



Journal of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association NSW Inc  
 Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington NSW, 2021 .  
 Website: [www.raacansw.org.au](http://www.raacansw.org.au)  
 Email: [raacansw@defence.gov.au](mailto:raacansw@defence.gov.au) .  
 Tel: (02) 8335 5209 . ABN 49 709 547 198

# ARMOUR

ESTABLISHED 1946

October 2020  
 Issue No. 484

Patron: Major General Dave Chalmers, AO CSC  
 President: COL Rob Lording . Editor George Baczocha

## THE LONG JOURNEY - Part 2



*From the atomic desert site Emu Field 1952  
 To the jungle and paddy fields of South Vietnam 1969  
 And eventually, holding ground within 1st Armoured Regiment lines 2018  
 This is the profile of Centurion 169041 - The Atomic Tank  
 4 Troop, B Squadron, Call Sign 24C (Two-Four-Charlie), 1969  
 Known to her crew as "Sweet Fanny"*

*Editor: Part 1 can be found in the October 2019 issue of Armour (No.482)*



After being resupplied at the start of June, 4 Troop moved into position at FSPB Virginia and as this was the start of the wet season Virginia became a bog hole. The conditions were made worse by the arrival of a Sqn of American 155mm self-propelled guns, regular movement of Australian and American re-supply vehicles, plus Centurion tanks and APC's patrolling daily, to the point where conditions were almost unbearable. The battle for Binh Ba was initiated by N.V.A main force firing RPG 7s at Centurion 20E, which was struck and penetrated. Instead of retreating, the enemy dug in and waited for the battle to begin. This battle has been well documented and Sweet Fanny played her part.

Sweet Fanny did have one unusual trait, being that she steered slowly to the right so regularly that the driver had to flick the left stick to correct it. On one occasion 4 Troop was reacted from FSPB Virginia and onto route 15, with Sweet Fanny leading and 24A immediately behind. 24A detonated a mine of approximately 15 - 20kg which resulted in the front road wheels being blown off, damaging the front suspension and cutting the tracks. The troop came to an instant halt, and on investigation showed that Sweet Fanny had slewed around the pressure plate because of her unusual tracking fault. 24A, driving straight ahead, found the triggering device. An ARV was called to tow the severely damaged tank to 106 Field Workshop.



### Inside this Issue

The Long Journey	1
Technical Notes & News	7
UK to scrap MBTs	8
Centurian mine incidents in SVN	9



## WARNING ORDER

### BEERSHEBA / CAMBRAI DINNER INVITATION

**Saturday 14th November, 2020**

Royal Automobile Club, Sydney

COL Rob Lording, President of the RAAC Association (NSW) cordially invites all fellow Black Hats to the annual Cambrai Dinner, to be held in conjunction with the annual Beersheba Dinner.

Pre-dinner drinks from 1830 hrs for Dinner & Drinks at 1900 hrs The Royal Automobile Club, 89 Macquarie Street, Sydney on Saturday 14th November, 2020.

Dress: Black Tie, Mess Dress or Coat & Tie, Miniatures to be worn.

RSVP NLT by post: 31 OCT 2020 to RAACA, Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Locked Bag 7005 Liverpool NSW 1871 or Email: raacansw@defence.gov.au

As this is a pre-paid function, please include your payment of \$99 per head with your RSVP.

Please make your Electronic Funds Transfer to Def Bank: BSB 833205, A/c No 20539747 indicating your Name and 'Dinner payment'.

For anyone who does not have access to the internet to make an on line payment, just go to your local bank branch and use the BSB and Account number above, to make a deposit into the RAACA account. Your bank teller will allow you to transfer from your own account or alternatively take cash for the transaction. Do not forget to add your Name and "Dinner Payment".

As a last resort if you are still on paper, please make your cheque payable to RAACA and sent it to: The Treasurer RAACA, Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Locked Bag 7005 Liverpool NSW 1871

**Payment MUST be made no later than 7 November, 2020 as no monies will be handled on the night and financial commitments are made quite early.**

Some limited parking may be available in the RACA car park after making arrangements with the Club. Trains to Circular Quay will take you within 100m of the Club. Generally, taxis are readily available outside the club in Macquarie Street after the dinner

## COVID-19 Information

The Royal Automobile Club, Sydney will be hosting the dinner in compliance with all NSW Government COVID-19 requirements including restrictions on the number of participants, strict hygiene social distancing requirements and if required, cancellation of the event.



(Continued from page 1)

To flush enemy out of the heavily vegetated areas, 12 gallon drums of CS crystals were dropped out of Hercules (C-130) aircraft and were supposed to break open on impact and release the tear gas, however some were cushioned by the jungle and remained intact. On 20th July, Sweet Fanny ran over one of these rusted drums, which were unseen because of the covering undergrowth.



Trooper Barry Hodges and Corporal Graham Munsell

The ruptured drum exposed the troop to the gas, resulting in burning eyes and coughing fits, and a mad scramble to get to the gas masks stored in the rear of the turret. The CS crystals stayed in the tracks for days, so the troop had an uncomfortable time during this operation.

This area had also been previously carpet bombed by the Americans, and I called to the driver, TPR Barry Hodges, to halt after noticing an Unexploded Bomb (UXB) of 240kg just beside the tank with the nose cone exposed. An engineer mini-team used plastic explosive (C4) to dispose of the bomb. Green Ants nests hung from dense vegetation, and would often dislodge and fall into the turret or drivers compartment, and en-mass would bite anything that moved. This was one more discomfort for the crew.

Dozers doing land clearing often encountered M16 jumping mines that had been lifted by the VC from the ineffective Australian Barrier minefield (a minefield that was laid by 1st Australian Task Force in 1967), and were then placed in positions to kill and injure our troops. During a recce of a track, Sweet Fanny came in contact with one such mine, and the resultant force of the blast cracked a track link so badly that the 9kg link had to be replaced. No wonder the mines can maim the human body.

At another time when travelling at speed, Sweet Fanny flicked up a M16 jumping jack which exploded in mid-air. Luckily, I had the cupola hatch positioned at 90 degrees to the blast, which stopped the shrapnel from peppering my back.

Another occasion when still supporting land clearing operations, we stopped behind a working dozer to make a brew when the dozer was ambushed by enemy firing a RPG. The dozer driver was wounded, jumped clear of his D8 and ran past us yelling with pain. We immediately accelerated to where we

thought the enemy had fired the RPG and pushing through the virgin jungle we discovered a cave with a tunnel system behind it. Believing this to be the escape route we fired 2 x HE rounds into the tunnel, hoping the shrapnel and concussion of the blast would cease enemy aggression. Land clearing was very hard on tank crews because it was routine, but vigilance was required all day. The dozers had 2 shifts of drivers to change over, however breaks for the tank crews were not allowed for.

169041 witnessed at least two B52 bomb strikes in her tour.

In late August 1969, 4 Troop was ordered to the Long Hai area to set up a blocking force with infantry before a B52 strike, in order to capture enemy escaping the blast area. After witnessing the spectacle at a distance and observing the damage from the 240kg bombs raining down from 38,000 feet, I doubt if there were any survivors.

When a B52 strike was imminent, we on the ground had to pull back several hundred meters. From the driver's perspective, sitting in the driver's seat of a 52 ton Centurion as the ground shook was like experiencing a devastating earthquake.

Early September we were part of a Tango reactionary force comprising of 4 Troop, a section of APCs (3 Cav), anti-mine sappers and infantry. On 6th September, we were travelling slowly south on route 15 with the mini team riding on the front track guards of Sweet Fanny. As we were going through a cutting, Sapper Tony Lilse screamed out "Halt", as he noticed wires leading up an embankment. On dismounting, he dug up a pressure switch in the road, and following the wires to the top the bank, found a claymore mine facing the road and positioned head high to armoured vehicle crews. My operator, driver and I probably owe our lives to him. After this scare, Sweet Fanny was spelled as lead tank for a while.

On the 9th of September Sapper Lilse was again on the leading tank and, once again, yelled "Halt". This time he found a pressure switch to a 23kg mine, again saving the crew, tank and himself.

About this time Sweet Fanny began losing engine power and after reading the speedo, RAEME technicians assessed the motor needed replacement due to the high mileage travelled. We motored back to 106 Field Workshop at Nui Dat, and two days later Sweet Fanny rejoined the troop in the field with a major service and new motor.

Towards the end of the month, 4 Troop was ordered to assist a company of 6RAR who had been ambushed and pinned down just short of a bunker system in dense jungle. To respond to them by the shortest distance, we had to negotiate thick bamboo. Of all the obstacles we encountered in South Vietnam, bamboo was probably the hardest to penetrate as it was 60-70 feet in length and intertwined with each neighboring clump. The bamboo was so strong it would halt progress as well as rip the commander's .30 calibre machine gun off, tear the storage bins to pieces, and many times we had to reverse and find an easier path. It took us four hours to get through 2kms of bamboo to assist the infantry. To add to our misery, many scorpions lived in bamboo and often fell into the tanks and onto the crews.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

We were so close to the bunker system that I had to look down the fully depressed barrel and direct the traverse to the target, because the gunner's sight could not adjust to the short distance. A solid anti-tank round (APCBC) broke up the overhead protection and a HE round finished the job.

On occasion, as crew commander I had to dismount the tank to take an accurate compass reading to direct mortar fire into the bunker system. After hostilities ceased, the severely wounded 6RAR casualties were carried out on the tanks to a clearing for dust-off. Sweet Fanny destroyed many bunkers that day both by shot and by crushing them.

*Ibid*

*Horner, D, Duty First – The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace, Allen and Unwin, 1990, p. 221.*

Some days later 4 Troop had to investigate reports of another bunker system further in the jungle. With Sweet Fanny leading,



thick bamboo and vegetation built up over the tank so much, that day turned into night and we had to switch on the turret lights to see. We became trapped inside the tank with all our periscopes also covered we were completely blind and had to be given directions by radio from the crew commander of the tank immediately to our rear.

Due to the hot exhaust, the leaf matter was ignited and smoke began filling the tank. To try and dislodge the burning matter we reversed into the jungle and were able to remove some of the burning foliage. I then ordered the crew to fire a canister round to clear the barrel, but we were still confined in

the tank until other tank crew members cut away the remaining entrapment.

It also must have been intimidating for the enemy, because we were almost at the bunker system and the fighting pit to our front still had a recoilless rifle (RCL) tripod base plate in it and cooking fires were still hot.

In hindsight I guess it would have been terrifying, listening to four V12 Rolls Royce meteor motors screaming in the distance, trees and bamboo crashing down to your front and a blast from a canister round emitting out of a massive clump of smoking, moving vegetation. Yep, I think I would run too!

At the start of October, Sweet Fanny was ordered to temporarily detach from 4 Troop and relocate to the Horseshoe until relieved. During the late evening of 7th October, a fire mission was called at 2200hrs to support infantry being attacked by enemy forces. The distance from the Horseshoe to the target was 5,500 meters in a south-east direction, which must have been out of artillery range from Nui Dat. I had a nervous time trying to determine the co-ordinates to the target and bring the gun to the correct bearing. After firing one HE round for effect, the correction was add 200 meters. Firing off seven rounds rapid fire, we were told to stand too. Noted in the duty officers log the fire mission was completed at 2210 hrs with the notation "up to one hundred VC had been engaged and with possible kills." Next morning a clearing patrol found 3 enemy KIA and numerous drag marks and blood trails. Sweet Fanny excelled herself again.

Being relieved a few days later, Sweet Fanny rejoined 4 Troop supporting South Vietnamese Troops engaging enemy positions on the eastern side of the Long Hai hills. Whilst traveling to this operation Sweet Fanny, as always, pulled to the right and kept heading off the shoulder towards the scrub. I suggested to the driver, TPR Barry Hodges, that he "pull the left stick Bazz" but no response was received. So again I said "left stick Bazz" and he came back in no uncertain terms that he was indeed pulling the "F\*\*\*\*\*" left stick. Coming to a halt our summation was a broken gear box. RAEME responded from Nui Dat and confirmed the diagnosis, so we harboured up until a new one was found and fitted. A few days later we were back on operations again with "left-stick Bazz" driving in a much happier frame of mind. We then rejoined 4 Troop supporting the South Vietnamese troops operating around the Long Hai hills.

Often, when occupying distant fire support bases and fire support patrol bases, tanks were called on for Harassment and Interdiction (H&I) missions. An enemy supply route was discovered near our location, and we were tasked to harass it day and night for 48 hours. The attached photos show the tracer round in flight during the night, with the camera secured to the turret to record the recoil and the rocking of the tank during the night shoot.

Rubber plantation operations were always difficult as maneuvering and not damaging the trees was a challenge, as compensation for damaged trees was paid to the owners.

Night harbors and ambushes in the plantations during the wet season would normally entail setting up in the pouring rain, as the monsoon rains would occur late afternoon each day. Extraction of injured personnel was also a problem, as they resulted in having to hoist casualties through the canopy on a litter. Picket duties kept one alert as the monsoon weather conditions resulted in branches crashing to the floor of the plantation throughout the night.

Towards the end of December, Sweet Fanny was coming to the end of her tour, but enemy activity was again increasing in the south of the Long Hai hills. A composite troop was formed from HQ but only three serviceable tanks were available, so Sweet Fanny was assigned to reactionary troop. Each tank was followed by a mark 3 international truck loaded with HE. SGT Robert Browning led the troop with orders to engage anything that could be a likely target, so after two full days of firing HE we

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

emptied the trucks of all their ammunition and headed back to Nui Dat. After action reports indicated that enemy movement ceased.

Aerial spraying of chemical defoliants was common during the Vietnam conflict. In addition, there was regular spraying of the perimeter of the Nui Dat base with chemicals and herbicides in order to remove vegetation from the area.



On the last day of December 1969, Centurion tank 169041 "Sweet Fanny" was taken out of service and she was replaced by 169039. But that's another story and not as interesting.

By the end of 1969, 169041 had covered nearly 2,500 miles on operations, and she was ready for yet another rebuild. Replaced in the squadron in January 1970, 169041 spent her final days in South Vietnam with 2nd Advanced Ordnance Depot (2AOD) at Vung Tau while awaiting space to return to Australia on a transport ship.

Eventually 169041 was shipped back to Australia on the HMAS Jeparit, leaving Vietnam in April 1970 where she

repatriated back to the 1st Armoured Regiment at

Puckapunyal. The deployment of 1st Australian Task Force in South Vietnam finished on 29 February 1972, with the subsequent return of the final force elements and remaining equipment to Australia aboard HMAS Sydney.

The Centurions served with the Army until the arrival of the replacement tank, the German Leopard AS1, in 1976.

November 20th 1976 was the last all-Centurion Cambrai Day parade. 169041, as call sign 11A, was one of around 60 Centurion vehicles, including ARVs, bridge layers and a dozer tank, that participated in this historic occasion.

Although sent to long term storage during the first half of 1977, she was recovered back to the 1st Armoured Regiment several years later. Restored to reliable running condition she was used to carry the retiring Chief of the General Staff (the term then used for the Chief of the Army), Lieutenant General H.J. Coates, AC, MBE, during his farewell parade in April 1992.

169041 then spent some time in storage, underwent several maintenance overhauls and rebuilds, and lived out her days with the 1st Armoured Regiment participating in parades.

To this day Centurion 169041 in her original design (minus the 100 gallon rear fuel tank fitted for South Vietnam) is holding ground at the Edinburgh Air Force Base in South Australia, within the Lines of 1st Armoured Regiment. Of note, she had passed through Edinburgh 65 years ago, in 1953, while en route to the Emu Field test site.

## *The Centurion Tank at War*

One of the most successful tank designs of the immediate era post the Second World War, the Centurion was originally requested in 1943 and commenced production in 1945, though too late to see service during the war. Centurion production ceased for all variants in 1962, at that time in total 4423 had been delivered.

The Centurion first saw combat with the British Army during the Korean War, also where British Centurion Tanks supported 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment as part of 28 Commonwealth Brigade. Its final campaign with the British Army was during the Gulf war of 1991, where 12 AVRE variants (Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers) were deployed. Centurions have fought in operational theatres all over the world, except for North Western Europe: the theatre for which it was originally designed!

### **References and further reading**

Thanks to the research of Mike Cecil of the Australian War Memorial (Head of Military Heraldry and Technology), much has been documented on the Atomic Tank 169041.

Reference to the 1st Armoured Regiment in Vietnam can be resourced through Bruce Cameron's 2016 publication *CANISTER! ON! FIRE!*

The Emu Field atomic site was surveyed by Len Beadell who at the time was range reconnaissance officer at the Weapons

Research facility in Salisbury South Australia. He also surveyed Maralinga Village and Gun Barrel Highway, which is a story within itself and can be referenced his book *Blast The Bush*.

Australian War Memorial. Australian Army war diaries: south-east Asian conflicts. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1372714>, accessed October 2018.

Beadell, L. (1967). *Blast The Bush*. New Holland Publishers Sydney, ISBN 1864367369.

Cameron, B (2016). *Canister! On! Fire!* Big Sky Publishing Pty, Limited, ISBN 9781921941993.

Carroll, J.R. (2013). *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: The Royal Australian Navy in Vietnam*. Rosenberg Publishing, ISBN: 9781925078169.

Cecil, M. *The Unique History of 169041*, Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers internet site <http://www.raeme.info/opse746.php>, accessed September 18

Cecil, M. *Classic Military Vehicle* October 2004 Issue 41, pages 43–46. Kelsey Publishing Group, 2004.

Fairhead, F. (2014). *A duty done : a summary of operations by the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam war 1965-1972*, The Royal Australian Regiment Association, Linden Park, SA.

Hall, R. and Ross, A. (2003). *Lessons from Vietnam: Combined Arms Assault against Prepared Defence - From Breitenfeld to Baghdad : perspectives on combined arms warfare*. Land Warfare Studies Centre, ISBN 0 642 29583 2.

McClelland, J.R. Fitvh, J & Jonas, W.J.A. (1985). *The Report of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

Royal Australian Navy. HMAS Jeparit. <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-jeparit>, accessed October 2018.

Royal New South Wales Lancers Lancer Museum web site. Centurion Tank, [http://www.lancers.org.au/site/Centurion\\_Tank.asp](http://www.lancers.org.au/site/Centurion_Tank.asp), accessed October 2018.

# Vale

## LTCOL Donald Chappel

Born in Perth, Don attended Hale School where he was a keen athlete, rower and Captain of the swimming team. He had a lifelong love of sailing, boats, ships and trains plus maps and navigation.

Don later graduated from Royal Military College Duntroon in time to serve in the occupation forces post WW2.

In Germany Don served with the Royal Dragoons. One of their tasks was to occupy the Hermann Goering Steelworks. There was a mob of angry ex 3rd Reich steelworkers surrounding the factory and as they approached the rioters pushed a railway cart in front of his armoured car and began to climb up the sides of the immobilized vehicle.

While the radio operator called for help, instead of drawing his pistol or using the machine gun, Don took a piece of wood and began to hit knuckles. Many a cry of Ach! British schwein! was heard. Soon help arrived from the British infantry and a truck towed the armoured car backwards to safety. The press wrote this up a triumph for the brave young Aussie officer.

Don went on to serve in the Korean War where he was stationed along the Inchon River to prevent the North from taking Seoul. They patrolled along the river valley but whenever the enemy were near they went up the hill because they had been ordered to avoid any clashes. It was an uneasy stalemate.

Later in the sixties Don was ordered to supervise a concert party tour to entertain the troops in Vietnam - Little Pattie and Col Joy and the Joyboys. During one of the concerts, shells began falling and the entertainers had to be evacuated by helicopter.

His last Army posting was to Central Command Headquarters Adelaide where he was the Brigadier of 4 cadet Brigade. One of his enduring Legacies was the Adventure Training course he introduced, which is still running in the ACT. Based loosely on the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, it was a series of achievements such as high scores on the rifle range and assault course, culminating in an overnight orienteering course in Deep Creek Conservation Park.

In the 70s Don left the army and became head of the Commonwealth Govt Training Centre in Hindmarsh square. This was an initiative called Trainer training initiated by Minister Andrew Peacock. Their job was to train line supervisors in industry in how to train their workers effectively.

He was diagnosed with lung cancer, there was no option but to fight. Just like on the Inchon River, again with the help of strong allies he fought cancer to a stalemate that lasted for two years. They were good years too. Inevitably that fight reached its conclusion, that one conclusion to which we all must surrender eventually.

Farewell brave soldier, dear Don, my Dad.

*Editor: Edited version of the eulogy read by his son, John at the funeral*



Courtesy of Ron Baikie Puckapunyal 1953



# Technical Notes & News

## APV to export seatbelts for US armoured vehicles

12 May 2020

Victoria's APV has been awarded a three year US\$500,000 contract to supply passenger restraints for military vehicles. APV military seatbelts will be used in several next generation amphibious and land military platforms built by BAE Systems in the US, including the Amphibious Combat Vehicle program for the US Marines and Armoured Multi-Purpose Vehicle program for the US Army that replaces the M113 Armoured Personnel Carrier.



APV has been providing restraints for Australian and North American military vehicles since 2002. The contract, with an optional additional year, was secured through the company's involvement with BAE Systems Australia's Global Supply Chain program.

"Through our global business, we are opening the door to a global supply chain worth around AU\$17 billion, introducing local SMEs to new markets and opportunities," BAE Systems Australia CEO, Gabby Costigan, said. "We have a wealth of world leading, industrial suppliers in Australia and we see it as our duty to support them to achieve success through exports."

"APV is a fantastic example of this and with its involvement in this program, we will continue to provide the highest level of protection within our company's military vehicles."

"This agreement builds on APV's track record of providing battle-proven military restraints since 2002, including the Australian Bushmaster and US MaxxpPro MRAP vehicles during the Afghanistan conflict where there was no loss of life of personnel wearing APV restraints within these vehicles," Managing Director and CEO of APV Safety Products, Harry Hickling said.

"The relationship with BAE Systems in the US means APV is working on the most technically advanced protected amphibious and land vehicle systems in the North American market."



## PROPOSAL BY THE UK TO SCRAP ITS MAIN BATTLE TANKS?

By Kyle Mizokami  
September 2, 2020

The British Army is quietly floating a proposal to send its main battle tank fleet to the scrapyards. The shocker would end more than 100 years of development and deployment by the very country that invented the tank.

Instead, the British Army would concentrate on space and cyber warfare, as well as contributing helicopters and airmobile troops to any NATO fighting force. The move would follow in the footsteps of the Netherlands, a country that eliminated—and then quickly rebuilt—its tank force.

A British Army Apache attack helicopter exercising alongside a Challenger II tank, Salisbury Plain, 2019.

Courtesy: FINNBARR WEBSTERGETTY IMAGES



The proposal would see the British Army's 227 Challenger II main battle tanks eliminated from its force structure. The Challenger II, originally one of the best tanks in NATO, hasn't received a steady stream of upgrades the way the American M1A2 Abrams has and is considered obsolete by today's standards. The Challenger II needs new, uprated engines, new fire control systems, and a new 120-millimeter main gun to match the gun on U.S. and German tanks.

The U.K. has had tanks for more than a century, and in fact invented the concept of the tank as a tracked, armored fighting vehicle. The name "tank" comes from the cover story used to hide the development of a new offensive weapon designed to break the deadlock of World War I trench warfare. The vehicles were developed under the guise of building transport vehicles to carry water to the front lines.

The British Army fielded the world's first tank, the Mark I, in 1916, and during World War II, introduced such impressive designs as the Crusader, Matilda Mark II, Churchill, and Cromwell. The Cold War saw the army equipped with the Centurion, Chieftain, and later, the Challenger I. The British Army introduced its current main battle tank, the Challenger II, in 1998. The U.K. fields just 227 Challenger IIs, compared to the 6,333 tanks the U.S. military operates. In 2019, London proposed upgrading just 148 of the 227 tanks to a modern standard, leaving it with one of the smallest—albeit effective—tank forces in the world. That proposal has apparently been sidelined in favor of scrapping the fleet entirely.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense proposes to delete the British Army's tank force and instead shuffle the money to fund greater space and cyber capabilities. It would also emphasize helicopters and presumably airmobile forces in its contribution to NATO, as the Army flies 50 Apache attack helicopters and operates an air assault brigade trained to conduct heliborne operations. This isn't the first time a NATO country has ditched its tanks. In 2011, the Royal Netherlands Army eliminated its 60-strong force of Leopard II tanks, arguing the future lay in lightweight, rapidly deployable combat forces structured for conflicts such as the fight against the Islamic State or the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The Dutch quickly came to regret the decision, as Russia boosted its tank-heavy ground forces and embarked on a campaign to intimidate its neighbors and NATO. Today, the Netherlands leases 18 Leopard 2A6M tanks from Germany and plans to buy back more tanks as a permanent part of the Army.

The Pentagon is also shedding a small number of tanks. This year, the U.S. Marine Corps disbanded its entire tank fleet, arguing it no longer needed them as it refocused on fighting China in the South China Sea. The Marines sent the 120 M1A1 Abrams tanks to mothballs, but the service could conceivably replace the tanks with smaller, lighter vehicle with tank-like firepower.

*History suggests the country will regret its decision.*



## *The Centurion Which Detonated the Most A/T Mines in Vietnam.*

A number of tank crewmen experienced numerous anti-tank mine incidents in Vietnam ... before reflecting on who they were, it's worth looking at which tank held the 'record'.

Some Cents detonated two anti-tank mines; only one, however, detonated three: ARN 169067 (between Oct 69 and Jun 70). During this time it was callsign 24A and 4A in B and A Sqns. The tank spent eight months in Vietnam ... is that another record (the shortest time)?



The post on 1 April 2020 described the last of these incidents (the first Centurion to detonate an RPG mine). What happened on the other occasions?

23 October 1969: Not everything could keep going Tango Force's way, however. At 7.35am, the lead tank (Ferrari) struck a 7kg mine. It was not on a track, but positioned close to the edge of the Xa Cam My Rubber Plantation, just west of Route 2. This was probably predicted to be a likely place for AFVs to leave the road. As always, considerable thought and planning had gone into laying the mine. The fact that the ground was quite soft where the incident occurred probably reduced its effectiveness\*. This was not immediately realised by the crew commander, however: "It all happened so fast, a loud bang, cessation of forward motion and a feeling of numbness. I checked that the turret crew were ok (Troopers Winga Williams and Java Jones), but couldn't raise the driver (Trooper Moe Burgess) on

the IC. I was so concerned for him that I broke all the rules and went over the top to check on him. He was ok; he'd just lost his headsets."

\*While there were no apparent wounds, such incidents could always involve both physical and psychological trauma (known as occult wounds) which took longer to become evident. Minimal damage was done to the tank.

25 February 1970: It was a bigger mine than 1 Charlie had hit a few days earlier (16kg compared to 13.5kg), but this one was not offset. Going off beneath the front left roadwheel, the suspension was able to absorb much of the blast. Despite this, the driver, Trooper Moe Burgess, was badly knocked around by the concussion. While he was checking their gunner, Trooper Bob Joyce, Wicks asked Williams to help their driver: 'I climbed out of the turret and down the front to find poor bloody Moe half out of his driver's compartment. I hauled him out and laid him on the mudguard.' Joyce was fortunate: The force of the explosion was so great, it released the catch holding down the spring-loaded gunner's seat and I was catapulted head first into the turret roof. Luckily for me, I was wearing a fibreglass helmet (US issue) which took the brunt of the impact and certainly saved me from serious harm.

Damaged components on the vehicle included the idler, track guard, muffler and six track links. Electrical power to the turret was also lost. In the eyes of the squadron commander, however, there was a positive side to the incident: 'The mine caused a bush fire which detonated a second anti-tank mine ... and we had found the minefield.' Although located further to the east of the D445 position than the prisoner had indicated, the enemy had once again correctly predicted ground likely to be used by armour. Interestingly, one of the anti-tank mines later found in the area by engineers was set to be initiated by a tilt switch.

\*To the credit to the LAD, repairs to the tank, ARN 169067, were completed in two hours.

AWM 288, R733/1/14 [1]. The OpDam report noted that this was 'the first non-electrically initiated anti-tank mine encountered for some time', i.e. it was a direct pressure mine, possibly of Soviet or Chicom manufacture. The device was typical of tilt switch mechanisms: a freshly cut stick, around 90cm in length, was inserted into a Chicom grenade, which in turn was moulded into the explosive charge. All that was needed for detonation was for the stick to be tilted in any direction.

*Article courtesy of B Cameron's Blog Spot 19 April*



## RAACA Memorabilia for sale,

AFV Crewman's Badge	\$20
Pocket Badges	\$40
Lapel Badges	\$20
Armoured Antics	\$ 20
Vietnam Video	\$20
Boer War Lapel	\$ 20
Army combat badge	Large \$30
	Small \$20

### Attention all service and ex-service people

The Royal Automobile Club of Australia has recently introduced a very special membership for service and ex service people, for example;

The entry fee of \$250 is waived; and The annual Subscription of \$1365 is halved to \$683.

The Club has a superb position at the Circular Quay, 24/7 access to the gymnasium at no extra cost, valet parking (the only club in Sydney to have this), and a wide range of Club facilities and activities including bridge and snooker.

Further, here's a special plus, you can cancel your NRMA road service because RACA membership gives you personal NRMA Service free, no matter what car you are driving or even if you are just a passenger in any vehicle!

You can access the Club's over 200 reciprocal private members clubs around the world. You can save your annual subs in a couple of days by using these clubs when travelling.

Call the RACA on (02) 82732300 for an application form or just pop in for a look at 89 Macquarie St.

**A seven day free trial membership is available.**

The Veteran web Network providing information to Australian veterans, ex-service and service personnel.  
Reaching more than 12,400 readers daily and growing.

All service and ex-service personnel can subscribe to the Veteran web Network cost free. Information is provided via email from various reliable sources. Veteran web is an information service, while is not a forum you are welcome to contribute.

Some interesting statistics of veterans by electorate can be found at:

[http://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/publications/datastatistical/fedprofile/Electorates\\_Mar2016.pdf](http://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/publications/datastatistical/fedprofile/Electorates_Mar2016.pdf)

## Vale

### Gwen Haynes

It is with great sadness that we heard this afternoon that Gwen Haynes, Museum and Regimental Association benefactor, wife and lifelong partner of Colonel John Haynes AM passed away 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020. Gwen had not been well for some time, John passed away on 15 February 2020.

Colonel John and Gwen were married for 65 years, Gwen's support ensured the great works John was involved in and drove (36 years as an officer in the CMF and ARA, RAAC Association, New Medal and National Boer War Memorial to name a few) were a success.

There are no funeral details at present.

Sincerely,

**John Howells**

Hon Secretary

New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc

ABN: 94 630 140 881



John and Gwen Haynes at the Parliament House, Sydney dining room 2013

**Lest we Forget**  
**We regret to advise the passing of the following members**

Mr.	John	JF	Bertles	12/15HRL
LTCOL	Donald	DR	Chappell	1AR, 3/9, 10LH
Mrs.	Joy	J	Canham	Widow of 1AR member
Mr.	Raymond	R	Doo	1AR 4/19PWLH
Mr.	Ivan	IJ	Brennan	2/4 AR
Mr.	David	DR	Stewart	12 / 16 HRL
Mr.	Keiran	K	Macrae	1AR
Mr.	Charles	C	Walsh	1AR 1/15 Armd Cn
Mrs	Aileen	A	Allard	Widow of 2/7 AR deceased member
Mrs.	Nearald	N	Hughes	Widow of 2 Tank Bn deceased Member
TPR	Thomas	T	Avery	2/6 Armd Regt
Mr.		RA	Hewston	15th NRL
Mr.	Bryan	BMJ	Algie	1/15 RNSWL 12/16 HRL



## Vale

### Peter Dailhou

At around 18:45 on 21 May 2020, Pete Dailhou passed away from a brain haemorrhage caused by a fall. He had been diagnosed with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy in early 2019 and had fought long and hard against the progressive loss of his physical and mental capabilities.

His funeral was held in his birth place of Mullumbimby, in Northern NSW, on his birthday 10 June 2020. At this point in time, under the current social distancing restrictions, only immediate family were allowed to attend and will likely have to be a private event.

Peter served as a Lieutenant in the Regiment in the late 1970s - mid 1980s and is remembered with respect by those who served with him. He had also served in combat with the Rhodesia African Rifles. Pete has remained in contact with the Regimental Association, though as he lived 300 km away, he has not been able to attend reunions or march on ANZAC Day.

In civil life, Peter was a school teacher, his last post being at West Taree Public School. He held a PhD in cybernetically enabling education and was fluent in Afrikaans and Shona.

Many thanks to Peter Butson who let us know of Peter Dailhou's passing via a Facebook comment.



Sincerely,  
 John Howells  
 Secretary

New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc ABN: 94 630 140 881

# Vale

## Barry Tormey

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Barry Tormey.

Barry John Tormey, was born 13 September 1940, he died 17 April 2020 at Royal North Shore Hospital. His service number was 2139845. Joined the Regiment in 1957 and transferred to the inactive reserve 1974.

I was posted to the Regiment in 1974, so only heard stories of his service, they were enough to intrigue a young soldier.

Barry was a troop commander in C Squadron in 1970. Barry appeared, quite a starring role in the recruiting film, Citizen Soldier .

The last time any of us saw Barry was in 2014 when he helped as a Museum guide when we staged the parade to mark the centenary of the raising of 1 LH AIF for service in WW1. We lost contact with him in 2018, at the time he was living at Wyralla Avenue, Epping.

Barry was interred last Thursday, 23 April 2020, at Rookwood General Cemetery with only a few family members as mourners in accord with COVID-19 restrictions.

John Howells  
Hon Secretary  
Royal New South Wales Lancers Association



C Squadron 1970

Photo includes  
LT Barry Tormey  
SGT K Thompson  
CPL M Thom  
CPL S Alcorn  
TPR D Balckman  
TPR A Gudaitis

Barry stands in the centre, Alge Gudaitis to the left of him, Dave Blackman is bottom left

