peter (P.J.) Neuhaus (1975)

The SA Branch has continued to be busy working with a principal focus on the successful conduct of the Society's 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reunion. This is reported separately in this edition of the Newsletter *{See p5. Ed}* but we should recognise here the efforts of all those on the Branch Committee who worked so diligently on the planning for and the conduct of a most enjoyable event.

### *Annual Graduation Luncheon*

This year, the annual Graduation Luncheon will be held at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club, corner Hutt & Angas

Sreets, City on Tuesday, 6 December 2016 commencing at noon and concluding by 2.30 pm. Speakers for the luncheon will be Major Levon Lambert, OPSO 7 RAR, who will speak on behalf of CO 7 RAR regarding what will then be the battalion's recent deployment to Afghanistan, along with His Worship Lieutenant Lachlan Clyne, Mayor of Unley and former PI Comd 10/27 RSAR, who will speak of his experience visiting the WW1 battlefields of Northern France as a part of a recent commemoration of the centenary of the pivotal Battle of Pozières.

The luncheon will commence with pre-luncheon drinks in the bar—these again being sponsored by RSL Care SA—followed by a two-course luncheon of a main and dessert in The Imperial Room. Formalities will be kept to a minimum with the principal focus being to foster camaraderie and enjoyment. It is anticipated the luncheon will conclude with the usual toasts and the opportunity to retire to the bar for those who may wish. It is hoped to maintain the price at \$60 per head. Anyone wishing to attend can email Doug Strain on [doug@thedssolution.com.au](mailto:doug@thedssolution.com.au).

#### *Second Tuesday Group*

Adelaide ex- and serving officers have been meeting informally on a monthly basis for over 17 years through a group informally titled the 'Second Tuesday' group. This group was initiated by David Litchfield (1978) and Peter Neuhaus (1975) as a conduit for local graduates to network. The group has been well supported for many years by a core group of now local business identities, supplemented by serving officers on postings to Adelaide. Many useful business contacts have resulted, and some serving officers have been able to identify a pathway to life on leaving the Army. The group meets from 0730 to 0900 hrs on the second Tuesday of every month, at Cafe Bocelli on Hutt Street in East Adelaide. Any visitors to Adelaide are most welcome. Should you wish to know more please contact Peter Neuhaus at: [peter.neuhaus@bigpond.com](mailto:peter.neuhaus@bigpond.com).

Connect with the SA Branch on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DuntroonSocietySA/> and keep up to date with the latest information about events.

### **Victoria & Tasmania**

#### *Branch Office Holders*

Victoria continues to operate by committee with occasional meetings and primary contact by email.

Coordinator: Bob (R.A.) Slater (1963)

Treasurer: Alan (A.M.) McDonald (1951)

Members: Konrad (C.) Ermert (1962) (Membership).

Craig (C.A.) Wood (1963) remains proxy for Canberra-based meetings.

#### *Membership*

We remain open to ideas from Duntroon Society members in the Southern region and will be happy to assist with any local connections that Duntroon/ADFA may wish from time to time.

Duntroon Society Elder and Vic/Tas Branch stalwart, John Sedgley (1938), reached 100 years on 15 August and celebrated at his home in Metung with five generations of family and friends. Letters of congratulation from HM Queen Elizabeth, the Governor-General, Prime Minister, Governor of Victoria and Victorian Premier were read out, together with many notes from absent friends.



*John Sedgley celebrating 100 years on 15 August at his home in Metung with five generations of family and friends.*

#### *Annual Luncheon*

The annual Luncheon will be held at University of Melbourne's Graduate House, 220 Leicester Street Carlton, on Thursday 13 October, 12 for 12.30 pm until 2:00 pm, cost \$65 per head. Guests are most welcome. This is an excellent venue for our purpose, and we are being made to feel very much at home.

Our guest speaker is once again Dr (Brigadier) Nick Jans (1964) who, following his informative talk last year on the topic: "The RMC Graduate: Yesterday and Today" that traced changes in attitudes up to 2006, will share his observations on further changes in the past decade. Duntroon Society National President, Chris Appleton, will also address us on the current state of the Duntroon Society and future opportunities and challenges.

RSVP NLT 5 October to Alan McDonald, 13 Moorhead Ave. Mornington, 3931, (03) 5975 4113, with cheques made payable to 'Duntroon Society Victoria Branch'.

### **Western Australia**

#### *Branch Office Holders*

Convenor: W.R.M. (Bob) Hunter (1985)

Social Convenor: K.F. (Kevin) Poynton (1974)

Note these positions are both endorsed by members but held informally as no specific constitution is in place.

#### *Social Functions*

A group of about 30 meets for informal networking drinks in the West several times a year. These informal gatherings provide a good opportunity for old comrades to meet and share tall tales and true, while also providing attendees with a useful range of contacts and introduction across different business environments. If not on the e-mail network, please contact the convenor Bob Hunter (0413 045 355) if you wish to have notification of these gatherings.

## **Coming Events**

### **ACT Branch**

17 November 2016. Annual Dinner and Speech, Duntroon House.

May 2017 (TBA). Autumn Lunch, Duntroon House.

### **NSW Branch**

16 December 2016. Graduation Lunch at the Imperial Service Club at the Royal Automobile Club building at Circular Quay.



## New Zealand Branch

24 November 2016. Annual Golf Tournament will be played at the Helensville Golf Club.

## Queensland Branch

Monthly (second Wednesday). Meet at noon for lunch at the United Service Club.

9 November 2016 (TBA). 'With Partners' Christmas lunch at the United Service Club.

## South Australia Branch (incorporating NT)

6 December 2016. Annual Graduation Luncheon, Naval, Military and Air Force Club, Adelaide.

## Victoria Branch (incorporating Tasmania)

13 October 2016. 1200 for 1230. Annual lunch at Graduate House, 220 Leicester Street, Carlton.

## Western Australia Branch

Quarterly drinks. For details, please feel free to contact the WA convenor, Bob Hunter on bobhunter@iinet.net.au or 0413 045 355.

## Retired Officers Luncheon Club

This Club meets on the first Thursday of every month for lunch at the Royal Canberra Golf Club at 12 noon. Retired officers meet in a very pleasant venue for a convivial monthly gathering which originated in 1985. There is a selected menu which ensures that the cost will be approximately \$30 including pre-lunch drinks and wine. Bookings are essential. If you are interested please contact Don McDonough (1961) on (02) 6259 6583.

## RMC Ceremonial Events

12 December 2016. Prizes & Awards Ceremony.

13 December 2016. The Graduation Parade.

4 February 2017. Army Reserve First Appointment Course.

Further information is available from SO3 Protocol and Visits, Mrs Jenny Pieper—(02) 6265 9515.

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## Obituary

Since the publication of the last Newsletter we have learned of the deaths of the following:

- 13 May 15 Major P. Trost (1948)
- 22 May 15 Lieutenant Colonel N.W.W. Wilson (1939)
- 26 Aug 15 Colonel V.C.Y. Smith (OCS June 1953)
- 29 Dec 15 Major J.S. Goodwin (OCS Dec 1953)
- 17 May 16 Major M.C. Belford (1980)
- 19 May 16 Major E.J. Andrews (OCS June 1965)
- 29 May 16 Colonel P.G. Cole (1953)
  - 4 Jul 16 Major G.W. Prendergast (OCS Dec 1966)
  - 7 Jul 16 Mrs T.A. Smith (née Creagh) (WRAAC OCS Mildura, 2/1953)
- 12 Jul 16 Lieutenant Colonel R.D. Hamlyn (1957)<sup>1</sup>
- 25 Jul 16 Colonel R.A.H. McCluskey (OCS Dec 1956)
- 30 Jul 16 Major B.R.C. Daniel<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Aug 16 Colonel J.H. Humphrey (1951)
- 8 Aug 16 Lieutenant Colonel A. Aitken (OCS Jun 1958)
- 12 Aug 16 Major General J.C. Hughes (1950)
- 19 Aug 16 Lieutenant Colonel R.L. Scott (1970)
- 29 Aug 16 Lieutenant Colonel J.G. Sedgley (1938)
- 3 Sep 16 Lieutenant L.R. Hicks (OCS Dec 1953)
- 4 Sep 16 Major J. McCulloch (OCS Jun 1973)
- 26 Sep 16 Lieutenant Colonel J.D. Stewart (1950)

1. Ron Hamlyn was a Fellow of the Duntroon Society, awarded in 1999 for his service as Secretary of the NSW Branch for nearly 20 years.
2. Bruce Daniel was the long serving Regimental Medical Officer at Duntroon from 1969 to 1981. While there he was resident in the house that was the RMO residence for about 50 years from 1939. It is now the residence of the DMA and was named Daniel House in 2014 in honour of Major Daniel. It is next door to the Commandant's residence, Cavanagh House, named after the long serving hospital matron 'Sister Cav' well known to Major Daniel. Having put up his age to enlist, Bruce Daniel had previously served as a Survey Corps soldier during WW2. While studying medicine after the war, he served in the Armoured Corps (CMF). On graduating as a doctor, he transferred to the Medical Corps (CMF). He served full-time in Vietnam in 1968-69 as 2IC 1 Aust Field Hospital and then joined the Regular Army for the remainder of his 40-year military career. His correct age when he died was 92.

## John Grant Sedgley (15 August 1916 to 29 August 2016)

**Bob Slater**

John, for some years until his death (shortly after celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday), was proudly the Elder of the Duntroon Society.

John's parents were from South Australia and that is where John grew up, although he was born in Brisbane where his father, who served during WW1, was stationed at the time.

From his earliest days John had a love and fascination for sailing that continued to his final days and included many years in sea scouting and competitive racing including seven Melbourne to Devonport races.

John entered Duntroon in 1935 (cadet number 500) and graduated in 1938 having spent his cadet days at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, whilst the Canberra facilities experienced a total re-build. He married in 1940 and saw active service in New Guinea and Borneo. His Army service was in both Infantry and RAE.

After over 20 years Army service John joined Melbourne Grammar School staff and was active with school cadets, House activities and sailing (which he introduced).

After his retirement he settled in Metung on the Gippsland Lakes where he became well known and loved amongst the sailing and general community.

In later years John became a great traveller, both local and overseas, well into his 90s.

John was alert up to the time of his passing, and was able in his last days to enjoy engaging with his five generations of family and his many, many friends.

John rarely missed an opportunity to link with Duntroon alumni activities and will be greatly missed for his friendship, attentive thoughtfulness and bountiful charm and good humour.



## Shorts

- A Thanksgiving Service was held on Saturday, 30 April 2016 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Opening of the ANZAC Memorial Chapel of St Paul at Duntroon. As part of the service, two new artworks commissioned for the Chapel were unveiled in the presence of the artist, Alan Pomeroy. The icon of ‘Mary Help of Christians’ was gifted to the Roman Catholic Chapel. It was unveiled by Lieutenant Colonel Micah Batt, DSM (1997), CO RMC-D. The image of ‘The Conversion of St Paul’ was gifted to the Anglican/Protestant Chapel and was unveiled by the Commandant Brigadier Mark Brewer, CSC and bar. The Anzac Chapel, constructed by the Royal Australian Engineers and funded by public subscription, provides for two chapels under one roof, a central Narthex between them. The Narthex, once a place where some cadets on their way to Church Parade called “Lions to the Left, Christians to the Right”, was the location of the Thanksgiving Service, in the light of the Deployment Lamp that has been alight since 1999 and will remain so while Australians servicemen and women are deployed overseas on operations.
- Readers will recall the expressions of horror in *Newsletter 1/2014* when the writer first sighted the No1 Oval under a mountain of road rubble and almost bereft of its ancient trees. Fortunately, further investigation promised a re-emergence of the Oval in 2016. A progress report in *Newsletter 2/2014* showed no progress with The Oval, but did present a photograph of the large tunnel under the Majura Parkway that would enable access from the other RMC playing fields via an extension of Hopkins’ Drive. It is a pleasure to report that The Oval has been meticulously restored except for some minor works in progress on the western side. For the past two years the spiritual home of RMC Rugby and the Molonglo Cricket Club has been a worksite for construction of the Majura Parkway, a 15-metre high raised highway which crosses between Number One and the rest of the playing fields (a road tunnel connects them). The old stand/pavilion is no more and has been replaced by a modest modern facility. The works have renewed the pitch and feature a new dressing shed, a new white picket fence that now surrounds the entire ground, and tree plantings which will in time restore the unique character of a place that looms large in the memories of many members of the Society. As yet it does not belong to the RMC, but a rain spattered forecast gives late August or September when the RMC Estate takes responsibility for it.
- The inaugural sporting fixture on No 1 Oval is scheduled to be on Sun 9 Oct 16 when RMC plays the Molonglo Cricket Club for the Laing Trophy (named for Alex Laing, 1960).
- Last February an email from France was received by a member of the Editorial Team. The sender was one René Sentuer who, after an exchange of emails, clearly showed himself to be a careful and persistent historical researcher. He had recently acquired an item that belonged to one of the first graduates of the RMC and was trying to find someone who may be

interested. That ‘item’ was a cap, marked RMC with the handwritten notation ‘No4 – Staff Cadet P.J. Morgan’ inside. He noted that, thanks to the excellent online documents of the AWM, he was able to identify the officer and his service until he died of his wounds on 4 April 1917. As yet the provenance of the cap is not clear, but René Sentuer has decided to present it to the RMC Museum, now part of the Army History Unit and titled the Army Museum of Officer Training. (*Newsletter 2/2014*)



*No1 Oval on 16 July 16 looking south east with a westering sun casting the shadow of the Majura Parkway in the foreground. The new Pavilion is in the centre right. Photograph by Liz Pugh.*



*View from the bleachers—the access underpass to the No1 Oval forms an extension of Hopkins’ Road. Photograph by Chris Appleton.*



*No1 Oval looking south east. Photograph by Chris Appleton.*

## Profile of Corps of Staff Cadets

|                                         |     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Current strength (August 2016)          |     |
| CSC                                     | 385 |
| First Class                             | 149 |
| Second Class                            | 102 |
| Third Class                             | 115 |
| Neville Howse VC Platoon                | 19  |
| Cambodia                                | 1   |
| Fiji                                    | 5   |
| Malaysia                                | 2   |
| New Zealand                             | 4   |
| Pakistan                                | 6   |
| Papua New Guinea                        | 15  |
| Thailand                                | 1   |
| Timor Leste                             | 1   |
| RAAF                                    | 5   |
| Tonga                                   | 1   |
| Females                                 | 50  |
| Cadets with previous service in the ARA | 25  |

## Who is the Elder of the Duntroon Society?

Not all the graduate deaths are known to the Duntroon Society editorial team. Since 1981, considerable effort has been given to seeking the date of death of as many graduates of the RMC and, more recently, of the OCS, the OTU and the WRAAC officer schools, as practicable. Further, bearing in mind that the Duntroon Society embraces a much wider membership than graduates of the institutions just mentioned, the role of Elder could fall to a Member who is not a graduate but who possesses the requisite longevity. Naturally, this does not preclude the oldest living graduate being recognised as such. Indeed, in many cases, both roles could be held by the same person.

This still leaves a critical doubt as to how many of the graduates and other Members of the Society born after 15 Aug 1916 are still alive and in their 90s. When John Sedgley became the Elder in May 2011, there were three who were likely to assume his role in due course. As far as we know, Horace Sydney (Syd) Hodges (RMC staff 1948 to 1993 and Fellow of the Duntroon Society), born on 3 February 1918 is the Society Member next in age. Two graduates were next in age; Lieutenant Colonel N.W.W. (Norm) Wilson (1939), who lived in the USA and was born on 13 Jan 1919 and then Brigadier L.A. Kermode (1939) of New Zealand, who was born on 11 Jun 1919. Leo Kermode died on 30 July 2013 and, Norm's daughter Linda, recently told us of her father's death on 22 May 2015

So it remains for any of our readers in Australia and New Zealand to help us confirm that Syd Hodges is the present Society Elder. Apart from that quest, it would of great help if we were able to have the names of all living graduates older than 90 years. The Editorial team will be immensely grateful for any specific information or any leads that may assist in our search.

To set the ball rolling we know of Jim Shelton (1946) and Jim Neylan (1948), both already 90. We also know of John McDonagh (1946) and Ross Harding (1948) both of them turning 90 in the next couple of months. There may be many more—but how many and who?

## Service at Dubbo Cenotaph 23 April 2017

The Committee organising the Centenary of Public High School Education in Dubbo in April 2017 is seeking ex-students and teachers of Dubbo High School, South Dubbo High School, Delroy High School, and Dubbo College who have served or are still serving in the Australian military.

On Sunday 23 April 2017 there will be a service at the Dubbo Cenotaph to honour former servicemen including Rawdon Middleton, VC. All current and former servicemen and women of these Dubbo schools are encouraged to participate in the service and wear the appropriate medals.

For more information, please contact Doug Butcherine (dougbu@bigpond.com) Phone: 02 6882 2323.

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