



ESTABLISHED 1946

September 2023
Issue No. 490

Journal of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association NSW Inc
Building 41 VBS Locked Bag 7005 LIVERPOOL 1875 .
Website: www.raacansw.com.au
Email: mikebutler181@optusnet.com.au .
Tel: 0401 966 989 . ABN 49 709 547 198

ARMOUR

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

The Battle of Binh Ba

The Battle of Binh Ba (6–8 June 1969), also known as Operation Hammer, was a battle during the Vietnam War. The action occurred when Australian Army troops from the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR) fought a combined force of People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and Viet Cong (VC), including a company from the PAVN 33rd Regiment and elements of the VC D440 Battalion, in the village of Binh Ba, 5 kilometres north of Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province.



The battle was unusual in Australian combat experience in South Vietnam as it involved fierce close-quarter house-to-house fighting, although the majority of enemy killed was through heavy artillery and air-bombardment. In response to PAVN/VC attempts to capture Binh Ba the Australians assaulted the village with infantry, armour and helicopter gunships, routing the VC and largely destroying the village itself. Such battles were not the norm in Phuoc Tuy, however, and the heavy losses suffered by the PAVN/VC forced them to temporarily leave the province.

Although the Australians did encounter PAVN/VC Main Force units in the years to come, the battle marked the end of such large-scale clashes, and ranks as one of the major Australian victories of the war.

Situated north of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) base at Nui Dat on the western side of Route 2, the village of Binh Ba had a population of around 3,000 people—mainly farmers and rubber plantation workers. [2] Tidy and rectangular in shape, and mainly constructed of solid brick and tile, Binh Ba was well known to the Australians. [3]

Indeed, during 5 RAR's first tour in Vietnam a rifle company and a mortar section had been briefly stationed within the village itself. [4] This strategy proved to be a deterrent to the VC tax collectors and assassination squads taking control of the village. [5] The drain on the finite resources of the small Australian force proved to be too much however, and the village was later left to the protection of South Vietnamese Regional Forces. [4]

In an attempt to demonstrate that they could move freely within the province, a combined force including a company from the PAVN 33rd Regiment, elements of the VC D440 Provincial Mobile Battalion, the Binh Ba and Ngãi Giao Guerrilla Squad and the Châu Đốc District Company had occupied Binh Ba on the evening of 5–6 June 1969. [6][7][Note 1]

In response, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces were sent from Duc Thanh the following morning. Initial intelligence suggested that a group of about platoon strength had infiltrated the village. [6]

Inside this Issue

The Battle of Binh Ba	1
Technical Notes & News	7
Defence capability; tanks not needed mantra	10



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – SPRING 2023

A great thrill to see in the King's Birthday Honours acknowledgement to Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Hine, our Association Secretary, with the award of the Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC). Very well-deserved recognition of a tireless worker in all that he does. RAACA NSW is in very good Secretarial hands!

12 September is the 2023 Annual General Meeting, to be held at Paddington RSL at 6:00PM. Please attend if you are able. It would be good to see more than the handful of members who regularly attend. In the build-up to the AGM, I would like to thank and acknowledge the work that Brian Walters OAM has done over a number of years as the Association Treasurer. It is never easy to secure a volunteer in that role and my thanks to Brian for his diligence in that position.

We have been very fortunate to secure the services of a current Association member, Lieutenant Colonel Brendan Beckett CSM (Retd), as a new member on the Executive Committee and Treasurer.

As we get closer to the Annual Beersheba – Cambrai dinner, a few words on that event. Saturday 4th November is the day at the Royal Automobile Club. Our Guest of Honor is Major General Susan Coyle AM, CSC, DSM, Commander Forces Command. In addition to her important role as Forces Commander, Susan started her Army life in 12/16 Hunter River Lancers, so she is a very welcome guest for the dinner. Mike Butler might even be able to persuade her to join RAACA NSW?

You will recall that RAACA NSW has established the Colonel John Haynes Trust, in memory of the exceptional work that John did for RAACA NSW, the RAAC Corporation and the broader veteran's community. The Trust is very ably led by Colonel Keith Schollum (Retd) and is following a very steady and deliberate investment plan for the funds that Colonel John bequeathed to the Trust.

Thank you all for your continuing membership of RAACA NSW. We are always looking for new members so please feel free to recruit!

Yours aye,
Rob



Meanwhile, during a separate operation 6 RAR had also been engaged in a heavy contact several kilometres north of the task force base and at 08:00 on 6 June, an Australian Centurion tank and an armoured recovery vehicle moving through Binh Ba to assist 6 RAR were fired upon. A rocket propelled grenade (RPG) struck the Centurion penetrating the turret, and causing damage to the tank and severe injuries to one of the crewman. The district commander subsequently asked 1 ATF for assistance in clearing Binh Ba.[9]

The 1 ATF Ready Reaction Force under the command of Major Murray Blake consisted of an understrength D Company 5 RAR (of just 65 men), a troop of Centurion tanks from the 1st Armoured Regiment and a troop of M-113 armoured personnel carriers from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment and subsequently reacted to the incident. In direct support was 105th Battery, Royal Australian Artillery. [10][11]



Meanwhile, elements of the 1st Battalion, 33rd Regiment took up defensive positions within the village. By 10:30 the Australians approached Binh Ba from the south, and were engaged by a volley of RPG fire from a row of houses. [7] After evacuating much of the town's population, D Company assaulted the village from east to west following preparation from helicopter gunships of No. 9 Squadron RAAF.

Regional Force troops were deployed into blocking positions. Four tanks led the assault, with the infantry remaining mounted in the APCs following behind.[10]

The Australians reached the edge of the village at 11:20, coming under light fire. Initially the tanks were effective for close action, however by the time the marketplace had been reached in the centre of the town concealed RPG-7s had caused external damage to two Centurions, whilst another was penetrated. Within an hour, three of the four tanks used in the initial assault were disabled through damage and crew casualties.

It became clear that the initial assessments of PAVN/VC strength had been inaccurate, and was probably closer to a battalion than a platoon. In addition helicopters overhead reported another large enemy force of up to 60 moving to the south and west. Blake subsequently decided to swing the attack left, in order to clear the southern edge of the town before moving out to western side of Binh Ba. As the Australian armour moved through the rubber trees they clashed with a company forming up to counter attack, inflicting heavy casualties on the PAVN/VC in the process.[10]

By 14:00 the Australians were bolstered by additional troops from B Company 5 RAR, under Major Rein Haring, which took up blocking positions to south and east. The Commanding Officer of 5 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel Colin Khan, now assumed command of the battle. With a fresh troop of tanks together with APC support, D Company conducted a second assault on the village, this time with the infantry leading. One tank and two M113s accompanied each platoon in close support. [10]



The lead platoon made contact with the enemy immediately and the advance was slow due to the need to clear every house. The PAVN/VC occupying the houses fired on the Australians from the windows and doorways before withdrawing into tunnels as they passed. An Australian soldier—Private Wayne Teeling—was killed by a shot through the neck as his team approached the first line of houses. A tank fired one round of HE into the building occupied by the PAVN/VC. The house exploded, and the clearing team assaulted immediately. Six dead were found in the ruins. [12]

This type of action was typical all along D Company's assault line and every time the Australians received fire from a building, tank rounds were used to breach the walls and a small team of infantry would conduct room clearance until all resistance was quelled.[10]

During the fighting some of the PAVN/VC had discarded their uniforms and weapons and attempted to mingle with the pockets of civilians that were unable to escape. The continued presence of civilians in the village required the Australians to expose themselves to extreme danger while trying to usher these groups to the rear of the battle zone. Others tried to flee the village, or hide in the small air raid bunkers attached to every house. [13]

The fighting continued all afternoon and only ended at last light. With Binh Ba still insecure, D Company and their armoured support subsequently occupied a defensive harbour for the night, exhausted by the fighting.[10]

Overnight B Company killed two VC trying to break out to the south.[13] At 06:00 on 7 June B Company intercepted a PAVN/VC company attempting to enter the town, and after blocking the exit and entry routes—and again supported by armour—they forced them to withdraw. On the second day the clearing of the village continued. D Company, with a platoon from B Company attached, met sporadic resistance from a number of small groups still holed up in the village. To fully clear the village every bunker, house and any likely areas of concealment had to be searched. Later in the morning South Vietnamese forces in the northern hamlet of Duc Trung came under attack, and B Company and the Assault Pioneer Platoon were deployed to provide assistance. [10]



Indeed, most of the action now centred on Duc Trung, with a helicopter reporting a force of up to 80 PAVN/VC troops moving between the buildings. With the pioneers blocking to the south a Regional Force reaction company cleared the village, however the PAVN/VC had already left. [14] By 13:00 heavy firing again broke out in Duc Trung, with the South Vietnamese rapidly overrun by over a hundred PAVN/VC. Accurate artillery fire was effective in stabilizing the situation, however, and B Company with a troop of tanks swept the hamlet. [15] During the afternoon D Company continued to clear Binh Ba and further close-quarter fighting followed before the Australians withdrew to allow the South Vietnamese to complete the clearance. By the evening the village was secure, and B and D Companies adopted blocking positions overnight. [6]

Operation Hammer concluded by 09:00 on 8 June with one final sweep carried out that morning to ensure that Binh Ba was clear. [6] By this time a large PAVN/VC force had been defeated by the Australians, and the village practically destroyed.[16]

Indeed, Binh Ba was so badly damaged that many of the villagers whose homes were destroyed were subsequently resettled with the help of the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit. [15][17] Despite efforts to clear the village of civilians before the battle, a large but unknown number of civilians had undoubtedly died during the fighting. This fact, coupled with the one-sided casualty count, later led to claims in the media of an Australian atrocity. [18]

One Australian had been killed and 10 wounded, while PAVN/VC losses included at least 107 killed, six wounded and eight captured.[1]

The battle was one of the major victories of the Australians in South Vietnam and although they would occasionally encounter PAVN/VC Main Force units in the future, it effectively marked the end of such large-scale clashes. Indeed, as a result of such heavy losses suffered at Binh Ba the PAVN were temporarily forced to move out of Phuoc Tuy and into the adjoining province of Long Khanh. [6]

The Royal Australian Regiment, the 3rd Cavalry Regiment and 1st Armoured Regiment were subsequently awarded the battle honour 'Binh Ba', one of only five presented to Australian units during the war. [19][6]

Footnotes

1. According to Chamberlain two battalions of the 33rd Regiment were deployed in the area, with the move of the regiment south-west from Long Khanh Province into Phuoc Tuy having been monitored by 1 ATF's signals intelligence unit. [8]

Citations

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. McKay & Nicholas 2001, p. 212. | 11. McKay & Nicholas 2001, p. 198. |
| 2. O'Neill 1968, p. 30 and 66. | 12. McKay & Nicholas 2001, p. 209. |
| 3. Battle 1970, p. 51. | 13. Battle 1970, p. 55. |
| 4. McNeill 1993, p. 298. | 14. Battle 1970, p. 56. |
| 5. O'Neill 1968, pp. 193–194. | 15. Battle 1970, p. 57. |
| 6. Coulthard-Clark 2001, p. 291. | 16. Coulthard-Clark 2001, p. 289. |
| 7. Odgers 1999, p. 349. | 17. Palazzo 2006, p. 130. |
| 8. Chamberlain 2014, pp. 47–84 and Appendix 17. | 18. Ham 2007, p. 484. |
| 9. Coulthard-Clark 2001, pp. 289–290. | 19. Horner 1990, pp. 459–461. |
| 10. Coulthard-Clark 2001, p. 290. | |

References

- . Battle, M.R. (1970). *The Year of the Tigers: The Second Tour of 5th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam, 1969–70*. Brookvale: Printcraft Press. ISBN 0-85581-000-9.
- . Chamberlain, Ernest (2014). *The 33rd Regiment – North Vietnamese Army: Their Story (and the Battle of Binh Ba)* (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/217396459/The-33rd-Regiment-North-Vietnamese-Army-Their-Story-and-the-Battle-of-Binh-Ba>). Point Lonsdale, Victoria: Ernest Chamberlain. ISBN 9780975035054.
- . Coulthard-Clark, Chris (2001). *The Encyclopaedia of Australia's Battles* (Second ed.). Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin. ISBN 1-86508-634-7.
- . Ham, Paul (2007). *Vietnam: The Australian War*. Sydney: Harper Collins. ISBN 978-0-7322-8237-0.
- . Horner, David, ed. (1990). *Duty First: The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace* (First ed.). North Sydney: Allen & Unwin. ISBN 0-04-442227-X.
- . McKay, Gary; Nicholas, Graeme (2001). *Jungle Tracks: Australian Armour in Vietnam*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin. ISBN 1-86508-449-2.

. McNeill, Ian (1993). To Long Tan: The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1950–1966. The Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–1975. Vol. Two. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin. ISBN 1-86373-282-9.
. Odgers, George (1999). 100 Years of Australians at War. Sydney: Lansdowne. ISBN 1-86302-669-X.
. O'Neill, Robert (1968). Vietnam Task: The 5th Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment, 1966/67. Melbourne: Cassell Australia. OCLC 20116 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/20116>).
. Palazzo, Albert (2006). Australian Military Operations in Vietnam. Australian Army Campaigns Series. Vol. 3. Canberra: Army History Unit. ISBN 1876

Aussie Abrams deployed to Indonesia

Posted by Brian Hartigan, 24/08/2023

At the invitation of Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI), more than 125 personnel from the Australian Defence Force will take part in Exercise Super Garuda Shield 2023.

Exercise Super Garuda Shield is a TNI- and United States Indo-Pacific Command-led bilateral training activity in and around East Java from 31 August to 13 September.

Australian Army is contributing a troop of M1A1 Abrams tanks from the 1st Armoured Regiment, an infantry platoon from the 10th/27th Battalion, Royal South Australian Regiment, command and control elements, and a range of armoured vehicles, trucks and recovery vehicles.



The tanks and other vehicles were transported from their base in Adelaide to Darwin Port, and loaded onto US Army Vessel SSGT. Robert T. Kuroda bound for Surabaya in Indonesia, last week.

This exercise will provide training for ADF personnel and rehearse the ADF's ability to collaborate with partner nations to effectively deploy significant land forces, including tanks, across the Indo-Pacific region.



ANNUAL DINNER INVITATION IN CELEBRATION & REMEMBRANCE OF THE BATTLES OF CAMBRAI AND BEERSHEBA

Saturday 4th November, 6.30pm for 7.00pm at The Royal Automobile Club, Sydney

Colonel (Retd) Rob Shoebridge, President of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW), cordially invites all fellow Black Hats to the Annual Dinner of the Association in celebration and remembrance of the Battles of Cambrai and Beersheba in World War One.

Pre-dinner drinks from 1830 hrs for Dinner at 1900 hrs

The dinner will be held at The Royal Automobile Club, 89 Macquarie Street, Sydney on Saturday 4th November, 2023.

DRESS

Black Tie, Mess Kit (Army Dress Order 6B) Mess
Dress white jacket, or Coat & Tie,
Miniatures may be worn

Guest of Honour: Major General Susan Coyle AM, CSC, DSM, Commander Forces Command

REPLY AND PAYMENT

RSVP NLT 27 October by paying \$110 per head: Electronic Funds Transfer to Defense Bank BSB 833205, A/c No 20539747 indicating your Surname and the text 'Dinner payment'.

As a last resort, you can pay by cheque payable to:

RAACA NSW and sent it to:
The Treasurer RAACA NSW
c/o LTCOL A Hine
Training Branch
Headquarters Forces Command Building 111
Locked Bag 7005

From: Noel Mclaughlin, Wednesday, August 2, 2023

Gentlemen,

For info HOC and Corps RSM: Gentlemen, I assume that the eligibility to wear the CGWPP will be extended to currently serving members in the two RAAC Vietnam-era units for the duration of their postings with either unit.

Your attention is drawn to the two emails below from COL Max Ball (Ret'd) Nat Pres VVAA and refers to his successful appeal to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) in respect of the Cross of Gallantry With Palm Citation (CGWP).



The salient details are in Max Ball's two emails below. The Minister's comments regarding sensitivity are noted. Suffice to say this has been long overdue. I have highlighted the salient points in Max Ball's email.

All who served in Vietnam from beginning to end including all those we lost KIA/DOW and who succumbed to other causes while in Vietnam will be eligible. Similarly families/NOK of those who died post-Vietnam will also be eligible to apply for this device on behalf of their now deceased loved ones.

For further information <https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards>

Also go to <https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards/medals/foreign-awards/republic-vietnam-cross-gallantry-palm-unit-citation>

This link applies to families of deceased veterans: <https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards/policy-information/unissued-service-awards-deceased-members> the pdf document listing all eligible units is attached. Pls ensure widest dissemination.

Regards,
Noel Mc Laughlin OAM
Chairman, RAAC Corporation

Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc. No. A0108026R
We represent the interests of Defence Force Retirees regarding their Superannuation
www: <https://www.adfra.org>/ Email: admin@adfra.org

DFRDB UPDATE – JULY 2023 (2)

For those seeking an overview of our situation, we have condensed the evidence we compiled in the Reduction of DFRDB Defined Benefits video presentation into an email Betrayal of Defence Veterans which we have sent to the Prime Minister and every MP and Senator.

You will see that our issue is not just about Commutation, as many still believe, and it is not just about being misled because of defective administration by Defence, as the Ombudsman found. It is about being betrayed by the Department of Defence with clandestine legislation designed to deny us the full entitlements we were led to believe we would receive if we served for 20 or more years.

We must continue to drive this message home to MPs and Senators if we are to achieve a change to the legislation.

Jim Hislop OAM
President



Technical Notes & News

Australia's future Self Propelled Howitzers

Posted by Mike Hughes; 11/08/2023

South Korean self-propelled howitzers made their Australian debut at Exercise Talisman Sabre, ahead of the planned construction of the Australian-variant AS9 Huntsman in Victoria late next year.



Alongside the US HIMARS, the K9 made an impressive display at the firepower demonstration held at Shoalwater Bay Training Area on July 22.

Gunners could finally see the future direction of their corps up close.

Gunner Max Hood, of 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, said while it was the first time they'd seen the tracked howitzer, they had already begun practising drills based around self-propelled artillery.

"We're moving away from the traditional gun line towards

operating on our own with less camouflage and concealment," Gunner Hood said. "We drop, shoot and get out of there to avoid counter battery." 30 AS9 Huntsmen and 15 AS10 armoured ammunition resupply vehicles will be built in Victoria.

The K9 has an effective range of 40km, a capacity of 48 rounds and fires 6-8 rounds a minute, including three-round bursts.

A further 104 rounds can be transported with the K10 resupply vehicle. The Huntsman and AS10 are expected to provide similar capabilities.

In another first for Australia's largest military exercise, the Republic of Korea Armed Forces also brought the K239 Chunmoo multiple rocket launcher system to Queensland for Talisman Sabre.

South Korean Marine Corps Artillery Commander Major Kim Donju said their involvement demonstrated the strength and capability of Korean Marine Corps equipment and "improved the capability of joint operations of multinational forces".

Ties between the two nations continue to grow after the government announced South Korean company Hanwah, which manufactures the K9 and Chunmoo MLRS, was awarded a contract to build Army's new Redback infantry fighting vehicles.

Hanwah is set to deliver 129 IFVs under Land400 Phase 3, which will be constructed in Geelong.



A Republic of Korea Armed Forces K9 Thunder deployed during Exercise Talisman Sabre. Story by Corporal Jacob Joseph. Photos by Leading Aircraftman Adam Abela.

Source: Contact Tuesday, August 15, 2023

All past ADF Members



Please take the time to scroll through Dr Dan Mealey's precis of the truth below about ADF service rendered in Afghanistan and pass it on to your Ex-Service Association networks, especially the Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Associations.

These Afghanistan veterans, especially ex CPL Ben Roberts-Smith, VC, MG are getting the same disgraceful treatment as the Vietnam veterans did in the eyes of the Australian public in circa 1965 to 1975. Dr Dan Mealey is ex RMO with the SASR in Afghanistan, and is currently a GP at the QSMC practice in Moruya and has a genuine empathy for ex ADF veterans.

Please pass on through BCC address list.

Kind Regards John Tilbrook

Dear Australia, You haven't been told the truth.

You could be forgiven for believing the war in Afghanistan is over. Since the early days post- 9/11, the world world's media has simply not reported the Taliban's worsening crimes against humanity.

This has not only prevented international help for the women and children suffering. It's also had a major impact on coalition soldiers coming home to civilians without the the requisite information to mount compassion in response to unthinkable trauma we endured over there.

"Let there be no doubt: this is a war against women – banned from public life; prevented from accessing education; prohibited from working; barred from moving freely; imprisoned, disappeared and tortured including for speaking against these policies and resisting the repression."

AGNÈS CALLAMARD, SECRETARY GENERAL AT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL - MAY 2023

The soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan were separated from their commanding officers by a highly fortified wall that kept the former in constant danger, and the latter in relative safety and ignorance.

Missing from both sides of that wall were journalists like Nick McKenzie, and sociologists like Samantha Crompvoets. Yet these mischievous beatniks have driven the entire narrative of what happened in twenty years' warring in that hell-hole, with the full support of those dangerously uninformed commanding officers whose continued failed leadership has driven 1,600 of their soldiers to suicide.

The problem with journalists who commandeer international media toward a contextually absent analysis of "war crimes," is that the real war criminals get away with blue murder (and with no media to tell the story). Blue murder. Green-on-blue murder.

All of the colours of murder in Afghanistan have remained unreported, with the real war criminals remaining at large. For the record, the "real war criminals" aren't our soldiers. And if you don't know who the real war criminals are, who could blame you? There have been no journalists to inform you.

Two major sentinel events occurred in the twenty year history of the Afghanistan war. The first of these events entailed the planes that crashed into the World Trade Centre. The second involved planes taking off from Kabul International Airport twenty years later when we withdrew our allied forces for the last time.

Who could forget the citizens falling from those buildings on fire. And who could forget the citizens falling from the wings of those planes. All of these people desperately trying to escape the savagery of our Taliban enemy. Both of these events made international headlines with an international outpouring of grief. Similarly, this emotive response followed numerous Western terrorist events notwithstanding the Christchurch mosque massacres, and the 7/7 London Bombings.

It's tempting to conclude that the stories of major Taliban war crimes taking place in Afghanistan over twenty years didn't hit our media consequent to a national indifference to events that took place there. But apathy only occurs on an international level, in the absence of information. In the absence of information provided to the world about what was really happening in Afghanistan, the world was not indifferent to those events - they just didn't know about them.

These events in the West resulted in comparatively greater media attention than events taking place in Afghanistan - not because we felt more empathy toward them, but because civilians were present there to react to them.

Those citizens had mobile phones. They had cameras.

And they had social media accounts to disseminate those stories around the globe with a speed, and an impact that checkmated international media to react in equal measure.

Between the two events of 9/11 and withdrawal of allied forces, there is a compelling twenty year absence of information in the annals of history about what was actually taking place in Afghanistan.

Arguably, this is due to the fact that those present weren't taking to the World Wide Web with their eye-witnessed experiences there. Those present were largely coalition and Taliban forces. In the context of an enormous Taliban regime that disguised themselves as civilians, the actual civilians feared death were they to show the world what was really happening. They were censored. They were tortured. They were murdered. And it wasn't our soldiers who were murdering them.

I was in Afghanistan 2014 and 2015 as an Australian medical officer and I can assure you that no coalition soldier was using their Facebook accounts, and especially not discussing stories with journalists. I can assure you that daily, horrific events took place that nobody in the West was reporting.

Those of us attached to the coalition effort were all conforming to the "bigger picture," a picture that left no room for internet / media cowboys to wield the internet space with their egos. But in the absence of intelligent journalists to push beyond the limitations and confinement of the information presented to civilians of the world, the stories that our journalists have been telling the world have been fundamentally wrong.

This absence of any kind of military context in Australian journalistic commentary about our soldiers, is only part of the problem however. Again, the greater problem is that ADF leaders often have no military context either. They have collected an embarrassing swag of medals and post-nominals, yet ask any combat soldier where those leaders were postured during this war.

(Answer: they were postured in the safety of a heavily fortified HQ, while the soldiers they now condemn and betray were exposed to unthinkable war trauma, and real war crimes- Taliban war crimes). Needed here, are war-experienced ADF officers to step up to protect their soldiers from poorly-contextualised journalistic, and politicised vitriol about them. But those war-experienced leaders don't exist. Or if they do, they are cowardly bowing to a toxic status quo; fatally confusing "protecting the green," with "protecting themselves" from a glaringly absent national criticism."

They have failed meet the basic expectation of their roles: to tell the truth. In the absence of that truth, compassion toward the plight of our soldiers has been non-existent. Suicide only happens in a vacuum of compassion. And compassion only exists in the response to information.

Dr Daniel Mealey

Anzac Day 2023 Round UP



Defence capability and the tanks not needed mantra

By Rodger Shanahan, June 2023

One of the most used quotes in support of the argument that the Australia Defence Force has no need for tanks in future structures is that they're surplus to requirements because, in part, they haven't been deployed since the Vietnam War. This is an oft-repeated line run by commentators in two of our major newspapers, the Sydney Morning Herald and The Australian. It is also a factoid employed in articles hosted by SBS and a range of other media outlets.



At its heart though, it is a nonsensical argument. If we were to use the 'hasn't been employed since Vietnam' as the metric for the utility of defence platforms, there are a whole raft of other ones whose continued relevance would be open to discussion.

An anniversary marked this week provides a particularly good example of why the Vietnam metric is so lacking in intellectual rigour. Seventy years ago, on 27 March 1953, was the last time an Australian military aircraft was involved in air-to-air combat. If the half-century since an Australian tank

fired a shot in anger is considered Exhibit A in the case against them, what are we to make of the seven decades and billions of dollars that we've spent on an air-to-air combat capability that we've never had to use?

And taking the 'use it or lose it' argument to its logical conclusion, what should the general public think about the eye-watering cost of our new nuclear submarines come April when it will be 108 years since a Royal Australian Navy submarine last launched a torpedo in anger? Yes, you heard correctly—108 years.

Of course, I'm not questioning the utility of submarines or combat aircraft or tanks as part of a robust ADF. Rather, this is an appeal to those who seek to influence public debate to avoid the pitfalls inherent in declaring capabilities obsolete simply because they were last used in the Vietnam War. Australian artillery hasn't fired a shot in anger since Vietnam (although Australian gunners served with UK gun batteries in Afghanistan), yet the US's use of artillery to support the Syrian Democratic Forces in defeating Islamic State in Syria and the difficulties in keeping up the supply of ammunition to Ukraine shows how critical tubed artillery remains on the modern battlefield.

Time alone doesn't consign a capability to the scrapheap. Technological advances may do so, or the nature of conflict itself. But often those facts are only known once a conflict has commenced and the adversaries' capabilities become known. Which is why predicting the obsolescence of a capability is so difficult, and why the various sages who seek to do so would do well to buttress their arguments with a deeper level of analysis about scenarios in which capabilities are, or are not, likely to be used. Of all the arguments as to why a capability is no longer required, temporal distance from the last time it was used is often the weakest.

So, when the defence strategic review is published and the impact on the defence budget of the AUKUS submarine project is better understood, it would be good if the commentariat could discuss the pros and cons of various capabilities that the ADF may require in the future without referencing the Vietnam War. Some capabilities, after all, retain their utility regardless of when they were last used.

Rodger Shanahan is a former Australian Army officer and Middle East analyst. Image: Australian War Memorial.



Vale

Major General Warren Glenny AO RFD ED

It is with great sadness I advise that the New South Wales Lancers' Memorial Museum's Patron of many years Major General Warren Glenny AO RFD ED passed away. General Glenny rose from the ranks of the Lancers' Regimental Cadets to command the Regiment, serve as Colonel Armour 2 Div, then GOC 2 and 3 Div, the Honorary Colonel of the Regiment. Most recently he has been a generous Patron of the Lancers' Museum.

A great man, well regarded by all who came in contact with him. Our thoughts are with Gaye and Warren's family.

Sincerely,

John Howells

Secretary

Royal New South Wales Lancers' Association



Vale

John Edward Hawton

The Association regrets to advise the passing of John Edward Hawton, aged 88 years. John was the SSM of A Sqn 1 Armd Regt Vietnam from December 1969 to late November 1970. John was the RSM of the 1st Armoured Regiment during 1973 to 1975.

May he Rest in Peace in the green fields beyond.

Russ James

Secretary, 1st Armoured Regiment Association

Gentleman, John Hawton was my very first RSM when I marched into 2 Cav in Nov 71 after my 2nd tour. He was a thoroughly professional soldier and an absolute gentleman. It was a privilege an dan honour to have known him and an equally great privilege to have his son Bob as my Gunner.

May he rest in peace. Lest we forget.

Yours in sorrow,

Noel Mc Laughlin

Chairman

RAAC Corporation

Vale

COL John Arnott, RFD, ED

John Braddon Arnott enlisted in the Citizen Military Forces or CMF on 21 August 1951 & retired on 31 October 1982, some 31 years later. His period of service encompassed immense change for the Army, the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC) & the Regt. He enlisted in an essentially WW2 Army. He joined the Regt when we had the Matilda Battle Tank & the .303 as our service rifle. When he commanded the Lancers for 3 1/2 years from Jan 66 when we had Centurion Tanks & M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC).

COL John Arnott, RFD, ED was in every definition of the word a stalwart of the veteran community & the 1st/15th Royal NSW Lancers; for 31 years in uniform & over 40 years thereafter.

John Braddon Arnott; we thank you for your service.

Lest We Forget

Lest we Forget

We regret to advise the passing of the following members

Mr.	Terry	AG	Bullock	1AR 3 Cav 1/15RNSWL 4/19PWLH 10LH
Mr.	Ross	ER	Richards	2/4AR
Mr.		W	Bisby	4 Aust Armd Bde
Mr.		KE	Short	1 AR B & C , 3 CAV RGMT
Mrs.	Gwenyth	G	Lewis	2/6 AR
Tpr	Roy	RG	Young	12/16HRL
Mr.		KW	Hayes	2/4 Armd Regt
COL	Bob	RE	Hagerty AM	1AR, School of Armour, 2/14, 1APC, 3 Cav
Mr.	Dudley	DR	Faulkner	12/16HRL
Mr.	Keith	K	Teasdale	9RAR, 3CAV, 2CAV, 1/15 RNSWL
Mr.	Graeme	GW	Mellett	A+ B 3Cav
Major (RTD)	Don		Gazzard	1AR, 2/14 QMI, 2 Cav, 3/9 SAMR, 3 Cav, 4 Cav, Armd Ctrn, HQ1ATF.

Vale

LTCOL John Alfred Norman CHIPMAN

LTCOL "Jack" Chipman passed away in Brisbane on Friday night, 1st September after a fall at home followed by a few days in hospital. His family was with him when he passed, including his former wife, 2 sons and daughter. Jack was 88 years old.

He commanded A Squadron 1st Armoured Regiment in 1969 training, then 1970 deployed to Vietnam. He was very instrumental in the success of the Battle of "Minh Dam", commonly referred to as Operation Hammersley or the Battle of Long Hai (the assault and destruction of the Minh Dam Secret Zone Defensive Position). The Battle Streamer awarded for this battle is clearly "Minh Dam" as recognised by the ARVN Commander and Government of SVN. This battle involved his entire Tank Squadron, as well as B Squadron 3 Cavalry and many other critical elements of the Task Force operating under Operational Control of 8 RAR. All movement in the contact area was conducted in a mounted role with all personnel in or on Armoured Vehicles. Following the battle on 21 Feb 70, armoured units had encountered most of the wounded and battle damage. It would be some days later on 28 Feb 70 when 8 RAR encountered a series of mine incidents that they suffered most of their casualties for the operation, after they dismounted and began foot patrolling.

8 RAR and 161 Battery RNZA were awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation for that Battle, at the complete exclusion of the Tanks, Cavalry and Engineers who suffered 42% of the casualties (3 KIA and more than 30 WIA) and had 2 tanks and 3 M113 destroyed. Jack did his best for more than 50 years to have that injustice rectified for his men.

He deserved every accolade he received and much more that he did not receive. He was a private person in every respect and had a lasting connection with "his Squadron" in every sense. He never bragged of anything, but thought deeply of the things that really mattered. He was the "Heavyweight Boxing Champion" of RMC Duntroon, for each of his years as a cadet there so I guess he was never subjected to taunting by his seniors.

Jack was a member of the National Boer War (Queensland) Committee assisting to raise money, publicity and saliency for the national committee's efforts that culminated in the unveiling of this outstanding memorial in Canberra on 31st May, 2017

May he Rest In Peace, his duty done.

WO1 Pedro Rosemond

