

# THE DUNTRON SOCIETY

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## New Awakenings for Veterans and their Families

**Gary (G.J.) Stone (1973)**  
President, Veterans Care Association

For the past few years the Veterans Care Association (VCA), based in Brisbane, has been working on front-line veteran rehabilitation, supporting many hundreds of clients and their families. VCA's tactical objective is to improve the health and wellbeing of the veterans they engage with daily, but their strategic objective has been to model and improve the systemic way Veterans Health is managed, moving it from the current 'treating sickness' model to a 'promoting wellness' model. All of the core VCA team are seasoned veterans and committed Christians who have experienced the good and bad of what is currently on offer and they have cobbled together a best-practice, veteran-friendly service.

Two RMC graduates Chaplain Gary (G.J.) Stone, (1973) a veteran of some 47 years of service, (8/9 RAR, 6 RAR, and 1 RAR) and his son Michael (M.J.) (1999) a veteran of 20 years of service (2 RAR and 8/9 RAR) lead a group of veteran clinicians and peer support carers engaging ill and injured veterans in peer support, encouragement, holistic health education, and life coaching.

Gary says, "Frankly, veterans are not responding well to the so-called 'Gold standard' of medication and cognitive/exposure therapy. At a recent Post Traumatic Stress conference in Brisbane it was reported that one third of veterans are actually getting worse from the clinical treatments they are getting. All the clients VCA are seeing are making significant improvements, as they open up and respond to fellow veterans, who encourage them".

VCA currently provides a comprehensive peer support, health and wellbeing education programme, engaging disengaged veterans and educating them about health and wellbeing possibilities and/or getting them into clinical therapy before they become acute cases requiring hospitalisation. They utilise a front line team of chaplains and peer supporters—all very experienced former military officers, and a second row of doctors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers who advise both staff and clients.

The central message VCA offers to veterans is that they can live much healthier lives if they deliberately give attention to nurturing their body, mind and soul, as well as living with a positive life purpose. Soul nurture, including healing for moral injury is the missing ingredient in all other rehab programs on offer in Australia. To drive home the potential and importance of faith, the VCA team takes participants to Timor, where they hear the amazing stories of

the Timorese who were victorious against all odds, with faith in God as their underpinning hope.

Designed and developed by Michael Stone, VCA's Flagship activity is a nine-month 'Timor Awakening' (TA) rehabilitation program, involving three months preparation, a 12-day immersion in Timor along with Timorese veterans and a six-month follow-up period. VCA has conducted eight of these programmes with 175 participants and support of 20 veteran volunteer staff members, and is preparing for two more programmes in 2019. In Timor they get a 'mountaintop experience'—a circuit-breaker awakening that their lives can improve, and they find new purpose and identity.



*Aussie and Timorese Veterans at Dili Rehabilitation Centre.*



*Veterans share their successes in Circle time at Balibo fort.*

The detailed evaluation data VCA has collected and had externally analysed by clinical psychologists and medical officers, presents solid evidence that the program is significantly reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression in all participants, and conversely improving quality of life. These results are being sustained over the long term, through regular follow up, and the participation by many participants in 'Life Coaching' offered by veteran Michael Albrecht.



*Michael with Xanana Gusmao.*

TA alumni are engaging and assisting with ESO (especially RSL) and are making positive contributions to the veteran community and society. Noteworthy is the case of a participant in TA 2, 15-year Navy veteran Kerri Howie who has recently given public testimony in the *Catholic Leader* newspaper (circulation 33,000 nationwide) of her coming to VCA in a state of deep depression and drug addiction. Subsequent to TA, she has been rehabilitated and has returned to Timor walking 160 km from Dili to Betano conducting a health clinic in every village en route. Kerri said, “I’m now inspired. I have purpose. I feel alive and I look forward to many opportunities ahead”.



*Michael, Gary and wife Lynne at home of Jose Ramos Horta.*

Another significant outcome has been the mutual support given to the Timorese veterans and Government of Timor in progressing veteran support initiatives. The recently elected Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri hosted the TA5 group in his office, and heard first hand from VCA staff on what his Government could be doing to enhance veteran support. This occurred simultaneously with the Government’s release of a 40-minute documentary on the TA experience that has been shown nationally in Timor. VCA has produced the following short videos on YouTube and is currently working on a professional documentary with interviews of participants.

- [Timor Awakening Commandos Return October 2017 Introduction Video](#) (two minutes).
- [Timor Awakening 5 General Video](#) (five minutes).

VCA wishes to continue to offer TA experiences. They have more applicants than they can support, but their capacity for veteran support is significantly diminished by the time and effort they must put into fund raising. The programs delivered to date have been made possible largely through the Sponsorship of RSL Qld and RSL Care—now known as Bolton Clarke. Further sponsorships and donations are most welcome.



*Timor Awakening 5 formally welcomed to country by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri.*

Michael Stone says, “Defence has given many of us extensive training in leadership, training and development, to be able to design and deliver these programmes, and healing our struggling veterans is an honourable task for us veterans to be engaged in. Experienced veterans can care for younger veterans in ways that civilian clinicians can’t. Younger veterans trust us and can be led into new lives because they know we understand them and we care. The deepest issues for veterans are not psychiatric—they relate to identity, purpose and connection with God and others. We can offer the empowerment for these to be rediscovered and realized.”

Comprehensive information on this work is available at [www.veteranscare.com.au](http://www.veteranscare.com.au).

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*Gary Stone served 25 years as an infantry officer before ordination as a married Deacon in 1994. Since then he has served as an army and police chaplain, has led extensive humanitarian ministries in Timor Leste, and is now chaplain to the ex-service community in south-east Queensland. Gary served as Chaplain at the RMC in 1998 and 1999—the first graduate to do so. Having previously served as Instructor RMA Sandhurst, and Senior Instructor OCS Portsea, he was well prepared for this role. A highlight of this time was the conduct of a Christian fellowship gathering at his quarter every Wednesday evening attracting up to 60 cadets including and assisted by his son Michael who was in the cadet body in 1999. Gary has been married to Lynne for over 43 years and they have four adult children and three grandchildren.*

*Michael Stone served for 20 years as an infantry officer, deploying straight to Timor the day after his graduation, doing two tours there as a platoon commander, Instructor 1 RTB, Adjutant QUR and returning to Timor from 2003 to 2006 to command a training team with 1st Bn FFDTL. After four months back in Australia as Adjutant 8/9RAR he was seconded to President Jose Ramos Horta as his Security Advisor from 2006–2011. After three years as OC Officer Training in QUR, Michael retired to commence this work with Veterans Care Association.*

## **Christmas Leave—1981-82**

**Allan (A.A.) Murray (1982)**

During my time at Duntroon, the Christmas leave period at the end of 1981 was extra-long. Peter Singh, a classmate and fellow Kokoda Company II Class, suggested in the middle of the year to go on an overseas trip. I was enthusiastic as it would be my first time overseas. Where to go? We were both in our final year of completing a Modern History Major in our Arts degrees. Europe loomed large in our lives, so that is where we agreed to go. So what would we do there?

The Cold War was the predominant geo-strategic influence at the time and Europe was the front line. Germany was divided, hundreds of thousands of NATO troops faced off against Warsaw Pact troops along the fortified border between East and West Germany, and in Berlin, the Berlin Wall surrounded West Berlin. On 5 March 1946, Winston Churchill in his speech, *The Sinews of Peace*, first characterized this divide as follows ... “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent”. {*Stettin is today called Szczecin and is in Poland.*}

Peter and I spent our Christmas leave in Europe backpacking the length of the Iron Curtain starting in Hamburg, in the north and ending in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, in the south. At the midway point we travelled to Berlin and crossed into East Berlin. I maintained a diary of our experiences which I have subsequently made into a paperback book. This article is an extract from the book mainly covering our time in Berlin and is written to acknowledge the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in November 1989; 30 years ago.

The term ‘Iron Curtain’ described efforts by the Soviet Union to block itself and its satellite nations in eastern Europe from open contact with western Europe. By 1981, the physical manifestation of the Iron Curtain took the form of barriers along the border between the nations of Europe in the middle of the continent. On the east side were the nations connected to or influenced by the Soviet Union; East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. On the west side were the member nations of NATO. Through both alliances and history, Australia was aligned with the nations of Western Europe.

Throughout IV, III and II Class, Musoria was the enemy we trained against in the Military Instruction Block, at Majura Range and during Campers. The Musorians were an armour-heavy Soviet Union-style doctrinal enemy with Motor Rifle Divisions equipped with RPGs, BMP-2s, BTR-70s, RAGs and the most lethal DAG. Our engagement with the Musorians was enlivened at the time by the Soviet Union invasion and operations in Afghanistan against the Mujahideen, which we often watched on the TV news whilst relaxing in the Rec Room. Naively, Peter and I hoped to come face-to-face with some real-life Musorians. Failing that we were happy to just observe life in a communist country in Europe.

We saved our money mightily and planned earnestly. In the days before the Internet, Peter and I planned our trip using paper maps, tourist guides and our mutual understanding of military history. Frommer was promising Europe on \$20.00 per day. We gained from our Officer Commanding, Major Hans (J.B.) Wynen (OCS Jun 70), permission to visit East Berlin and Yugoslavia which resulted in us being warned for possible security de-briefing upon our return; Australia worked on the assumption that everyone from behind the Iron Curtain was a spy.

Following Grad Week in 1981, as some of our classmates headed off to College-funded visits to Sandhurst and West Point, Peter and I headed to Europe. Our period of Christmas Leave was from 11 December 1981 to 20 January 1982 and we planned to use every day on our trip, landing in London on the morning of 12 December 1981.

London was especially cold; the weather was overcast and misty and there was snow and ice up to 15 centimetres deep on the footpath. After a few days we headed for West Germany, via Belgium and the Netherlands, and the weather

was no better. We also wanted to see NATO troops. In London we saw members of the Scots Guards and the Life Guards on ceremonial duties, as most tourists do. But in West Germany we had serendipitous encounters with NATO troops in Hamburg and Düsseldorf. My diary of the trip recorded these as follows:

**20 December.** *We arrive in Hamburg at about 11.00 pm from Amsterdam. We are 419 kilometres west of Stettin in Poland. It is bitterly cold; my breath freezes as I exhale. At the Hauptbahnhof (railway station), dozens of young men, many appearing intoxicated, are running to catch trains at different platforms: they are repeatedly shouting ‘eins’ (the number ‘one’ in German). We do not know what is happening. Most have just one bag with them and are also carrying a little sign in their hand with the number ‘1’ written on it. After 20 minutes or so, it is over. Our enquiries advise it is the final day of compulsory military service for these men. Conscription began in West Germany in 1957. These young men are on their way home on the train after 18 months in the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces), most likely having served with NATO’s West German/Danish Corps stationed north of Hamburg in Schleswig-Holstein. This ritual is a regular occurrence in West Germany...*

**23 December.** *After dinner we enter a tavern in Düsseldorf for a few beers. Peter starts talking with three Poms; they were loud and assertive. It becomes a bit heated and before long Peter is outside preparing to have a fist fight with one of the Poms. After some further discussion, the matter is sorted, and we return inside without violence. They are ‘squaddies’; soldiers with the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). We have another encounter with NATO troops. The four armoured divisions of I (British) Corps of the BAOR are to the east of Düsseldorf. At Caernarvon Barracks, located immediately outside of Düsseldorf airport, is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Group, Royal Corps of Transport which provides transport and movements support in the area to the rear of I (British) Corps and which is where these ‘squaddies’ work as truck drivers. When we advise that we are Australian Army officer cadets, the look on their faces is one of horror. The ‘squaddie’ who wanted to fight with Peter thinks he is going to be in big trouble. We calm him down and enjoy a few more beers with the Poms before calling it a night.*

We journeyed between cities in West Germany on the train, utilising the Eurail Pass. It afforded the opportunity to gain an appreciation of the terrain. From Hamburg to Düsseldorf we traversed the rolling farmlands of the North German Plain. It was clear why NATO planners considered the Plain to be the primary corridor for a Warsaw Pact thrust into Western Europe; it was tailor-made for armour. From Düsseldorf we headed to Munich. As we went south-east, the terrain became rough, mountainous and densely wooded. There were two corridors in the south—the famous Fulda Gap, and the lesser known Hof corridor. The former was the most dangerous for NATO as it struck at Frankfurt and gave access to the Rhine River, the latter followed the autobahn from Berlin into the heart of Bavaria.

From Munich we headed to Berlin. My diary recorded:

**Christmas Day 1981.** *In the evening, we board an East German train and settle down for a good sleep which is*

disturbed on several occasions; the usual checking of tickets and a couple of checks by the East German border guards. They check when we cross into East Germany and check again when we cross into West Berlin. The latter presumably to ensure we haven't been joined on the train by any East Germans.

**26 December.** After an all-night trip, and passing through East Germany without stopping, we arrive in West Berlin at 7.30 am having crossed the Iron Curtain and passed through Warsaw Pact territory. Our accommodation is in the northern part of the American Sector, midway between Tempelhof Airport, 500 metres to the south, and Checkpoint Charlie, the name given by NATO nations to the best-known Berlin Wall crossing point.

We stayed with family friends of Peter who next day took us on a tour of West Berlin. To our delight we observed soldiers of the Red Army at the Soviet Memorial to their World War II dead at Tiergarten. The Memorial was now in the American Sector, yet Soviet Union soldiers stood guard. A barbed wire fence surrounded the Memorial to prevent observers from approaching within 200 metres of the soldiers and we were advised there were protective walls in several places to prevent long-range sniping of the soldiers.



*Soldiers of the Red Army guard the Soviet War Memorial at Tiergarten. Taken from behind the barbed-wire fence. Source: ©The Family Murray Trust*



*Berlin Wall with observation tower and guards on the East Berlin side. Source: ©The Family Murray Trust*

Next, we visited several portions of the Berlin Wall. I recorded in my diary:

*I stand adjacent to the Berlin Wall, one of the most notorious manifestations of the Cold War built by the Communists after August 1961 to keep East Germans*

*from escaping into West Berlin. By 1981, a 3.6-metre-high reinforced concrete wall extends for 161 kilometres encircling all West Berlin. On top of the 1.3-metre-wide wall is an enormous pipe to make climbing over nearly impossible. At some locations, the East Berlin side can be observed, and I see the so called 'death strip': a gauntlet of soft sand (to show footprints), floodlights, vicious dogs, trip-wire machine guns and patrolling soldiers with orders to shoot escapees on sight. At regular intervals, there are guards in observation towers with machine guns.*

*Whilst thousands have crossed the border illegally, hundreds have died trying to get over, under or around the Berlin Wall. On 16 March 1981, 31-year-old Johannes Muschol was shot and killed attempting to cross the 'death strip' as was 26-year-old Hans-Jürgen Starrost on 16 April 1981.*

On 28 December, we rose early and prepared for an excursion to the other side of the Berlin Wall, to observe Communism. We caught the underground train to Checkpoint Charlie. It perhaps symbolized the Cold War more strongly than any other place. My diary recorded:

*The checkpoint on the western side is a limited and temporary structure; a metal shed. The infrastructure on the eastern side includes the wall, a watchtower, checkpoint and zig-zag barriers. The more than thirty-five-year stand-off between the members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact is starkly presented to us. It takes 30 minutes to clear the East German security; staffed by petty, unsmiling guards. We assiduously avoid mentioning that we are members of the Australian Army; there is always the possibility of being pulled aside and grilled by the Stasi. We are required to exchange 25 West German Marks and receive in return East German Marks in a small plastic bag. Then it is into East Berlin. We are behind the Iron Curtain on Warsaw Pact territory.*



*The metal shed on the western side of Checkpoint Charlie, looking east. Source: ©The Family Murray Trust*

We were free to wander East Berlin and were not required to travel as part of an organised tour. I recorded:

*There is no attempt to influence what we observe or perceive of East Berlin. We walk the streets and smell the air of communism, conscious that we are among a society in the grip of a totalitarian surveillance state with an organisation, the Stasi, that maintains an informant for every seven ordinary people. Families are snooped-on and persecuted. The Stasi maintain files on no less than one-third of the population!*

*Old, under-developed and bleak is a good description of my initial impression. As we walk down one of the main streets, life is drab and there is little on which to spend our small amount of money. The shopping plazas of West Germany are absent. I notice that once we are off the main street, all activity ceases. Several buildings are still bomb-damaged from World War II. The cars are all old and there are a lot of military vehicles; also there are a lot of people in uniforms of various types. Ubiquitous among the cars is the Trabant made by the East German auto maker VEB Sachsenring and almost unchanged since 1957. They are noisy and dirty.*

*We go to the viewing platform of the Fernsehturm (Berlin Television Tower) and the view from 203 metres is good. We compare the quietude of East Berlin with the activity of West Berlin. Back on street level, after a concerted search, we find a cafeteria to have some lunch; there is little to choose from, the service is disinterested, and the meal is miserable.*

The Warsaw Pact was a manifestation of the Cold War. In 1981, six Soviet Union Armies (with 20 divisions) were stationed in East Germany, a force of about 425,000 troops with many thousands of T-62 and T-72 tanks. The National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) totalled 113,000 troops; four motorized rifle divisions and two tank divisions.

After our encounter with Red Army soldiers we watched a guard change at the Memorial to the Victims of Nazism, this time they were East Germans of the National People's Army. Whilst their appearance was patterned after older German military traditions—including uniforms and marching in goose-step for the ceremony—we knew their structures, equipment and tactics aligned with the Red Army. We were able to get close to them. Peter and I realised they represented the doctrinal enemy we had been training to fight for the past three years at the College.



*East German soldier during guard change at the Memorial to the Victims of Nazism. Source: ©The Family Murray Trust*

We left East Berlin just on dusk and struggled to get through the security in time to get back to West Berlin. I had about six East German marks left, and they wouldn't let me take it out—they wanted me to deposit it into a bank account. Instead, I donated it to charity. A day was quite long enough in Communist East Berlin.

Next day, 29 December, we travelled out of Berlin heading only as far as Nuremberg. This time we were travelling during the day and were able to observe the border. My diary recorded:

*Towards the end of the 1960s, East Germany decided to upgrade the border, taking advantage of the knowledge that had been obtained in building and maintaining the Berlin Wall: the border defences were systematically upgraded to make it far harder to cross.*

*The border zone is 5.6 kilometres wide on the East German side. There are several tall steel-mesh fences. In between the fences are barbed wire and minefields. The fences are patrolled and there are intermittent guard towers equipped with machine guns. The fences we see are part of a vast system of barriers, 1,336 kilometres in length, dividing Europe, restricting the right to travel and imposing the will of a Communist state. On the border, where our time behind the Iron Curtain comes to an end, security is tight. The East German border guards search the train with German Shepherd dogs.*



*One of the border fence lines, the Iron Curtain. Source: ©The Family Murray Trust*

From Nuremberg we eventually made it to Ljubljana via Austria and Italy. We were 94 kilometres north-east of Trieste and experienced life in socialist Yugoslavia. We had achieved our bold objective of trekking the length of the Iron Curtain as depicted by Winston Churchill. As we returned to London via France, we discovered we were not the only staff cadets in Europe. In an incredible coincidence, on a railway platform in Nice we encountered classmates Michael Abrahams and Phil Stephens. We went on to have a memorable night together in Monaco.

Looking back on this Christmas Leave, 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was a tremendous experience providing invaluable insights into the world at the time, a world we would shortly graduate into as young Army officers.

Brigadier Allan Murray entered Duntroon in January 1979 and graduated into the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps in 1982. He returned to Duntroon to play sport and instruct between 1989–92. Leaving the Australian Regular Army in 2001 as a lieutenant colonel, he continued to serve in the Army Reserve, commanding 8<sup>th</sup> CSS Battalion and 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade. In 2009, he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal for his work as Assistant Commander 2nd Division. He retired from the Army on 26 January 2019. This is his sixth contribution to the Newsletter. The article is an extract from his book Cold War Observer—My Diary from the Iron Curtain available in paperback and e-book from Amazon.

## An Eclectic Mob: RMC Class December 1990

**Karen McFadzen (Dec 1990)**

December 2020 will mark 30 years since the class of December 1990 graduated. We were the fourth ‘RMC Duntroon’ integrated class and second cohort that had passed fully through three years at the ADFA. Looking back we were in the defining stages of the new RMC Army service college and with the directing staff responsible for preserving, fostering and carrying on the Army officer culture, traditions and history. The approaching 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary is significant and is an opportunity to reflect and share the achievements of this remarkable group of people.



*RMC Parade December 1990.*



*Graduation Class December 1990.*

RMC Duntroon was a great start to life. It taught us leadership skills, gave us self-confidence and built enduring

camaraderie. I would guess most Duntroon classes, before and following, would say the same. Our class had female and males from enlistment and were integrated with equal footing as ‘staff cadets’, that is: carried the same equipment, completed the same training and underwent the same rigorous testing (Army had not yet updated the training regime to accommodate or distinguish gender differences). Perhaps the other point of difference for the Class of December 1990 is that I would also categorise us as being inquisitive, intrepid yet quirky, colourful and earnest. Some examples of this:

One cadet asked another for a favour to drive him to the regional train station as he had enough and decided to go AWOL. The DS found out they were missing at morning rollcall from the sign out book as the driver had dutifully signed out the night before. The driver received 14/21 days on the square for “aiding and abetting”. Feeling sorry for him a third classmate took up reading poetry from the top floor of Kapyong building at 6am each morning, to provide moral support.

In the second half of the year four female classmates wrote and signed a joint letter of protest against a change to SOPs: “introduction of female showering during extended field exercises”. Their position was that as staff cadets the ethos was “one in, all in” and any changes to SOPs should also be applicable for all cadets regardless of gender. They were cautioned and informed that their letter amounted to ‘mutiny’. This change was slight, however they felt strongly as it was the first that distinguished and separated the female and male cadets.

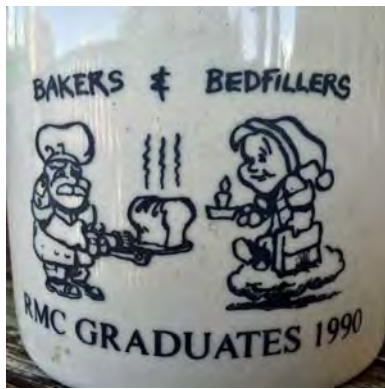
Some overzealous and slightly inebriated cadets decided to honour the traditional cadet justice system by launching a “bish” on another in the adjacent Defence Academy. That person was not there but the seven were caught and the resulting punishment was 14/21. To maintain spirits whilst “on the square” they decide to add a piece of scrim to their helmets each day. By the end of the 21 days they resembled yetis.

Our class was the first to be christened ‘Bakers and Bed Fillers’. The term originated early on in 1990 from a member of the DS during a frustrated moment addressing the attitude of the two groups (18 month direct entry and the ADFA three year entry). This outburst was the catalyst that promoted introspection, group cohesion and class identity.



*On the square.*

“Bakers and Bed Fillers” came to symbolise our belief that, regardless of which avenue through which we enlisted, on enlistment into the Army we were one RMC class, the class of December 1990. This term has now entered the College lexicon.



*December 1990 Grad Port logo.*



*Defensive Ops.*



*Long Tan Company, Ex Timor, NZ.*



*Gallipoli Company supporting football.*

In December 1990, 126 graduated. Upon graduation there were 10 women and 116 men. We had five New Zealanders, two Singaporeans, one Malaysian, one Papua New Guinean, 115 Australian Army and two RAAF. The pictures show that we were svelte, lithe and brimming with youthful energy. So

30 years on: How have we fared? Where are we? What are we doing?

Well ... there seems to have been two phases after graduation. The first focused on exploring the world, starting families and establishing careers. In this first phase we also had an increase to the Op tempo from the early 90's which had many of us participating in international deployments (some multiple times) such as: Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, UNTSO Israel/Lebanon, Solomon Islands, Bougainville, East Timor and Timor Leste, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The majority of the class has now entered the second phase, 'mid-life', which by definition is 45–64 years old, with many recently celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup>. This time of life typically marks reaching of key milestones (births, deaths, marriages, separations and retirements), transitions occurring within families, work and lifestyles as well as physical signs of ageing (greying, weight gain, wrinkles and balding for some). I found in researching and gathering material for this article that recently there has also been reinvention and renewal of sorts with the discovery of new talents, hobbies, paths, passions and interests.

So let's take a closer look at the RMC Class of December 1990. I'm proud to say, as of August 2019, fourteen are on their way to mark 30 years post-graduation. This is a terrific achievement and one in which we can share and celebrate, they are: Dave Rodley; Adrian Pang; Mal Stewart; Andrew Treble; Pete Connolly DSC, CSC; Darryl Groves; Sean Ryan; Kath (nee Moss) Sowry AM; and at senior levels:

- At two star:
  - Jake Ellwood DSC, AM Commander 1 Division.
  - Craig Furini AM, CSC Head of Operation Sovereign Borders.
  - Kath (nee Ross) Toohey AM, CSC Head of Land Capabilities.
- At one star:
  - Gavin Duncan DSC Director General within Military Strategic Commitments.
  - Ben James AM, DSM Director General Training and Doctrine at Australian Army.
  - Wade Stothart DSC, AM, CSC Director General Army People Capability.

I've also asked a few people to share their stories and give you a taste and insight to where they are today and how they got there. Here's a snapshot of two still in uniform.

***Kathryn (nee Ross) Toohey AM, CSC: Major General – Canberra***

Kath feels very fortunate to still be serving in Army. She is currently Head Land Capability in Army Headquarters. Her team is responsible for future concepts and managing land capability ranging from helicopters to armoured vehicles and from radios to uniforms.

Kath was CSM Kokoda Coy at the RMC and graduated to RASigs. The first half of Kath's career included a 13-month deployment to Cambodia with 2 Sig Regt followed by postings to 7 Sig Regt (Electronic Warfare), HQ 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade and then aide-de-camp to the Governor General. She particularly enjoyed instructing back at RMC and a three year posting to Brussels. In Belgium she took on the role of Capability Division European Liaison Officer. Kath has spent the second half of her career completing mainly capability related roles—identifying requirements for new capability for Army and the ADF. Despite her engineering background, this

was an area she fell into by accident, but it is an area she finds extremely rewarding.

In 2016, Kath took leave from the Army to assume the statutory appointment as the Deputy Electoral Commissioner for the 2016 Federal Election. A federal election is the largest logistical activity in peacetime Australia, so this fact combined with the (then) new changes to senate voting meant her Army planning, leadership and problem-solving skills were put to good use. She returned to Army in 2017 to assume her current appointment.

Kath married Mick (M.J.) Toohey (June 1990) in 1995. They have 21 year olds twins (boy and girl) and a 14-year old son. At “6 foot” Kath is the shortest member of the family and spends her spare time supporting their various sporting interests.



*Mick, James, Rachel, Kath and Alex Toohey.*

*(Note from author: Kath was the first of our class to be promoted to 2-star and has just had her tenure extended).*

#### **Andrew Treble on deployment in Kandahar June 2019**

I have had the rewarding career I signed up for in 1987. Some, classmates and DS alike might even reflect on how the hell I even got to graduate, time spent in Orderly Rooms could have made me a decent lawyer. I am seven months into a nine and half month deployment embedded as the Chief of Future Operations for the US-led Train, Advise and Assist Command—South in Kandahar in support of Op Resolute Support (NATO) mission which will likely be my last.

I am not retiring the boots yet but in all fairness, war is a young blokes game so likely my last operation. In the past I've had a chance to participate in Op Cranberry—prelude to Op Relex (Sovereign Borders) now recognised with the operational service medal (domestic) while OC C Coy 51 FNQR 2000-2001, as well as Op Bel Isi—Bougainville (2000-2001), Op Slipper—Afghanistan (2008) and Op Highroad—Afghanistan (2018)



*Trebs (right) with US 1st Cavalry Division.*

I think I have had one of the more unconventional conventional journeys. Throughout I have been surrounded by an extensive network of friends forged from ‘on the square’ to the many different postings I have had. The first half was fairly straight legged at 8/9<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions. With a pregnant wife I tested the marital resilience taking her to Thursday Island (as inaccessible to family support for our first born). I had the jewel in the crown, a new family and the honour and experience of commanding indigenous soldiers. In that time, I trained four rotations of DFAT and AusAid in Op Bel Isi pre-deployment training, led an honour guard on the Sydney Opera House steps for the National Reconciliation Day (May 2000) and brought them to Canberra to dance at the AWM for the Centenary of the Army in 2001.

From there I went to learn Thai at the ADF School of Languages before attending The Royal Thai Command and General Staff College. I graduated three days before the 2006 military coup. We held our second daughter’s fifth birthday party that day; it took our friends only 15 minutes to get to our apartment instead of the normal 60 minutes due to a lack of traffic! In that time I was honoured to participate in ANZAC Day ceremonies at both Hell Fire Pass in 2005 and represent Army in Burma at the other end. I returned to SE Asia in 2011 to command 2/30<sup>th</sup> Training at Butterworth Malaysia, so for someone who missed the warries of RCB through the 90s, I got to live through 12 of them, ironically it’s me now being a bastard to subbies and soldiers and their misdemeanours in SE Asia! Who da thought?

A summary of 30 years is hard as my Army life has brought some of my highest highs and lowest lows. I have made many friends across Army, Navy and Air Force and other foreign militaries, Defence civilians and in DFAT. I have lost a few friends along the way; as we all have.

But most importantly for 24 of those 30 years, my wife Sarah has been the rock, the backbone of the family and the awesomeness that made our journey with the Army family to date pretty bloody good! Ambition and station in life doesn't always reflect true satisfaction or success, the lifetime memories of the friendships forged and the journey shared with the Bakers and Bed-fillers do.

On the road less travelled I am delighted to share some updates and profiles of those forging new paths, breaking stereotypes and challenging the status quo.

#### **Brad Greive AM: Author, wildlife expert, film/TV producer and ex-paratrooper—USA**

Bradley Trevor Greive AM (better known as BTG) served as a OC 1 PL, A Coy 3RAR(Para) when a tropical respiratory infection, contracted during the final days of Ex K92, damaged his lungs and ended his military career just before he commenced his second posting as OC DFW Pl, Spt Coy 3RAR(Para). Utterly devastated, BTG struggled to find his feet, taking on whatever work he could find—waiter, photographer assistant, art gallery guide and advertising copywriter—while trying to reinvent himself via a fledgling writing/publishing career as an underpaid cartoonist with the Sydney Morning Herald.

After eight failed manuscripts and a decade of unrelenting failure, he became an ‘overnight success’ when his first published book, *The Blue Day Book*, became a surprise international bestseller. BTG, who as Bn Q Sgt, often turned Mess Parade into an impromptu stand-up routine, is currently the world’s most successful humour author and Australia’s



highest selling author of all time, with numerous *New York Times* bestsellers and global sales in excess of 30 million copies across 115 countries. The *Blue Day Book* has celebrated its 20-year anniversary and has been republished in 2019.

BTG is a passionate champion for wildlife and wild places and leads at least one major conservation field project on every continent. Since relocating to the USA in 2010, he has made numerous natural history documentaries and television programs. After several years researching a sub-group of Alaskan brown bears, on the island of Kootznoowoo, he was formally adopted by the Deisheetaan clan of the Native American Tlingit people, and was given the Tlingit name Yáa Gí Yéil (Raven by the Pond). BTG's love of wild adventure, which he defines as 'fresh air plus testicle-shredding terror minus death', has so far resulted in twenty surgeries, countless sutures, two resuscitations, and numerous broken bones. Among a great many regrettable wildlife encounters, BTG has endured six treatments for rabies following monkey bites, he has been attacked by penguins on three separate occasions, and lost part of his left nipple to an enraged reindeer, and on at least one occasion was reluctantly intimate with a giant bat.



*BTG with Eagle Owl.*

Some of BTG's more unusual interests include space exploration, leading to him complete cosmonaut training with the Russian space program in 2004; and strength sports, culminating in BTG winning a Polynesian rock-lifting championship in Ha'apiti, Moorea, in 2006. Now on the verge of turning 50, rampant hair-loss and weight gain are the least of his problems. These days BTG's battered frame is largely held together by metal pins and scar tissue, and is so rigid with arthritis he has to warm up his joints like a un-greased robot for thirty minutes before attempting to brush his remaining teeth.

In 2014 BTG was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to literature and wildlife conservation. He currently divides his time between Australia and the USA in order to placate his American in-laws and thus remain happily married.

***Belden Namah: PNG military, former Deputy PM for PNG and MP—PNG***

Namah is the MP for Vanimo-Green River in the PNG Parliament (2007-current) and is currently a leader of one of the opposition parties. He has led a colourful yet controversial career. Upon graduation he was an officer in the Papua New Guinea Defence Force for several years. In late 1997 Namah and three other men were arrested and jailed for sedition in the Sandline mercenary affair in 1997. Paroled in 2003 Namah became a self-employed businessman, describing

himself as being 'into the multi-billion-dollar business of logging', before he entered politics.



*Belden Namah, MP.*

In 2007 he served as Minister for Forestry in the Somare-Temu cabinet. In July 2010 he resigned from the government and National Alliance Party membership to join the opposition, the Papua New Guinea Party led by Morauta. When Morauta stepped down Namah was elected Leader of Papua New Guinea Party and Leader of Opposition.

Upon becoming Leader of the Opposition, and leader of the PNG Party, Namah said that any government he might lead would aim to provide free universal education (noting that education was 'a right guaranteed under the constitution') and healthcare, and 'fix the law and order problem in this country'. In that regard, discipline would be instilled by compelling prospective students to undergo a two-year military service before entering university. There would be support for Papua New Guinean scientists working on climate change. He also said he supported the Somare government's bill on introducing reserved seats for women in Parliament.

In August 2011, Namah was appointed Deputy Prime Minister to Peter O'Neill and Minister for Forest and Climate Change. Upon taking office, Namah stated that the new government would, as a matter of priority, commit funds to provide free education to all the children in the country.

However controversy has followed him throughout his career. In 2014, a former police chief issued an arrest warrant for Namah, accusing the politician of having threatened him, and in April 2018 Namah was found guilty of misconduct from an incident in 2012. At that time there was a protracted major political impasse in which two groups of MPs claimed to be government. He gained a stay against the order of misconduct and dismissal in July 2018.

*(Note from author: Source Wikipedia and other online articles as Belden could not be reached for comment)*

***Charles Bishop & Steve Rohan Jones: Founders of Interactive Expos including Big Boys Toys, Toy & Board Game, Doeberl Cup and A Dogs Day Out***

For many of us what we are thought we would do and what we did do seem somewhat different. In the case of Steve and Charles or Charles and Steve (epitaph: inseparable since 1987\*), there is literally a world of difference as the French epigram says 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'.

On graduation from Duntroon, Steve and Charles took different but standard career paths. Charles chose RAAOC and served as an Ordnance officer for 11 years. Steve went into Artillery and served for 16 years during which period he was an instructor at RMC Sandhurst and deployed in the first rotation to East Timor.

In 2002, they arrived back into Canberra for the second time in their lives and spent six months enjoying life (aka not working), playing golf and laughing at the thought of ever working again, 'together'. They then decided to establish a Consulting company, O2C, to foster their relaxed lifestyles, grow their families and to pursue other interests and ideas.



*Steve and Charles Toy Game Expo2019.*

With O2C they provided standard leadership, project management, process re-engineering and authorship. However it was also where they started to venture down the 'road less travelled' and became involved in leading the way in Mental Health Awareness and Crisis Training, Emotion Intelligence and Resilience training. Steve co-authored *Weaving the Net* for the Mental Health Council and Charles produced the Bishop Report on recruitment and retention of school aged cadets in the ADF.

Steve and Charles are unique in their courage to create and pursue dreams that satisfy their inner child (ie 'never grow up') and this has led to the creation of a series of Expos and competitions. They were pioneers that went against the tide of 'technology'-focused entertainment, a risky venture with the rise of the internet and mobile phones. Their aim was, and remains, to provide 'hands on experience' of the best international and national board games available and to engage participants in more meaningful ways.

Since 2009 they have become trailblazers in building and running a wide range of distinct interactive public facing expos and events for fun including the Doeberl Cup, Toy and Board Game Expo, A Pooch Affair, Big Boys Toys and A Dogs Day Out. Delivered across multiple cities including Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, select highlights include:

- Owning a 20m by 10m inflatable Nerf arena.
- Meeting and having dinner with World Champion Chess player Gary Kasparov.
- Participating at International Trade Fairs for board games.
- Having a Playdoh pit with 250kg of Playdoh (yes, it does all move to grey in the end).
- Hosting the National Robot Wars championships.
- Racing around Canberra dirt trails in Rally cars.
- Running the National Titles for Settlers of Catan.
- Playing Board games in a store they own.

Charles and Steve have followed the sage words of Gandalf the Grey 'All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us'. Indeed, they wonder what they will do with the remainder of the time given to them. And, wonder what you will do with your time.

*Note from author: \* 1987 year of Army enlistment*

### **Stuart McIntosh: Finance Services Business Owner, Australian Whisky Maker—Mornington Peninsula Victoria**

"My grandparents passed the love of whisky through my parents to me and I want to make sure my children pass it onto their children". Written by Stuart's Father in 2011, these 25 words won 'Father and Son' an extensive trip of the Scottish distilling industry. Not only was it an inspiring trip, but it became the direct catalyst for Stuart and Naomi (Duntroon girlfriend turned wife) to establish Chief's Son Distillery on the Mornington Peninsula.

After the trip, Stuart and Naomi purchased a 'pilot' still and all the extensive brewing and maturation equipment and coupled with Naomi's science background, set about perfecting the art of distilling Single Malt Whisky. In 2014 they began developing the business case for a commercial operation and in 2015 the facility was complete and distillation commenced. In 2019 they very successfully launched their first three whiskies and were immediately recognised as a premium craft brand and stocked in prominent independent bottle shops and bars throughout Australia. They have now established a distribution agreement with China and have several other nations seeking their product.

In 2019, production increased significantly, making Chief's Son Distillery the largest independent, family owned Single Malt Whisky Distillery in Australia. Fortunately the passion doesn't stop with just Stuart and Naomi, but their families, including their three young children are now involved in the business. <https://www.chiefsson.com.au/>

Stuart served for 16 years as an Artillery Officer which included deployments to Bougainville and East Timor. "From 30 years ago as a struggling staff cadet, through Army and the Finance Industry, I could never have imagined building and operating one of Australia's largest Single Malt Whisky Distilleries... you got to love life's twists and turns!" Come and visit our Distillery Door when you're in the area. Make sure you jog the memory and we'll look after you.



*Naomi and Stuart McIntosh.*

**Macgregor Thompson: Entrepreneur in IT and Renewables—Sydney**

Mac served 10 years as an infantry officer with 5/7 RAR and Land HQ before leaving to run a gold bullion shipment and security company in PNG before returning to Australia to set up his own businesses. He founded DigiGuard, an Australian and New Zealand based IT business continuity firm and sold it to Iron Mountain (NYSE:IRM). He then built and sold CloudRecover, a Sydney based online storage and back up business to J2Global (NASDAQ:JCOM). He is currently working with David (D.B.) Griffin (Jun 1991) creating a renewable power export business from the Northern Territory to Singapore.



*Mac and Jo.*

Mac lives on the Northern Beaches of Sydney and is married to Jo. Between them they have five children aged 12–19.

**John Blake: Sailing, Singer/Songwriter—Sydney**

Many people ask me how I went from the Army (Infantry officer until 2000) to writing songs and being in a band. Well it was two things that occurred around the same time. One was my back seized up and I spent several months lying on an old Army stretcher. The second was that Georgie (my sister) bought me a ukulele in 2011 and challenged me to learn how to play it. This little uke made a big difference to me at the time—and still does. It was really the thing that started me on the road to being a singer/songwriter.



*John Blake & The Charm, Invictus Games 2018.*

However the journey wasn't a direct line after I left Army as with most people the path took some twists and turns. One of the twists occurred in 2015. Karen and I took time out and left for a Northern Adventure to cruise the east coast. We sailed from Sydney to Townsville, hopping to Islands, visiting river anchorages and enjoying the fraternity of cruisers. I took the uke with me and met many other like-minded people. The space on the cruise gave me the time to transition as a singer/songwriter.

Since then I've written 70 songs, formed a band 'The Charm' and performed in various venues and pubs across Sydney. The notable highlights for me have been co-producing "The Charm's" debut EP with Lindy Morrison (ex-The Go-Betweens) and the honour of being the only band invited to play in The Dome, Sydney 2018 Invictus Games. <https://nkmcfadzen.wixsite.com/thecharm>.

**Andrew Turley: Future History and Art Novelist & expert on Sidney Nolan artist—New Zealand**

Andrew Turley certainly took the road less travelled—Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Zambia, Zanzibar....



*Andrew Turley in Africa.*

In 1992, not long after graduation as an Officer in the Royal NZ Engineers, Andrew ended up in Cambodia leading a Mine Clearance Training Team as part of the UN Transitional Authority in the lead up to the first democratic elections. While there he contracted a viral fever that left him partially paralysed and although able to climb Kilimanjaro since, he sustained permanent nerve and muscle damage in his arms and legs.

He left the military after three years, retraining in advertising, eventually running an agency in Singapore and then his own agency for 14 years in Sydney. During this time he de-stressed by travelling Africa. For a month at a time he would make his way alone through countries off the beaten track, collecting ritual masks and artefacts as he went.

His passion for exploring Africa turned into a passion for exploring artist Sidney Nolan when he found a relatively forgotten series of paintings Nolan had done at the height of his fame. Collectively called 'African Journey' they were exhibited to and purchased by HM The Queen, members of the Royal Family and British high society in 1963 London.

He purchased several and decided to research and write on Nolan's forgotten paintings so their story wasn't permanently lost. His first book was on Nolan's 1964 'Adelaide Ladies', a series of portraits of Australian women who Nolan believed represented the modern and emerging character and identity of Australia, yet had been swept under the carpet by middle-aged male curators. This was in a time when women could be fined for drinking in a public bar and Australia was artistically defined by Nolan's earlier and more masculine 1940s Ned Kelly. The limited edition book is held in the UK's Tate Library as well as Australia's National and State libraries and the libraries of most public art galleries.

Having recently followed Nolan's footsteps through Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania Andrew is deciphering the painter's African works. He has written on Sidney Nolan for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Portrait Gallery and Artist Profile magazines, most recently appearing on the Australian ABC and United Kingdom's BBC documentary on Nolan's life. Who would have thought?

### **Simon Coburn: Environmental Science at University of Melbourne—Melbourne**

Simon never meant to join the Army. He was enrolled in nuclear physics at Sydney University. But when he attended the National Science Summer School, he did a tour of the RMC and the ADFA and decided to join the Army.

Simon can thank Kurt Weideling (classmate) for his 1990 Duntroon year book entry. It reads "In a time so deprived of idealism and hope, we looked for a man willing to sacrifice freedom, money and rank in order to prove a point. Simon was such a man." Kurt was onto something. Simon has been sacrificing money and rank to pursue new opportunities ever since.

Simon enjoyed the hell out of being a tank commander in Puckapunyal, a reconnaissance commander in Darwin and doing a master's degree on armoured vehicles in the UK. While in Darwin, he won the NT sailing championships in his laser dinghy and performed in the first Darwin production of Jesus Christ Superstar. Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote a letter to the cast to mark the occasion. On promotion to Major, he declined a posting to UNSTO when that was the only gong on offer. He joined the 17% of the Army that left in 1999 just before the "dash for cash" in Timor to start a farm machinery company. In his own words, "I didn't think I'd get another chance to start a company and to design and build stuff".



*Simon and Rachele home in Switzerland.*

Simon spent two years in Toowoomba delivering custom tillage equipment to farmers on the Darling Downs before being bought by another company. He also played the lead

role (Danilo) in the city's production of the opera, The Merry Widow. He then moved to New Zealand and joined the Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps as a major. Helen Clark (PM) had just selected the NZLAV instead of the F-16 and Simon spent two years in windy Wellington helping prepare for its arrival. He then moved back to the West Island, married Rachele and had two kids that look just like him (ouch).

While settling down as a married man, Simon studied for an MBA and worked at Woods Bagot, an architectural consultancy, as a project manager. He co-wrote a master plan for Australia's six major airports and built a radar maintenance facility at Melbourne Airport. Just as he was settling into a globetrotting lifestyle, he applied for a job in Switzerland. The family moved to a small village with no expats and learnt to speak German. When the global financial crisis struck and the company started laying off staff, Simon volunteered to manage a project in Romania that no one else wanted. He visited 33 times and came to love the people and the country. When the project ended, the family returned to Melbourne. He then worked part time at a small design and manufacturing company (Tectonica) so that Rachele could work full time as an English teacher. He led a team that designed and built a range of Li-ion battery testers called STATIX. He took up the ukulele to show his kids that even an old man could learn to play a new instrument. His kids now play the trumpet and harp. With ASLAV due for replacement, Simon threw his hat into the ring and joined Rheinmetall as campaign manager for the Boxer vehicle. He spent 18 months touring the country promoting the capability and resigned after Army selected Boxer and Rheinmetall chose Queensland instead of Victoria for the new factory.

Simon's interest in nuclear power has never waned. He has returned to university to study energy systems so that he might join the team that builds Australia's first nuclear power station, a lifelong ambition.

### **Peter Harris: Awarded Knight of the Ordre national du Mérite by the French Republic—Canberra**

I was honoured to receive the National Order of Merit, by the French Ambassador in the Residence of France in Canberra this year. The National Order of Merit was created by the General de Gaulle in 1963 and is awarded to French citizens and foreigners for distinguished military or civilian merits rendered to France.

The award was for my contribution, over 20 years, on bilateral defence relations between France and Australia, particularly in the areas of defence equipment exports, operational use of helicopters and industrial cooperation. The best part of this experience has been sharing the journey with Mandy and the kids. I received my aeronautical engineer degree and was a RAEME officer for 23 years including a deployment to Cambodia with UNTAC. I appreciate the opportunity provided by the Army as I have had the chance to learn another language and another culture.

There are many that have taken different tracks and made their impact in a variety of endeavours.

- Julie (nee Sims) Phillips is a psychiatrist, Canberra.
- John Rowlands owns two farms and personally manages the larger (600 acre) sheep farm, Ballarat.
- Kim Arthur is a Patient Transfer Officer, St John's Ambulance, Perth, WA.
- Kate (nee Barr) Campbell is in the Army Reserves, Albury/Wodonga.
- Paul Freeman is a wealth product specialist, Sydney.

- Mick Frewen is the CEO of Care Flight, Sydney.
- Andrew Northover runs a Business Resilience and Safety Advisory business, Singapore.
- Andrew Schaper is a Pastor/Chaplain, Brisbane.
- Steve Evans is a hobby farmer and avid fisherman, Sunshine Coast.
- Chris White is a Children’s author, Canberra.
- Denby Moylan is a PWC consultant, Canberra.
- Steve Clynk is a recently appointed Head of Strategy and Planning in Mining, Sydney.
- Kel Campbell is a sales manager within IT, Sydney.
- Scott Ordner is a commercial consultant with NBN, Sydney.
- Mark Silby has returned from living overseas and is in Brisbane.
- John Sholl is the risk officer for BHP Olympic Dam, Adelaide.

Also living overseas are:

- Patrick Crofskey, Mick Shatford, Stu Taylor, Ross Tucker—New Zealand.
- Mick (Greenan) Armstrong—Yangon, Myanmar.
- Alfred Aloysius, TC Yap—Singapore.
- A Haron – Malaysia.
- Steve Nichols—UAE.
- Mark Ferguson, Stirling Fielding, Kurt Weideling—UK.
- Darryl Groves, Matt Jackson—USA.



*David (D.J.) Fawcett (1985) SA Senator, Pete Harris, His Excellency Mr. Christophe Penot, Ambassador of France to Australia.*

It wasn’t possible to track down everyone in the class and share their stories but I hope you get a sense of the breadth and depth of talent that makes up the RMC Class of December 1990. It’s been wonderful to see their continuing vigour and enthusiasm for life, and how far and wide their paths have gone. Here’s to celebrating their achievements and endeavours in the past 30 years and to renewing and strengthening connections in 2020.

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*Karen McFadzen was in RASigs until 1999 and participated in Op BEL ISI, Bougainville. She then had a successful corporate career which enabled her to retire in 2014. Since then she has enjoyed some eclectic pursuits; she is an amateur watercolourist, band manager/roadie for The Charm, has cruised the east coast Australia with her husband, (John Blake) and two toy poodles, and volunteered with a girls special needs program.*  
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## Class of December 1999 – 20-year Reflections

**Roy Henry (Dec 1999)**

It will soon be 20 years since the 158 staff cadets marched off the RMC parade ground on 14 December 1999 into the wider Australian Defence Force and the armies of several other nations.

Our class was much like any other December Graduation class since 1986. Two thirds had graduated from the ADFA the year prior, before joining the 60 odd direct entry cadets who had completed six months of initial training at the RMC. Most of us were under 25 years of age. Cadets from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Thailand filled out the ranks, as well as several Royal Australian Air Force cadets.

There were the typical cadet life challenges well known to every graduate: Commanding Officer’s Drill Parades on Tuesday and Friday; BC Day every Wednesday; Company activities every Saturday followed by (compulsory) sport. Of course, who could forget the ‘never want to do twice’ Exercise Timor (now named Shaggy Ridge)—the infamous food and sleep deprivation exercise where we learned that you can sleep standing up, that ration pack food can be delicious cold, and such exercises are an extremely effective way to lose a lot of weight, fast!

Whilst cadets conducted Tactical Exercises Without Troops (TEWT) in the “Majura Fairbairn Corridor” against the infamous Musorians, the ADF grappled with a real strategic problem—East Timor. Resources and external staff that were routinely allocated to training cadets were rapidly and quietly redeployed north. On 20 September 1999, the ADF landed in East Timor. We watched the news to see friends and seniors from previous classes leading troops on operations on the streets of Dili and beyond. This was to be a major turning point for the College and for the careers of its graduates. The traditional motivational pitch with which instructors began each lesson became unnecessary: it was clear that most of us would soon deploy on operations.

The College struggled to meet major field exercise objectives given the reduction in external ADF support. At the College, training was immediately amended to include riot techniques, crowd control and civilian evacuation exercises. This change was two-fold: the training was immediately relevant, and more complex training involving external ADF assets was impossible given the extent of the ADF commitment to East Timor. As a result, some of our classmates had their first experience with RAAF C130s, Army Blackhawks and APCs when they joined their units, in country, on operations.

Whilst some may remember the Class of 1999 as a ‘budget’ class; for the graduates (and staff), our expectation of deployment to East Timor was seen as an incredibly exciting, once in a generation opportunity, and one not to be missed. New capabilities such as night vision goggles and section (Pintail) and platoon (Wagtail) radio sets were quickly introduced at the same time as ammunition was reduced to bare minimum quantities, forcing cadets to yell “bang, bang” during field exercises.

Those allocated to Infantry were whisked out of the College early, badged as second lieutenants and sent to Singleton for the Regimental Officer Basic Course before returning to the RMC just in time for graduation. A new record was set for ‘Graduation to Deployment’ by four of our classmates posted to 2 RAR who, with the equipment they

had on them at the time (this included Mess Kit), joined their platoons on the border of Timor just 12 days after graduation. They had also completed their (short) tour before most of us had marched into our units the following year! Within three weeks of graduation, there were at least 11 newly minted lieutenants in East Timor with the 2 RAR, 3 RAR and 5/7 RAR battlegroups. East Timor was not that rewarding for the four Artillery graduates who had their Christmas leave cancelled so they could backfill the duty officer appointments whilst their unit deployed.

Many of the 1999 class deployed to East Timor within two years. For the small number who regretted that they missed what was considered a once-in-a-generation opportunity, they could not have imagined that the ADF would serve in East Timor for almost a decade, and that they and their classmates would go on to serve in operations in Timor Leste, Bougainville, the Solomons, Sudan, Israel, Lebanon, Sinai, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as domestic operations including Op Gold—Sydney Olympics, the many iterations of border protection, and several Head of State visits. A straw poll of 30 graduates for this article showed they had collectively deployed overseas for a total of 40 years to at least two separate operational theatres.

Our classmates have had some extraordinary experiences:

- Mick Stone’s almost 20-year and continuing relationship with East Timor, including being the principal advisor to the President of Timor Leste, Jose Ramos Horta, and saving his life following an attempted assassination. Mick has been the subject of two separate episodes of *Australian Story* on the ABC.
- Vince Connelly was elected to the Federal Parliament in 2019 as the Member for Stirling.
- Matt Carr wrote a book called *Battle Scars* on how he used his military training to live with cancer, before finally succumbing to the disease in 2015.
- Gabby Follett was the first Australian in our class to be promoted to colonel, followed closely by Andrew Moss and Lou Turner. About a dozen others are on their way to pick up their red tabs in 2020.
- The abundance of medical doctors, some who commenced their careers in Infantry, Aviation, Engineers and Signals: Matt Starr, Ben Coleman, Kelvin Muller, Jodie Wallis (nee Forlonge), Jamie Fox (nee Johnson), Marc Heggart, Katrina Saunders (nee Warfe), Kane Lavender, Imogen Patterson, and Maggie Pollard (nee Chambers). Imogen Patterson joins ‘Digger’ James (1951) as one of the few RMC graduates to become a surgeon. Katrina Warfe is now Chief Medical Officer with the AFP.
- A high concentration of Thai Staff College graduates: Dave Hill, Nick Beumer, Alex Rubin and Richard Simson. One of our Thai graduates, Po (Pisut) Tempatarachoke, was a guest instructor on those courses. Josh Jardine also attended Indian Staff College.
- Sandy Taylor served with the Royal Australian Artillery for six years, before joining Royal Artillery, Her Majesty’s Armed Forces for four more years.
- Stuart Purves is currently on his third overseas instructional / liaison posting. With those and multiple deployments he has spent a third of his career overseas. Somehow, he has also avoided doing staff postings in Canberra.

- Roy Henry was fortunate to serve on operations in East Timor in 2012 at the same time as his father, who was an officer with the New Zealand Defence Force.
- Tina McBride was the first female Battalion 2IC / XO of an Infantry battalion (3 RAR).
- Amanda Creevey (nee Dewar) led the first psychological operations detachment in 2003 to Iraq.
- Jen Harris (nee Egan) is our capped Wallaroo player. She is also the first female CO of a Combat Engineering Regiment (3 CER) and a UK Staff College graduate.

The 1999 class was by no means unique. However, the collective experiences and service in the post-September 11 years has certainly solidified some pretty strong views on training, equipment and leadership. In 2019 the Army looks, feels and runs quite differently from the one we knew as we graduated. Our class has seen a major transformation of the Army and the ADF at large and many have been fortunate to play a significant, and for some, a continuing role in that transformation. The skills obtained in the Army have led to a remarkable diversity of later lives as engineers, pilots, doctors, consultants, crooners, lawyers, authors, project managers, wellness coaches and entrepreneurs.

Perhaps a 1999 SCDT would say to a 2019 staff cadet, “Stay fit, be ready, and believe in yourself and your team. Opportunities will come thick and fast. It’s going to be one hell of a ride!”

Or would they just say: “Doctrina vim Promovet” – Learning Promotes Strength.

## Jock Irvine’s Cartoons

**John (J.E.) Bullen (1958)**

G.D.W. Irvine, born in Edinburgh and better known to all as Jock, was a Colour Sergeant at Duntroon, graduating in 1956 into infantry. He was an early member of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam where he served for 15 months in 1963-64. In the late 1970s he was Director, Military Police.

Jock was well known for his serious face, concealing a keen ability to see humour almost anywhere. A gifted artist, he drew many quite delightful and highly perceptive cartoons, some of them of cadet life at Duntroon in the 1950s. He was also chosen to illustrate Geoffrey Solomon’s quite delightful book *A Poor Sort of Memory* on life at Duntroon in the late 1930s. Jock’s equally delightful sketches add a charming and often subtle dimension to that excellent book.

Several of Jock’s 1950s cadet life cartoons have come into *Newsletter* hands and will be published one at a time in issues to follow.

Here is the first one—possibly the least subtle cartoon he ever drew. For those readers who have not instantly recognised the subject, it is RSM G.J. Watson MBE in typical pose.

‘Fango’ Watson—not even senior officers ever dared to address him as Geoff—served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF, mostly with 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment, and in 1946 was posted to the RMC as the Regimental Sergeant-Major until 1954. At Duntroon he created an individual legend. Renowned for his immaculate appearance, his unbending authority and his insistence on perfection, he firmly established himself as an all-powerful demigod to the imperfect, namely the Corps of Staff Cadets.

Commissioned in December 1954, he marched off from the RMC December 1954 graduation parade in company with the 1954 graduating class. As an officer he served in the

Armoured Corps at Puckapunyal, later returning to Canberra where he retired in 1965.

In later life he remained formidable. He applied the same rigid discipline to all plants under his command in his garden at 50 Blamey Crescent, Campbell, winning several gardening prizes. One cold Sunday in the late 1970s, armed with pruning shears and leaping out from behind a precision groomed shrub to ambush a startled pair of off-duty staff cadets in civilian dress on their way to the Australian War Memorial, he declared that if he were still the Regimental Sergeant-Major of the Royal Military College they wouldn't be walking down Blamey Crescent with their hands in their pockets and live to talk about it.



## An Invitation to the Australian Embassy, Saigon 1970

**James (J.B.) Doohan (OCS Dec 63)**

In June 1970 Major Neville (N.R.) Smethurst (1956) was invited by the then Ambassador, Sir Ralph Harry, to attend a dinner function held at the Australian Embassy, Saigon. The reason was that Neville had been awarded the Polar Medal for his outstanding work as OIC of Mawson Base Antarctica in the early 1960s.

The Polar Medal was presented by the UK to those who participated in a polar expedition endorsed by the governments of a Commonwealth country, with emphasis placed on personal achievement. For Australians, it was replaced in 1987 by the Australian Antarctic Medal. To my knowledge, Neville Smethurst was the only Australian Army officer to have received the award.

Sir Ralph Harry was keen to present Neville with his medal and had invited all of the other ex-Antarctic expeditioners in country to be there as witness to the occasion. Ever the family man, Neville demurred wanting to have his wife Maureen present when he was formally awarded the medal. Sir Ralph graciously accepted his excuse but said he was proceeding with the dinner in any case as an in-country celebration of his award.

Subsequent photos are a good record of the night at the palatial Saigon Embassy with Sir Ralph freely engaging with the ex expedition members.



*Sir Ralph Harry (Ambassador), Captain James Doohan, RAASC (ANARE 65/66, 66/67), and Neville Smethurst, RAInf (ANARE 60). (Photo courtesy of James Doohan)*



*Sir Ralph Harry, Ray Selkrig (Embassy Staff), James Doohan, and Neville Smethurst. (Photo courtesy of James Doohan)*



*Sir Ralph Harry, Sergeant Norm Hawkins, RAEME (ANARE 65/66), Sergeant Ed Lowe, RAASC (ANARE 62/63), James Doohan, Neville Smethurst, Sergeant RAEME (unknown), Ray Selkrig, and WO2 John Heather, RAASC (ANARE 59/60). (Photo courtesy of James Doohan)*

*James Doohan graduated from the OCS Portsea in Dec 1963 to RAASC. As OC of 42 Amphibian Platoon he was seconded to the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE) in charge of the Army detachment responsible for unloading the polar vessels operated by the Danish Lauritzen Line which was hired by ANARE for their annual expeditions.*

He went on two four-month expeditions: 1965/66 and 1966/67 and in that time visited all of the Australian Antarctic bases. James served in SVN as Operations Officer in 5 Coy RAASC (Feb 1970 to Feb 1971), attended the Royal Military College of Science in Oxfordshire, UK before returning to Australia to work in Army Materiel Branch. Apart from a stint as a Squadron Commander and an SO2 in Ops Branch HQ FF Comd, he spent the remainder of his career in Materiel Branch. He resigned from the Army in 1986 to take up a position as a management consultant in DVA. He became a senior mathematics teacher at St Edmunds College Canberra for 12 years before moving to Bendigo Secondary College. He is currently retired and lives in Kyogle where he is Chairman of the Kyogle Division of Legacy and is growing a rain forest. He is the author of two books—the satirical Sniveller's Handbook (how to get on) and Mastering Study.

## A Fitting Conclusion to a Fine Military Career

**John (J.E.) Bullen (1958)**

The Queen's Birthday Trooping of the Colour Parade at Duntroon on Saturday 8 June 2019 was the final military parade for the Governor-General His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, AK, MC, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Defence Force. It was now more than 54 years since his first appearance on this same parade ground as Staff Cadet P.J. Cosgrove in 1965. It is the army parade ground he knows best of all, having spent so much of his first three years here on defaulters parades in all types of weather, even in dense winter fog.

As described elsewhere in this issue of this *Newsletter* by the DMA Colonel Chris Alder, it was indeed a fine parade. Everything went perfectly in weather to match. But there were some differences from a normal Queen's Birthday Parade.

On receiving the presentation from the College at the end of the parade, Sir Peter recalled some of his own experiences as a proud member of Kokoda Company (the 'Doggies'). He mentioned the memorable Queen's Birthday Parade event when a cadet near him became too enthusiastic during the three cheers for Her Majesty, impaling his arm on a bayonet—later fainting and leaving a pool of blood on the parade ground.

The former Sergeant Cosgrove, now Doggie-in-Chief, expressed disappointment on learning that today's admirable Battalion Sergeant-Major had somehow failed to be a member of his beloved Kokoda Company.

In addition to the formal presentation from the College, Kokoda Company made their own presentation – a green Kokoda Company T-shirt and a dog tag inscribed with his CSC number, his name and the date.

The BSM led the Corps of Staff Cadets in "Three cheers for his Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Graduate of the Royal Military College – Duntroon".

At the end of the parade, Sovereign's Company (Gallipoli) marched off from the Robert Campbell Road end of the parade ground while Kapyong Company at the other end of the line marched off near Duntroon House. Alamein, Long Tan and Kokoda Companies marched up each of the stairs below Ack Block, the flagpole and Beer Block respectively. It looked good.

Their Excellencies Sir Peter and Lady Cosgrove were driven to Duntroon House where they enjoyed the Officers Mess hospitality amongst many old friends. General Sir Peter was lavish in his praise for this parade and in particular, the BSM, Senior Under Officer Amy Rowlings. It had been a wonderful parade to finish on.

## Of RSMs and Hair

**Noel (N.) Sproles (OCS June 1960)**

I was cleaning out a cupboard the other day when I came across an old photo album. In it was a photo of Sapper Noel Sproles taken at Balcombe Barracks not long before I went to the Officer Cadet School at Portsea. I was barely 19 and was sporting a brand-new crew cut—the ultimate in cool in the late 1950s. My mother greeted my crew cut with wide-eyed surprise when I next went home on leave. However, her reaction was nothing compared to that from WO1 C.R. 'Tara' Hockings who I was to meet some weeks later. Tara (and one never referred to him by that name when he was anywhere in earshot) was the Regimental Sergeant-Major at OCS. He was not a big man but made up for that with a presence that was to control our lives for the next year.

My first acquaintance with RSM Hockings was when he jumped aboard the bus that had just delivered us to OCS. Lambs to the slaughter comes to mind! He cut a fine figure and every bit of leather and piece of brass on his uniform glittered and gleamed. His pace stick remained so horizontal that it seemed he must have had a gyroscope hidden in it somewhere. The creases in his trousers were so sharp that you could imagine shaving yourself with them while using his boots as a mirror. Topping it all off, like garnish on a dish of haute cuisine, were several rows of crisp and bright campaign ribbons. His first address to us comprised just one sentence, albeit a very long one! It went like this: "My name is Hockings I am the RSM you call me sir on the command move move off the bus form three ranks thumbs against the seams of your trousers heels together feet at thirty degrees MOVE!!!" Things went downhill from there.



*New class arriving at OCS Portsea in January 1959. At left is the Adjutant, Captain J.C. Harding and at far right is the RSM, WO1 C R Hockings. John Harding was a member of the first class to attend OCS, graduating in June 1952. As a major and also as a lieutenant colonel he later served on RMC staff in the 1970s.*

A few hours later I was struggling back from the Q store with rifle and webbing and kit bag hanging off my back and my arms loaded down with all types of uniforms. As I



struggled along, I took in the picturesque view of Port Phillip and Mud Island and the ships passing so close to the beach that you could hear the engines thumping. My reverie was shattered by Tara's booming voice from the Orderly Room verandah. We then had the first of the many single sentence one-way conversations that we would have over the next 12 months. "Mr Sproles you will have all year to admire the view look to your front there is a pace ladder in the ground get on to it thirty-inch paces LEFT RIGHT LEFT RIGHT HEEL TOE HEEL TOE EYES FRONT". Bloody hell I thought, how did he know who I was? There goes the protection of anonymity! His secret of course was that photos were taken of all candidates as part of the selection panel process. He had studied every photo and so knew who we were before we even got to Portsea.

He was not without humour. Every now and then we went through the sizing exercise—you know the routine—'tallest on the left, shortest on the right' sort of thing. We must have been growing lads to justify the frequency of the operation. Arthur Schaschke was bowlegged and was always on the short end of the line. Every time we went through the routine, Tara would roar from one end of the parade ground to the other "Mr Schaschke, if you could get your knees together you would be on the other end of the line!" The only possible reply was a crisp "Yessir" as, to laugh on parade, even at the RSM's attempts at humour, was to guarantee seeing the sun rise next morning as you attended the defaulters' parade.

We had the dubious distinction of graduating into the senior class just as the Army replaced the Lee Enfield .303 rifle with the 7.62 mm Self Loading Rifle. While our junior class had only the SLR to deal with, we were blessed with both. When not in use, our rifles were laid out, completely stripped, in our rooms on our 'tables bedside'. The duty cadet would ring the RSM five minutes before morning parade to see which rifle our class had to take on parade. Tara would hum and haw and eventually nominate one. That meant we had to have one rifle assembled and the other stripped each morning on a few minutes notice. Always, there was the risk that one mistake or one mark on any component guaranteed a journey down the hill next morning to greet the sun.

Anyway, I digress. Back to the crew cut. On our first parade, Tara gave each of us his undivided and personal attention. When he got to me, he paled, took a step back and told me in no uncertain terms what he thought of young gentlemen sporting crew cuts! He then uttered a momentous directive that goes so far against the grain for any RSM that I suspect that it was an all time first and has never been repeated since. "Grow your hair Mr Sproles. You have two weeks to do it!". What could one say but "Yes Sir! Right away Sir!"

While the RSM would take his time in deciding which rifle we would have on parade, he could be quick when things really mattered. Len Grant was a New Zealander in my senior class. Having graduated a few hours earlier and displaying a level of courage that exceeded his discretion, Len resolved to get Tara to call him 'Sir'.

As the new graduates packed up to leave Portsea the day after graduation, all the assistant instructors went to ground. Undeterred, Second Lieutenant Len boldly strode down to the RSM's office, knocked on his door and was told "You may enter, Mr Grant".

There followed a pained conversation for a while as both parties knew what this was about.

Eventually Len said "I have to go now RSM".

"Yes Mr Grant, you may go".



*The offending haircut, modelled by Sapper Sproles.*

"That is not quite what I wanted to hear, RSM".

"Yes sir" the RSM conceded.

Victory! Mission accomplished, Len left the headquarters building and was on the path up to the cadets' quarters to let us all know of his triumph.

The RSM came out of his office and from the verandah bellowed out "Mr Grant!"

Len halted 2, 3, turned 2, 3 and, standing to attention, yelled back "Sir!"

Honour satisfied, the RSM turned and walked back into his office. He wasn't an RSM all those years for nothing.

Postscript – Len Grant (OCS Dec 1959) graduated into the New Zealand Regiment and was subsequently awarded the MBE, though presumably not for bravery in the face of the RSM.

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*Dr Noel Sproles graduated from OCS Portsea in June 1960 into the Royal Australian Survey Corps and later graduated from RMIT in Land Surveying. He served at Fire Support Base Coral during the Vietnam War. Later in 1968 he was wounded in action as the Australian Liaison Officer to the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force near Binh Son. As a lieutenant colonel he retired from the Army in 1982 and studied successfully for his PhD degree. These days his hair is short, neat and very much in keeping with his RSM's kindly advice of 60 years ago.*  
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## From the DMA

### Colonel Chris Alder (Dec 1998)

The second half of 2019 finds the College at its normal frantic pace. We currently have 146 cadets in I Class, 131 in II Class, and 89 in III Class. At the time of writing this update, I and II Class are currently at Puckapunyal undertaking a range of field training activities. Deployment to Puckapunyal has again allowed good opportunities for the cadets to conduct integrated training with the Combined Arms Training Centre. This has provided an excellent exposure to combined arms capabilities, and the opportunity for cadets to interact with recent graduates. Exposure to wider Army capability in the field remains an important part of cadet training. In the short term, it provides realistic training opportunities. In the longer term, it helps the cadets decide which corps they wish to serve following graduation.



*Kokoda Company with His Excellency General Sir Peter Cosgrove, after Queen's Birthday Parade.*

The new Third Class are coming to the end of their foundation training period and are preparing for the Lanyard Parade and their formal acceptance into the Corps of Staff Cadets. You will be pleased to know that on visiting III Class recently during Bayonet Assault Course training at Majura the temperature on the range was in the minuses, and several degrees cooler in the water obstacles! It was wonderful to see many smiles all round as the cadets showed real determination in their approach to this training.

Our preparations to welcome III Class into the Corps of Staff Cadets follows on from the commissioning of 84 cadets during the June Full Time Officer Commissioning Course graduation. Every class that graduates Duntroon has a distinctive culture that is very apparent to the staff who oversee training. You can rest assured that our most recent graduates were highly impressive, particularly in respects to their maturity and professional focus in wanting to learn as much as they could about the challenges ahead. The Battalion Sergeant Major, Senior Under Officer Amy Rowlings, demonstrated exceptional leadership and outstanding academic application during her time at the College, and was a worthy recipient of the Queen's Medal and Sword of Honour.

Our most recent graduates also had a strong cohort of international Cadets: 5 from Fiji, 3 from Pakistan, 2 from Papua New Guinea, 1 from Qatar and 1 from Thailand. Of interest, the mid-year graduation marked the commissioning of Staff Cadet Nikita Urum, Duntroon's first female Papua New Guinea graduate; and Sergeant Hamad al-Naimi, Duntroon's first Qatari graduate. I can assure you that the Duntroon experience continues to forge close bonds between our international and Australian cadets. We are a much stronger and more capable Army as a result of these connections.

Duntroon continues to support broader Army officer training through our Part Time and Specialist Service Officer training. Our most recent Part Time course graduated 46 lieutenants, with the Sword of Honour being presented to Officer Cadet Christopher Lenton. Chris is a participant in the ADF Gap Year Program, and was allocated to RAINF and posted to 3 RAR on completion of his training at Duntroon. At the time of writing our Specialist Service Officer course is conducting basic field training at Majura. This again is a rich

panel of skilled individuals who bring diversity and a depth of experience to the Army.

As is always the case, this year's Queen's Birthday Parade involved a Trooping the Colour ceremony. 2019 saw the parade return to Duntroon following recent years of being held on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. The Corps of Staff Cadets were again very well supported by the Band of the Royal Military College. The parade was reviewed by Governor-General His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, AK, AC, MC, as his last official military parade as Governor-General. The Colours of the Royal Military College embody the history, tradition and responsibility of the Corps of Staff Cadets. The unique opportunity to Troop the Queen's Colour on the Queen's official Birthday instils a great sense of pride in cadets and graduates, and the staff and cadets involved in the parade were privileged to have had the opportunity to formally farewell the Governor-General during this ceremony. Following the parade, Cadets from Kokoda Company welcomed the Governor-General into the Corps of Staff Cadets' Mess. This was a very fitting gesture that allowed the Governor-General to reflect on his initial experience in Kokoda Company as a cadet. As part of his farewell, the Governor-General very generously gifted his service uniform to the Corps of Staff Cadets. This will now proudly be displayed in the Corps of Staff Cadets' Mess.

As the year draws to a close, this journal publication will coincide with the end of Brigadier Hoskin's tenure as Commandant of the Royal Military College of Australia. It is important that I acknowledge Brigadier Hoskin's commitment to support the College and more importantly the Cadets during his time as Commandant. Your support has been outstanding and is greatly appreciated. We look forward to maintaining the close connection that has been formed, and wish you all the best for the future.



## From the President, Duntroon Society

### Chris (C.G.) Appleton (1978)

At the Queen's Birthday parade the College farewelled His Excellency General Sir Peter Cosgrove AC MC (1968) from his last day on the square at RMC, more than 50 years after he graduated and shortly before he concluded his appointment as Governor General. It is a matter of pride to the Society that the highest office in the land continues to be held by a graduate of the College—General David Hurley AC DSC (1975) is also a member of the Society.



*His Excellency General Sir Peter (P.J.) Cosgrove (1968) reviews the Queen's Birthday Parade, escorted by SUO Amy Rowlings. (Photo courtesy of the RMC)*

In June the Duntroon Society Award was presented to Mark Rakatani of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force. Mark graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1917, the first member of the PNGDF to do so. Mark's father, Colonel John Rakatani was the PNGDF Exchange Officer at the RMC in 1989–90. Mark's great grand-father, Sergeant Major Katue (of the then Australian Army's Papuan Infantry Battalion) earned the Military Medal on the Kokoda Track, in the early days of that campaign, before the arrival of the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion. His portrait by Sir William Dargie is held in the Australian War Memorial.



*The PNG Defence Attaché with Mark Rakatani and Chris Appleton. (Photo courtesy of the RMC)*

In other news...

When the 46<sup>th</sup> Parliament resumed after the May Federal election, five RMC graduates were among the 151 Members of the House of Representatives: Vince Connelly (1999)

RAInf, Lib, Stirling, WA newly elected); Andrew Hastie (2006), RAInf, Lib Canning WA, returning); Luke Gosling (1993), RAInf, ALP, Solomon NT, returning); Stuart Robert (1991), AustInt, Lib, Fadden Qld, returning) and Andrew Wilkie (1984), RAInf, Independent, returning). Other veteran MPs include Mike Kelly (formerly AALC, ALP, Eden Monaro) and newly elected Phil Thompson (former infantryman, 1 RAR, Lib, Herbert, Qld). And in the Senate: David Fawcett (1985), AAAvn, Lib, SA) and Jacqui Lambie (Independent, former RACMP).

At the June graduation, women received seven of the 11 prizes awarded to the graduating class. Women also received four of the 12 Corps prizes. SUO Amy Rowlings received both the Sword of Honour and the Queen's Medal. Seven women were placed in the first 17 on the graduation order of merit, and Nikita Urum graduated to the PNGDF, the first woman to do so.

If you wish to discuss any matter concerning the Society, please contact me at [dunsoc@central.com](mailto:dunsoc@central.com).

### New Members

Since the last newsletter, 18 new members have joined the Society, their names are listed below. Please continue reach out to mates past and present to invite them to join us in the Society at [www.dunsoc.com/join](http://www.dunsoc.com/join). New members are:

Tony Bennett (Jun 2001)  
Hamish Brown (Jun 2019)  
Kelvin Campbell (Dec 1990)  
Evangeline Dowling (Jun 2019)  
Martin Dutton (1982)  
Sebastian Ellis (Jun 2019)  
Darren Latham (Jun 1991)  
Karen McFadzen (Dec 1990)  
Stuart McIntosh (Oct 1990)  
Leslie Meyers (OTU 2/65)  
Jenny Pieper (née Corbett) (WRAAC OCS1983)  
Amy Rowlings (Jun 2019)  
Kirsten Shumann (Dec 1991)  
Mark Silby (Dec 1990)  
Rosanna Slater (Jun 2019)  
Ben Stafford (Dec 2018)  
Neil Thompson (OCS Dec 1979)  
Aaron Tucker (Dec 1999)

## From the OTU Association

### Frank Miller (OTU 4/67)



It is pleasing to report that the number of financial members continues to increase. As mentioned previously, this is primarily due to the number of class reunions set to commemorate their fiftieth anniversary of graduation. So often, people who haven't caught up for over five decades, take the opportunity to re-engage with their long lost colleagues and "The Scheyville Experience". As well, a drive on seeking up-to-date computer addresses along with diligent work by the membership officer have paid handsome dividends.

Preparation for the 2020 October national reunion is going well. This will involve two main events—a formal mixed dinner on the Friday evening and a picnic lunch at the Scheyville site on the Sunday. The intervening Saturday has been set down for individual class reunions.

Scheyvillians marched behind the OTU banner at the ANZAC day parades in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, and for the first time, the ACT. On dismissal, participants usually head off to a luncheon and fellowship. In many cases they are joined by the ladies.

The OTU Association held its annual National Council meeting in early July. Comprising the national executive and the heads of the state and territory chapters, it was held via a video link hook up. This is a most important forum as it is the governing body for the entire Association. Matters including the long term future of the organisation and avenues for further improvement of features offered to members were discussed.

A number of formal dining in nights have been held. Mention is made of the Queensland chapter dinner at which Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Gary (G.J.) McKay MC (OTU 2/68) was guest speaker.

Melbourne's annual Geddes Dinner was rescheduled from July to March to accommodate the number of members who head north and overseas to avoid the winter chill. The move proved successful with some seventy Scheyvillians and friends attending. Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Alistair (A.A.) Pope (OTU 4/66) gave a fascinating talk on ISIS and its demise. This was the thirteenth Geddes dinner.

It is pleasing to report that RMC's "Team Scheyville" came tenth in over forty teams that competed in this year's international officer training Academy challenge. Held at West Point, participants are judged over a range of basic military field skills. The Association was most pleased with this result and proud that recognition of the name Scheyville continues.

The coffee table book featuring a large number of photographs taken when the OTU was operational, along with the names of staff and graduates is due shortly for publication. It promises to be a fascinating read.

Plans are well in hand for next year's youth development initiatives in a number of states and the ACT. To list these once more, Victoria and NSW send young people to the January Lord and Lady Somers camps. The ACT sponsors youth to attend Rotary's RYLA programme, Queensland the VITAE initiative, Western Australia the Leeuwin programme and, South Australia, in conjunction with Tasmania, Operation Flinders. This is the Association's way of giving back to young boys and girls some of the highly beneficial experiences that were part of life at Scheyville all those years ago.

Financially the Association is on a very strong footing. Careful attention is being paid to ensure that funds are to be spent wisely and in accordance with the organisation's stated objectives.

The Association's magazine, the *Scheyvillian* has been published three times a year. It is always most interesting in its reminiscences of the course, its "what are they doing now?" articles on former cadets and staff, and its incisive reviews of recent military books.

Frank Miller  
Chairman, OTU Association.

## From the Branches

### Australian Capital Territory

#### Branch Office Holders

Convenor: Chris (C.G.) Appleton (1978)

Secretary: Jason (J.J) Hedges (1992)

Treasurer: Mike (M.J.) Ryan (1980)

Members: Moreen (M.P.) Dee (WRAAC OCS 1966);

George (G.T.) Salmon (1959); Mike (M.J.) Ford (1957);

Stuart (S.B.) Althaus (RMC & OCS Jun 1982)

The Autumn Lunch was held in Duntroon House on 24 May and attended by 40 members and guests of the Society. Colonel Chris Alder, the Director of Military Art spoke of the imperatives driving the training program at RMC and Brigadier Rupert Hoskin made some closing remarks. Good company in splendid surrounds were enjoyed by all.



*ACT Autumn lunch: Margaret Appleton, Merrie Hepworth (WRAAC OCS 1967) and Ross (R.R.) Harding (1948).*



*ACT Autumn lunch: mid-1970s CSC RSM and CO reunited: Colin Swinbourn and John (J.A.) Sheldrick (1956).*

Please save the date for the Branch's Annual Dinner on Friday 8 November 2019 at Duntroon House commencing at 7.00 pm. The guest speaker will be Lieutenant General John (J.J) Frewen (1986), who is the Principal Deputy Director of the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD). More information about General Frewen is at <https://asd.gov.au/about/leadership.htm>. Invitations seeking attendance and payment will be issued by email in September. Please consider rounding up a few classmates to come along.

## New South Wales

### Branch Office Holders

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

### Annual Graduation Week Lunch—Friday, 13 December 2019

Please 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 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.

### Monthly Lunch

Many Duntroon Society members meet at the Imperial Service Club, now incorporated in the Royal Automobile Club at Circular Quay. They normally meet on the second Friday of each month at 1200hrs for 1230hrs and have an excellent two course lunch and wines for \$65 per head. Future lunches will be held on 11 Oct, 5 Nov (Melbourne Cup, mixed) 8 Nov, and 13 Dec (mixed). 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.

## New Zealand

### Branch Office Holders

Patron: Major General Robin (R.G.) Williams (1952).  
Auckland Sub-branch Convenor: Lieutenant Colonel Barry (B.D.) Dreyer (1965).  
Wellington Sub-branch Convenor: Brigadier Ian (I.J.) Duthie (1962).

### Auckland Sub-branch

#### Luncheon

Twenty-four members of the Auckland branch lunched on 16 August at the historic Ranfurly War Veterans Home in Three Kings in Auckland.

The Veterans Home was founded in 1903 as the National Memorial to the 272 New Zealanders who died in the South African War 1899 to 1902. Funds to build the Home were raised by public appeal. The initial 40 veterans in residence came from the New Zealand Wars, the Crimean War, and the Indian Mutiny.

The Home has been in continuous use since, and at its peak it comprised an 83-bed rest home, a 35-bed hospital, and a 24-bed dementia unit.

Nowadays, the trust has leased its land to a privately-owned retirement village operator and gone into a joint venture development of the site. This includes a 60-bed hospital and home, the refurbishment of the original Ranfurly House, and the development of a retirement village of 170 apartments.

The refurbished Ranfurly House provides a community and service centre for Veterans, and residents of the Ranfurly retirement village. This magnificent building includes a bar, café, dining facilities, library, recreation spaces, a theatrette,

and offices of the Ranfurly Veterans Trust. These facilities can be used by residents and the Auckland Veterans' community. The refurbishment was superbly done to the highest standards at a cost of \$10 million.

Lunch was first class, with plenty of catching up and camaraderie. The last guests departed sometime after 3 PM.



*The National Memorial board in the Ranfurly War Veterans Home.*

### Our Oldest Graduate

Some of you may remember Brigadier Les Wright, class of 1942. He was a Colonel on ANZUK Force Headquarters in Malaysia and Singapore, and on the departure of the Brits, was tasked with forming the new HQ ANZ Support Group, which opened in October 1970.

Brigadier Les is fit and well and lives in his home on the North Shore in Auckland. The writer and Tony McLeod, who heads the RNZA Association, visited him at his home to discuss some aspects of the battles at Casino and North to the liberation of Trieste. Brigadier Les served in a field regiment and was then GSO3 on Divisional Artillery Headquarters.

We think he is the oldest living New Zealand Duntroon graduate. We are confident he has a few more years yet. Brigadier Les is a mine of information and is able to use his great memory to recount minute detail of incidents and characters from long ago. He is sprightly and active, but has poor forward-looking eyesight (not good for a gunner). He passes his best wishes to all members of the Society.

### Wellington Sub-branch

The Wellington Sub-branch held its annual Winter Lunch at the Royal Wellington Golf Club on Sunday 14 July. A total of 21 attended and enjoyed an afternoon of fine food, wine and companionship.

## Queensland

### Branch Office Holders

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

Here in South East Queensland our social schedule is to meet for lunch monthly at the United Service Club on the second Wednesday, with the numbers being around 6 to 12, usually. All members with email addresses receive a monthly reminder. About twice a year we upgrade the monthly lunch to a 'lunch with partners' format. The most recent was a most enjoyable 'Christmas-in-July' lunch on 10 July with a convivial 27 attending. The next 'with partners' lunch will be probably be in November, probably on the second Wednesday, and with a 'Christmas-at Christmas' theme. As always, an email notice will go out 2-3 weeks ahead. If you

think you have missed out, contact Convenor, Graeme Loughton, on 07 3378 7376 or [loughton@bigpond.net.au](mailto:loughton@bigpond.net.au).

## South Australia & Northern Territory

### Branch Office Holders

Chairman / Convenor: Doug (D.D.) Strain (1978)  
Deputy Chairman / Convenor: Peter (P.J.) Neuhaus (1975)  
Members: Jack (I.R.) Gregg (1976), David (D.C.) Litchfield (1978), Chris (C.M.) Burns (OCS Dec 1979), Chris (C.) Mulraney (1979), Steve (S.M.) Quinn (1978), Chris (C.E.T.) Roe (1987), Tim (T.J.) Hanna (1980), Steve (S.F.) Larkins (OCS 1976), Leanne Glenny (WRAAC OCS 1983), Mark (M.G.) Dickson (1977).

To keep up to date with the latest information about events please connect with the SA Branch on Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/DuntroonSocietySA/>.

### Annual Graduation Luncheon—3 December 2019

We will be holding our 2019 Annual Graduation Luncheon at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club on Tuesday, 3th December 2019 commencing at Noon for 12.30 pm.

This year our guest speaker will be well known Adelaide journalist and Sunday Mail columnist Lainie Anderson who will recount details of the 1919 Vickers Vimy flight from England to Australia which has become such an important part of the national fabric of aviation, and with a special emphasis on Adelaide.

“It may have resembled a “coffin with wings”, Lainie said “but the Vickers Vimy biplane sitting at Adelaide Airport propelled its mostly SA crew to fame after one of the most daring and significant flights in history”.

Her research has culminated in her recently published book “Long Flight Home” and is a fictionalised account of the trip through the eyes of on-board mechanic Wally Shiers, who had promised to return straight after World War I to his sweetheart.

Lainie, who travelled overseas to research the historic flight as part of a Churchill Fellowship, says the fact that two other crews crashed and died in the air race brings home how dangerous the adventure was. The planes were made of wood and fabric, they had little more than a compass for navigation and, after India, they landed on racecourses and jungle clearings — newspapers at the time said, ‘This is crazy, it will end in death’.

Lainie says she was struck by the ingenuity of the winning Vickers Vimy crew—South Australian airmen Ross and Keith Smith and mechanics Shiers, also from SA, and James Bennett, from Victoria.

“They were so clever, they used chewing gum to fix a cracked piece of the engine,” she says. “In Indonesia, the plane was sunk in mud, so villagers took bamboo matting off the walls of their homes to make a runway.”

Lainie will have copies of her book available to purchase and will be happy to autograph any copies members may bring along.

The cost of the luncheon is \$70.00 which includes a main course and desert. All pre-Luncheon and luncheon drinks are to be paid for at the bar. Payment is via EFT to Westpac BSB No: 735-041 Account No: 502573 Account: The Duntroon Society. Please note your name as the description. For alternate payment contact Doug on 0407 200 664 or: [doug@thedssolution.com.au](mailto:doug@thedssolution.com.au).



Lainie Anderson.

### Second Tuesday Group

Adelaide ex-serving and serving officers have been meeting informally on a monthly basis for nearly 20 years through a group informally titled the ‘Second Tuesday’ group. This group continues as a conduit for local graduates to network and has 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, Adelaide. Any visitors to Adelaide are most welcome. If you wish to know more please contact Ilona Horan (1999) at [Ilona.Horan@defencesa.com](mailto:Ilona.Horan@defencesa.com) or Jake Kearsley (1997) at [jake@allowaccess.com.au](mailto:jake@allowaccess.com.au).

## 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) and John (J.G.) Carmichael (OCS Jun 1977) (Membership)

### 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.

### Annual Luncheon Thursday 18 October 2018

The annual Luncheon will be held at University of Melbourne’s Graduate House, 220 Leicester Street Carlton, on Thursday 17 October, 12 for 12.30 pm until 2 pm, cost \$65 per head. Guests are most welcome.

Speaker Topic: The Rise & Fall of ISIS: 2014-2018 – LTCOL (ret) Alistair (A.A.) Pope (OTU 4/66).

Alistair is an OTU graduate who served in SVN and now lives in Vung Tau. Alistair returns to Melbourne frequently and is well known for his insightful talks and published articles in Quadrant. This is his second talk to the Vic/Tas Branch annual luncheon.

[RSVP NLT 10 October to Alan McDonald, 13 Moorhead Ave. Mornington, 3931, (03) 5975 4113, with cheques made payable to ‘Duntroon Society Victoria Branch’ – or contact Bob Slater for electronic transfer details]

This year Victoria/Tasmania members continued with a less formal lunchtime get-together in May following a theme of exploring different venues of interest.

Our first occasion, in May 2017 was at the delightfully modernistic yet traditional Danish Club in Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, and in 2018 we held a two-day reunion at the former OCS Portsea.

This year we held our luncheon at the iconic Heroes Club in Clendon Road, Toorak where 19 members and partners were welcomed warmly and enthusiastically by club Immediate Past President Mike Fogarty who also treated us to an insight into the Club's colourful history.

Again we welcomed Bill and Vona Beiers, Bill, a WWII Z Force officer, at 98 was the Elder of the Duntroon Society.

The Heroes Club resides in an old single-storey Toorak residence that was acquired in the late 1940s and is a time warp of WWII. Our luncheon was held in the Churchill Room (where else?). Features of Heroes are the wood panelling, open fire, floor to ceiling quality memorabilia and the two-table billiards room. Specialities are blokes' fare (it is an all-male club; ladies by invitation) and an excellent bar. It is understood that this was a favourite haunt of Brigadier Spry and his ASIO officers in the early 1950s. Currently it attracts many of Melbourne's leading professionals as well as a number of Defence Force officers, mainly retired. Sir Peter Cosgrove is a patron, dating from his time as CDF.

Rumour has it that the name 'Heroes' originated in the early days from:

1. A whip-around of members revealed that not one had ever done anything heroic,
2. A prominent wife berated her husband returning home late with: "I suppose you've been with those drunken heroes again!", or
3. Both.

Take your pick!

Anyone visiting Melbourne, this is a good place to have lunch, have a chat with ever-welcoming members, have a good luck around at the priceless memorabilia, and soak up the atmosphere.

Attending were members Ron (1963) and Janette Bade, Bill (1942) and Vona Beiers, John Carmichael (OCS Jun 1977), Sandra Davies (wife of Phil, 1961), Marcus Fielding (1986), Martin Hobbs (1984), Evan McCrum (OCS 1969), Alan McDonald (1951), Jonathan McGuigan (OCS Dec 1975), Allan (1956) and Ann Nolan, Alistair Pope (OTU 4/1966), Bob (1963) and Ruth Slater, Graham Smith (1972) and guests Ross Bishop and Mike Fogarty.



Mike Fogarty—Heroes Club Immediate Past president and guest speaker.



Ruth Slater, Sandra Davies, Janette Bade, Ron Bade, Graham Smith, Bill and Vona Beiers, Ross Bishop, Mike Fogarty.



Vona and Bill Beiers in front of the Toorak Services ('Heroes') Club.

## Western Australia

### Branch Office Holders

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

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

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

### Social Functions

Any visitors to WA or others wishing to be informed please contact the WA Convenor, Bob Hunter on [bobhunter@opleadership.com.au](mailto:bobhunter@opleadership.com.au) or 0413 045 355.

## Coming Events

### ACT Branch

8 November 2019. Annual Dinner commencing at 7.00 pm at Duntroon House.

### NSW Branch

11 Oct, 5 Nov (Melbourne Cup, mixed) 8 Nov, and 13 Dec (mixed). Monthly Lunch.

13 December 2019. Graduation Lunch, Imperial Service Club at the Royal Automobile Club building at Circular Quay.

### Queensland Branch

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

TBA November/December 2019. 'With Partners' lunch.

### South Australia Branch (incorporating NT)

3 December 2019. Annual Graduation Luncheon, Naval, Military and Air Force Club, Adelaide.

## Victoria Branch (incorporating Tasmania)

17 October 2019. 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:  
[bohunter@opleadership.com.au](mailto:bohunter@opleadership.com.au) or +61 413 045 355.

## RMC Ceremonial Events

9 December 2019. Graduation Prizes & Awards Ceremony.  
10 December 2019. The Graduation Parade.  
9 June 2020. Queen's Birthday Parade.  
22 June 2020. Graduation Prizes & Awards Ceremony.  
23 June 2020. The Graduation Parade.

Further information is available from the Protocol Assistant, Staff Sergeant M.J. Troy on (02) 6265 9539.

## Retired Officers Luncheon Club—Canberra

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.

## Obituary

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

- 28 Mar 19 Major R.L. Hanson (OCS Dec 1977)
- 17 Apr 19 Lieutenant Colonel J.D. Harverson (1956)
- 21 Apr 19 Lieutenant Colonel G.M Platt (OCS Jun 1970)
- 22 Apr 19 Major J.B. Crawford (OCS June 1975)
- Apr 19 Lieutenant Colonel R.L. Buntine (1954)
- 6 May 19 Major M.C. Reynolds (OTU 3/66)
- 18 May 19 Mrs Sue Andrew<sup>1</sup>
- 23 May 19 Mrs Pam Yonge<sup>2</sup>
- 16 Jun 19 Brigadier B. Wade (1956)
- 22 Jun 19 Lieutenant Colonel J.E. Herron (OCS Dec 1965)
- 27 Jun 19 B.C. Hampson (OCS Dec 1964)
- 2 Jul 19 Major General N.R. Smethurst (1956)
- 6 Jul 19 Major S.J. Sanderson (OCS Jun 1973)
- 11 Jul 19 Major P.R. Loffhouse (OCS Dec 1957)
- 25 Jul 19 Lieutenant Colonel T.J.M. Hayes (OTU 3/1967)<sup>3</sup>
- 10 Aug 19 Captain A.J.deB. Forbes (December 1942)<sup>4</sup>
- 12 Aug 19 Lieutenant Colonel W.N. Hatton (1947)
- 22 Aug 19 Second Lieutenant T.A. Fischer (OTU 3/1966)
- 26 Aug 19 Lieutenant P.W. Beiers (Jun 1942)<sup>5</sup>

1. Widow of Colonel John (J.D.) Andrew (1943).
2. Widow of Brigadier Paul (P.D.) Yonge (1943).
3. Entered the RMC in 1962, but was discharged on 15 July 1965. He was accepted for the OTU Course 3/67 and graduated on 22 September 1967 into the Royal Australian Engineers.
4. See below for a brief obituary and brief summary of Forbes family.
5. Elder of the Duntroon Society at the time of his death—see below for a brief obituary.

## Forbes' MCs

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

*Captain the Honourable Doctor Alexander James ('Jim') de Burgh Forbes, CMG, MC*, was a long-time active member of the Duntroon Society being the first Convenor of the South

Australian Branch. He regularly travelled to Duntroon to attend most meetings of the Society Executive Council.

He graduated into the RAA on 15 December 1942 to be posted to Darwin during 1943 before becoming a member of 2 Mountain Battery, in which he remained until his resignation from the Army on 18 April 1947. This battery became part of the Australian Army 2 Corps that took over the responsibility for the campaigning in Bougainville from the American forces there during October to December 1944. During 29 January 1945 the battery was in support of 31<sup>st</sup>/51<sup>st</sup> Battalion then engaged in fierce hand to hand fighting to resist a strong Japanese attack on the west coast of Bougainville. From exposed positions Lieutenant Forbes directed effective fire which greatly helped to break the attack. Later, on 11 February he was again directing fire but was unable to gain adequate observation in the bush, so waded into the sea up to his armpits in full view of the enemy and directed fire from there. These actions resulted in his award of the Military Cross.

Following his Army service he studied at the University of Adelaide and at Magdalene College, Oxford, where was awarded his PhD in 1954. On his return to Adelaide he embraced politics and became the Federal Member for Barker in 1956, retaining that seat until his retirement in 1975. During those years he held four ministerial positions including that of Minister for the Army from December 1963 to January 1966.

His father, *Brigadier Alexander Moore Forbes, MVO, MC* entered the RMC as Staff Cadet No 2, becoming the first BSM and, with his class, was 'specially commissioned' on 14 August 1914 for service in the Australian Imperial Force. During 1916, Captain Forbes was the commander of 102<sup>nd</sup> Battery of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division when, in operations on the Somme, for meritorious service and devotion to duty he was awarded the Military Cross. After serving during World War II, he retired on 1 December 1946 and died on 20 January 1961 just before the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the RMC.

The College's fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in March 1961. One of the highlights of the Ceremonial Parade was the presentation by his son Jim Forbes to the RMC of the original Sword of Honour, awarded to the late Brigadier A.M. Forbes. This sword has since been carried by the BSM on all ceremonial occasions.

*Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Oliver Giles Forbes, MC* was the younger brother of Jim Forbes. He gained his commission when a member of the Adelaide University Regiment. He practised law but continued his service with the Citizen Military Force until March 1953 when he transferred to the Regular Army. As the Assault Pioneer Platoon commander he went to Korea with 2 RAR. His battalion took over a position on The Hook on 9 July 1953. From then until the Armistice on 27 July, 2 RAR fought off a number of heavy and, at times, intense attacks to take the position. For his efforts in maintaining the defences during this time, and his courage in rescuing two casualties from the minefield, he was awarded the Military Cross. After his resignation from the Regular Army on 2 April 1954, he continued to serve in the CMF.

This award created the only known instance of three members of an Australian family winning similar decorations for bravery in three consecutive wars. As if to enhance the military uniqueness of this family, in 1952 Jim Forbes had married Margaret, the daughter of Brigadier A.S. Blackburn VC, CMG, CBE. On 23 July 1916 during the Battle of



Pozieres, Captain Blackburn led four separate sorties to capture a German strong point. For this action he was awarded a VC. He died on 25 November 1960.

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**Pierre William (Bill) Beiers (Jun 1942)**

**21 February 1921- 26 August 2019**

**Duncan Beiers (son)**

Bill Beiers was born in Newcastle, NSW. His father, Lieutenant Colonel. Harold Matheson Beiers, had met his Swiss/French wife Jeanine in Marseille while serving in Europe during WW1. They married in Marseille before returning to Australia to start their family.

The family moved to Sydney and Bill grew up in the Elizabeth Bay area, completing his Matriculation at Sydney Boys High School.

With WW2 looming, Bill went to Duntroon RMC where he graduated in June 1942. Soon after joining the AIF, Bill moved to a parachute battalion. It was here that he crossed paths with and transferred to Z Special Force, with whom he served until the end of the war.

Bill was in Borneo when the war ended, and for a short while until colonial rule was re-established, Bill served as the Police Commissioner of one of Borneo's main towns.

Following the war, Bill graduated in Civil Engineering from Sydney University. On graduation he immediately left for London where he worked in civil engineering for White Wolf Barry and Partners. He met his wife to be, Vona Rockliff, on the ship to London, where they married in 1953.

Continuing their adventures, they left for Bombay in 1954 where they lived until 1956. Bill worked on the design and construction of wharves and Vona for the P&O company.

Back in Australia Bill worked on bridge and wharf design for engineering firm Maunsell and Partners in Sydney, Townsville and Hobart. In Hobart he was on the team building the Tasman Bridge. In 1966 he returned to Melbourne and settled on the Mornington Peninsula, where he has lived since, working for Lysaght-BHP at Hastings, until his retirement in 1987.

For the past 30 years Bill has been kept busy. A keen tennis player, Bill played competitively until he was 93! He also enjoyed sailing on the Gippsland Lakes, gardening, attending concerts, plays and films. Tending 10 acres of rural land filled in any other spare time!

Bill was typical of the Z Special Force members in his humility and generosity to others. Until this year he had marched in the past 17 ANZAC day parades in Melbourne, behind the Z Special Force banner.

Until two weeks ago Bill was playing petanque each week in Mornington and playing chess with the Mt Martha chess club. He died peacefully at home with his extended family around him.

Bill was a keen supporter of the Duntroon Society and attended most Vic/Tas Branch activities as well as biennial reunions. Bill succeeded John Sedgley as the Elder of the Duntroon Society.

He leaves his wife Vona, three children and six grandchildren.

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**The Over 90s**

In recent Newsletters we have published a list of RMC graduates who had reached the age of 90 years. We update it here. With the death of Bill Beiers on 26 August, Bert Wansley is now the Society Elder.

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| W.H. Wansley (Jun 1941) | b. 31 August 1921    |
| L.W. Wright (1942)      | b. 10 May 1922       |
| W.D. Jamieson (1943)    | b. 16 February 1924  |
| P.W.F. Joplin (1944)    | b. 2 June 1925       |
| J.E. Neylan (1948)      | b. 23 April 1926     |
| C.StJ. Griffiths (1947) | b. 15 June 1926      |
| A.V. Preece (1946)      | b. 28 August 1926    |
| J.F. McDonagh (1946)    | b. 6 November 1926   |
| R.R. Harding (1948)     | b. 20 December 1926  |
| L.R. Greville (1946)    | b. 10 August 1927    |
| K.J. Hill (1948)        | b. 10 September 1927 |
| I.D. Stock (1948)       | b. 15 March 1928     |
| J.I. Martyn (1948)      | b. 13 April 1928     |
| D.M. Butler (1948)      | b. 3 September 1928  |
| W.M. Purdy (1948)       | b. 19 October 1928   |
| P.H. Bennett (1948)     | b. 27 December 1928  |
| F.P. Scott (1948)       | b. 19 January 1929   |
| N.C. Schofield (1950)   | b. 27 February 1929  |
| A.R. Vail (1951)        | b. 7 March 1929      |
| M.J. Lamborn (1948)     | b. 20 March 1929     |
| J.E. Duff (1951)        | b. 19 August 1929    |
| R.J. Wilson (1948)      | b. 13 November 1929  |

This list is not complete and is subject to constant change. There could be survivors in the Classes of April 1944 and 1947. The Classes of 1950 and 1951 would, by now, have members who have already reached that very significant age, but we do not have their appropriate details. Without your help we cannot ensure the accuracy of the listing. We are now seeking those born between 1921 and 1929.

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**Profile of Corps of Staff Cadets**

Current strength (22 August 2019)	392
First Class	146
Second Class	138
Third Class	94
Neville Howse VC Platoon	14
Afghanistan	3
Fiji	4
Malaysia	1
New Zealand	5
Pakistan	6
Papua New Guinea	10
Qatar	3
RAAF	4
Thailand	1
Tonga	2
Females	90

Note: There are two Australian staff cadets at the OCS at Waiouru, New Zealand.



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