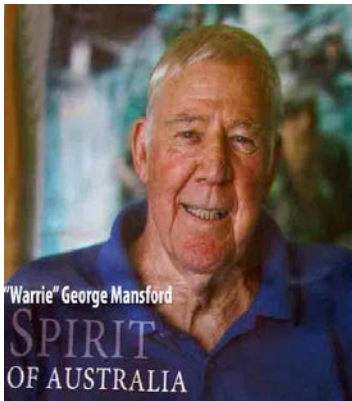


SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA - TRIBUTE TO A WARRIOR 'WARRIE' GEORGE MANSFORD A DIGGERS ASSESSMENT



A voice from the Pavement - Peter Adamis - A Diggers assessment 13 February 2014



Today was an interesting and one that needed to be recorded for the sake of posterity. I woke up just after the missus (Yovanna) was preparing for work. She is a Career and employment Consultant at Melbourne University. I dragged myself out of bed, slammed into the dresser and cursed the bloody thing for being in the way.

Walked into the kitchen, this time tripping over the elevated floor which I had installed some years ago to make it easier for the missus when she does the cooking. Mind you it's a bloody hazard. So much for much for my university education as a qualified Environmental Health and Safety Consultant. (But that's another story)

I turned on this fancy looking kettle that turns blue when it boils. Something out of a Star Trek movie. I didn't buy it, the missus did. I knew from trial and error episodes in the past that drinking a cup of coffee before taking my medication for the heart, (three heart attacks), blood pressure, depression and cholesterol was not the right thing to do. But then again, when was I ever a conventional bloke? The coffee was good because I had laced it with honey, so the medication had to work overtime when I took it eventually.

After the cuppa was finished, I then took a shower and remained underneath the cascading water for about twenty minutes until it dawned upon me that it was time to use shower gel that the missus uses for herself. Knowing from past experience that hair gel and other smelly stuff made a lot of lather, I emptied half the of the two containers on top of my now balding head and washed all the relevant parts.

Shuffling into the bedroom naked without any clothes and hoping the missus would not see the wet footprints, I began to dress in my 'bag of fruit'. I was interviewing a young bloke for a political seat in an adjacent electorate. My previous experience in the political arena for the past 24 years had given me the edge on winning pre-selections and I had accumulated a wealth of experience in the art of political warfare.

Moving into the lounge room I was met with my wife fully laden with her war bag of career and employment tools, ready to depart for work. We gave each other the traditional kiss (That has only been broken once in the past 13 years, that was when we had a big blue while holidaying at Day Dream Island), and I saw her out to her car in the driveway and watched her drive off in her car. I went back inside into my den and to my lap top and wrote two articles whilst waiting for this young fella seeking my political advice.

Suffice to say at the appropriate time (11.00 am), I heard him stumble though the carnage of dead leaves and branches that had been strewn on the ground leading to (Killing Area - and yes I do have a designated killing area for the unsuspected) second gate which was being held together by the latest security technology (A twig). I should patent this new found technology and make a killing. After all its only wood.



Pellana - Home amongst the leafy suburb of Watsonia.

I welcomed the young bloke into the home as he struggled to find the front door amidst the overgrown foliage, dried up leaves and other garden debris that was all over the front path.

All relics lying as useless rubbish after being affected from the extreme heat that Melbourne, Victoria is currently experiencing. I love the heat and abhor the cold and the freezing winters that Melbourne is also well known for.

Two hours later of ear bashing by me and much note taking by him, the young bloke listened and I hope that he went away fully satisfied with a template and blueprint for winning a pre-selection. It was about 1.00 pm when he finally left and it was only when I was seeing him out the front gate did I realise that I forgotten to take the medication for my medical condition. Oh well you can't win them all and one could say that I suffered from selective amnesia. (That's what my missus says anyway)

Returning back to the laptop to continue with my articles, I was to be interrupted again by a number of mobile calls regarding political alliances and strategies for the upcoming Victorian State Elections in November. However in between these calls, I was lucky enough to complete the articles. As the final sentence was being typed, I heard the front security door slam and the hurried footsteps. I chuckled to myself as I knew that the hurried footsteps were as a result of the person reading the signs "Beware of Dog" signs that had been pasted near the two entrances.

Mind you, I am the only "Bitch" for miles around Watsonia to be guarding the home and always felt a certain glee that the signs served their purpose. On the other hand there was negative side to it as the electricity and gas meters would not be read for months and I would be ring the utilities companies for a balance of outstanding monies owed. I went to the front door and peered through the security eye hole and saw nothing. Ok, it's safe, I said to myself and opened the door. Yep, there was no one there but a plastic parcel lying on the doorstep. I didn't need to know who it was from, I just used my old "appreciation method" to deduce that it was my parcel of books from George Mansford.



Ancient Spartan and Aussie soldier. I picked up the parcel and sure enough, the parcel crumbled and gave way indicating that books were inside. I went inside and cut open the edge to retrieve the books. Beauty I said to myself, this is what I have been waiting for.

I took all the books and hid them in my book shelf so that the missus would not know how many I had purchased. My intention of the additional books was to give them out to my military mates who had not the means or capacity to obtain them.

After all the "Duty First" spirit did not cease once we left the Australian Defence Force. It remains with us until death. A motto that only those who have served can truly understand. I took one out and immediately went to my "inner chambers" sat on the "throne" and began to read "Warrie" George Mannford's book. I read up to page 30 using my speed reading techniques and stopped only to muse upon on the words;

'Don't let your mates down' and the 'ancient Spartans'.

I said to myself that 'Warrie George was talking to me personally and I felt a certain pride. Why, because *'never letting your mates down'* was one of the cornerstones of my military upbringing and my heritage was akin of the ancient Spartans. I was born in Greece, in a small village called Pellana. A village that was an ancient military outpost and the site of the original capital of ancient Laconia prior to the Dorians who evolved into the Spartans.

It was also the site where 'Helen of Troy' was allegedly to have resided with her husband King Menelaus, 'Master of the War Cry". This woman was responsible for the launching of a thousand ships to ancient Troy, led by King Agamemnon, brother to King Menelaus. Troy was located near the Dardanelles in Asia Minor, now modern Turkey. The village Pellana was renamed in 1930 after it was officially proven to be its ancient site.



I came to page 57 and 58 to read about the Parachute Company and felt a sense of pride. I was part of the initial group to be involved in the training of parachutists prior to a company being formed and yes I remember well that it was illegal for us to be on the course.

We never let our Commanding officer 'Harry the Hat' Hammet down. We made him and 'Warrie' George Mansford proud.

I will confess that even after so many years, I feel the loss of my old boss 'Harry the Hat' Hammet, (One of my many fathers far from home, so to speak). He was especially kind to me from the first time I met him to the day he died in an aircraft accident. (But that's another story).

One point of interest at this juncture is that I am led to believe that young James Hammet is now the Commanding Officer of 8/9 RAR. What a turn up for the books. Gosh when I think about it, it is exactly 40 years ago that we were running through 8/9 RAR lines and up to our mischief. I remember running as part of the Battalion through the 8/9 RAR lines shouting 'Baaaa, Baaaa, Baaaa emulating 8/9 RAR mascot 'MacArthur'. I often wonder if the competitiveness and rivalry still exists today as it was in our day?



Page 59, I remember well our first mascot 'Bluey'. One story that I have never told anyone is that at one time when I was on guard duty, long after 'Bluey' had died, I can honestly confess that I felt 'Bluey' nipping on my GP boots and trousers at my ankles.

Mind you it was night and many strange things can occur when one had a stint around the guard room precincts. After all 'Bluey' was buried near the guard room.

Over the years I would often wonder how did 'Blueys' handler seen here in the photo manage to get him ready for parade is beyond me. Bluey was a bloody rascal, but then again he was one of boys and just emulated us.

Page 60, I chuckled as I did not have to read that far. I had my own memories and visions of how 'Warrie' George Mansford dressed at Battalion parades. He was the worst dressed officer we have ever met, but by jingoos, we loved him every bit for his foibles and felt he was one of us. After all, his legend had preceded him from personal experiences we had having served with him in 1 RAR, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Malaya in the early seventies. In any case, even though he was an officer, we regarded him as one of our own.



My old CSM Burt Franks would tell us some great tales of George around the camp fires after an exercise and as a young digger I would lap it all up. I often wondered whether some of the tales within the book also refer to people like Burt Franks of old. Burt was another good man responsible for shaping me into the man I am today.

I miss old Burt and his lovely wife Dawn very much as I much as I miss my old CSM from 1 RAR, Barry Tolley. I have been told that Barry Tolley is still alive, but I doubt very much that he would remember old 'Pete the Greek'. Wayne Aitkenhead was another good CSM, but another story.

Page 61 brought memories of those route marches throughout the back barracks, down the long and widening roads, stopping the traffic and yet moving forward with one foot in front of the other. Sweaty, tired, footsore, feet bleeding from the blisters, pains in the lower legs and feet, backs aching from the loads we carried, rifles on the sling being changed from one shoulder to the next, sharing our water bottles, helping out mates along and even carrying each other's packs or webbing when one of our mates was feeling the strain.



'Warrie' George Mansford, the Battalion medic and tony 'Harry the hat' Hammett on Spear point route march. I must say I can remember asking myself why the bloody heel was I marching and why did I join the bloody Army in the first place. It was easier to take a bloody taxi. (Ours is not reason or to ask why but to carry on or die was a saying we often would repeat to ourselves. We had a wicked sense of humour).

In the end, we all made it back as a section and one by one back as a platoon and company in that order. tired, exhausted, but in the end we felt like supermen and an certain exhilaration that we had mad finally come through.

It was time for a shower, piss and a quick trip into town for a few beers and female companionship while our married mates went home to their wives and families.

I was not to know until some 25 years later, that on my final medical prior to discharge from the Regular Army that I had enlisted into the Army with two flat feet. No wonder I always suffered from lower leg pains. On reflection, all those memories now fall into place, the reasons for the long and tiring route marches, it was to instil in us resilience, endurance, mateship, working as a team and last but not the least, to weed out those not suitable for life as an infantryman (grunt).

Page 69, I literally shit myself laughing (as I was still on the 'throne' so to speak) for I did not need to be told the words

'DON'T F . . K AROUND WITH 'WARRIE' GEORGE.

We knew what was expected of us and we did not let him down. The time was about 3.00 pm and I finished my business on the "throne", chuckling to myself that 'Warrie' George would kill me if he only knew that I was reading his book on the 'throne'. It was time for a 'Kit Kat' and a break from reading. I returned to my trusty laptop and found that it had closed on me by going to sleep. 'Geezus' I said to myself, this new technology thinks for its self.

I stretched my aching back and went out to the rear garden for a breath of fresh air amongst the jungle growing in the back yard and goldfish swimming in the pond surrounded by bamboo, hanging baskets and ferns. A little haven that I had created for myself when I left the Army. I always felt safe and a sense of inner peace when hiding in my cocoon. It was better than crossing the street to the Watsonia RSL and drinking myself to death or playing the poker machines amongst the many others who daily made it their second home. The fact of the matter was that I was happy in my environment, surrounded by my little jungle and outer circle of high fences and beneath the Australian Flag that fluttered high above my canopy of leaves.

It was my special place that I went and hid from time to time to reflect and remember mates of old. I will confess that I have the odd cry to myself and wondered why my mates had gone so early before me. I questioned and parlayed with the almighty and questioned his wisdom if it was ok to feel down (depressed), is it normal to feel melancholy, is it because society does not need us any more and underestimates our value and contribution to this place we all call home, Australia. I must admit some of it was feeling sorry for myself and felt useless most of the time. We, who are of mature age (men and women) still have much to offer, if only the Captains of Industry could recognise our skills and talents and harvest the knowledge that took years to attain.

Suffice to say, there is always the silver lining in any environment. In my case, it's the writing or messages, to the likes of 'Warrie George's' poems and/or my mates emails that gives me courage and confidence. Enough one might say to pick me up and once again feel that I am that young tiger of old. Only those who have served will understand what I am talking about. But who cares as we all have our demons to contend with and many like me are reluctant to discuss such matters. Some of us were very fortunate not to have been involved in a two way range (war) and in one way it's a blessing in disguise except for those who served long periods on a continuous basis.

Anecdotal evidence alone demonstrates the effect of a long time service in any organisation and the detrimental long term effects where one can lose his or her individuality in an ever changing world of technology. Returning to the mainstream without adequate long term support and assistance can lead to an early retirement and death. This is a fact and there is sufficient evidence by the numerous studies to back it up. The secret is to keep active the body and the mind. *(My little joke is, that if one does not mind then why should the body care)*

The missus arrived at 5.30 pm and we gave each other the traditional as kiss as discussed above. We then had dinner which had been prepared the night before and both settled down to our respective little alcoves where one concentrated on work related material and the other on his research articles. I guess I just love writing and paying tribute to those who have gone before me.



At 7.00 pm I picked up 'Warrie' Georges' book and went to the other 'throne' located in the back office and began reading where I had left off on a previous engagement. I was determined to finish the book in style. Alas it was not to be, the bloody phone rang and it was a call from India.

This time they wanted to know if 'Peter Adamis' was at home. I ' said that I was terribly sorry, but that they had the wrong number, and that this was a Buddhist Temple' adding that we practiced silence as a virtue.

There was a long paused silence and a loud click was heard. So much for respect, privacy and courtesy in this day and age. Stuff this I said to myself, as I was enthralled and captivated by 'Warrie' Georges book and wanted to read it to the end, even if I had to stay up all night. I then did whatever good Australian of Hellenic heritage would do and cracked open a 'bottle of red' that the missus was saving for a special occasion. I only drink for medicinal purposes only. After all one had to take some form of medication when reading 'Warrie' Georges book. I sat down at the back area near the little haven of a jungle and read the remainder of the book. Mind you, the bottle of red went down rather well drinking on my own.



Page 73. Some years ago in the late 1990s', I happened to come across a bloke who was writing about his experiences as a migrant from Greece. I do not know why, but I happened to mention this 'Warrie' George during one of our early discussions.

'Warrie' George told me the same story as on page 73 saying that was the only time he felt ashamed of being an Australian soldier.

He said that he had to carry out this odious task on behalf of the Australian Government. In fact 'Warrie' George sent me an account of this experience of which I passed it onto the author. Suffice to say, although I never saw the bloke again I was advised that he had published his book and such I often wondered if he ever acknowledged 'Warrie' George. Life a new migrant in the fifties and sixties was not easy and one can only imagine the hardships they faced with in their newly adopted country. But that's another in itself.



Page 76 brought memories of my time at the Tully Battle School and its harsh conditions. It was not a place where one went for a rest that I can tell you; but if you survived the training, you could honestly call yourself a soldier, no matter what corps you were in or what your role was in the military.

For those of us that had trained at Canungra, Papua new Guinea, Malaya, Singapore and the Atherton highlands of far north Queensland, training at Tully for some of us was like going home.

I don't know what the conditions are like now, but I can remember 'Warrie' George telling me about a return trip to Tully many years after he had left the Regular Army. I am not sure 100% of the story but it appears that when he went to visit, the camp staff had provided him with a normal bed, blankets and all the comforts of home. I think that 'Warrie' George scared the daylights out of the young Lieutenant to find that his visitor was found sleeping on the floor. To get the correct account of this story, one has to speak with the great man himself, but then again that's how legends grow.



I never knew until reading 'Warrie' George's book that the Joint Tropical Trials establishment were the original owners of Tully.

I make this point as I spent some time being detached from 1 RAR at this place.

What I do remember is guarding this unholy piece of ground with stuff that was supposed to be secret hidden deep beneath the soil.

To this day, I still don't know what the hell we were guarding. (But that's another story).

Having digressed somewhat, this reminded of a discussion with 'Warrie' George whilst on a visit to Cairns in 2011. He said to me that both the 1st and 6th battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment had been highly trained to a point where they could meet with any military contingency the Australian government was prepared to send us. I guess its some form of compensation know that we transferred our skills to the next generation of warriors who have done is proud.

Pages 145 to 166, were of great interest to me. For I have at home, hung on the wall in a frame, the statement of Kevin Rudd, a former Prime Minister, who said the following:



*The responsibility of Government is the security of the nation. And it follows therefore that the Government has a particular responsibility towards those who have worn the nations uniform. Because there is in my view no higher calling than to wear the uniform of Australia.
Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. 8 September 2008.*

Yes I do feel neglected and betrayed, not by the nation, but by our lawmakers who should know better. It has nothing to do with going to war, it has all to do with serving ones nation. Our political masters should realise that we are not just mere tools or playthings to be used and discarded at leisure and neither are we pawns to be played like as if in a political chess game at Canberra. We too have a soul, we too have families and loved ones, we too have emotions and feelings like our Australian brethren. After all we are all Australians no matter our origins. Once you have worn the uniform of Australia you are indeed unique.

Page 224 and I felt that 'Warrie' George had much more to say and yet he said it like it was. Re-discovering old value does not mean to disregard the paradigms of the past, but to review them from today's standard of living and to retain those values that are worth saving. Love of your mates, Respect, Fair Go, Never letting Mates Down and above all 'Duty First'. To be honest, I don't believe that 'Warrie' George has even scratched the surface of his experiences. By 9.00 pm I finished the book and I was worse for wear.

Despite being under the weather, I sat down and wrote straight from the heart my first draft. By the time I had finished it was approximately 10.45 pm and I sent it off to George without checking the grammar. I should have known better. I sauntered into the dining room and watched some silly movie on the TV, dozing in front of it until woken up at 2.00 am by the music at the end of the movie and back into the 'old farter' so to speak.



This time to be woken this time by my missus at 6.00 am to remind me to put out the garbage. **This is the new drill for us old soldiers preparing for a new type of combat:** *Slippers on - check, Monks cloak on - check, Keys found - check, Nitrolingual spray - check, Rubbish bags - check, yep I was armed and ready to face the world outside.*

As I dragged the rubbish bags to the bins, passersby walk quickly past me as they made their way to the train station nearby. They would do anything to get away from this monk that appeared out of nowhere dragging behind him two bins, one for the rubbish, the other for recycling.

I say a monk, because I am a sight to see in the morning. *Mind you, I think I look just great.* You can see me down the driveway wearing a long blue bathroom gown down to my knees, puffy eyes, dishevelled beard, grumpy and grim with all the trappings of a monk. Yep, I am not a happy camper! I can't see why the missus can't put out the garbage from time to time, it's always me.

On my return I remembered the medication and swallowed the bloody pills followed by a fresh cup of tea to wash it all down. I sat down at my desk and turned on the old laptop. This lap top was a birthday present for my 60th birthday from my wife and I must say it has certainly travelled the globe the past few years. I read my article to George and was horrified that I had already sent the first draft with all its errors and poor grammar.

They say you see things clearly in hindsight and I guess that applies to me as well. I went through article again and removed some of the idiotic material and retained the majority. It was important to me to ensure that the essence of my thoughts were captured without too much erasure or self criticism and censorship.



The stories within the book I can relate to except where George and his mates were involved in the numerous two way range battles so to speak. Thankfully I was saved from experiencing the horrors of war, leaving me to record the memories of mates long past.

I must keep writing articles about my mates before I too succumb to the seductiveness of that hateful Alzheimer's disease. An embrace that wipes out a person's memory leaving him a shell of his former self Anyway, who cares, I always wanted to be monk and enjoy the solitude.

I can see that even now the spectre of the tall poppy syndrome hovering over many of us who reflect and write about a past that should not be forgotten. This spectre does not hover over 'Warrie' George, because he is not even afraid of the bastard called 'DEATH' himself and will embrace him when 'Warrie' George is ready.

We however must remember that the words he has written whether in flowing or poetic format are sufficient to be nourished and carried on by a new generation of warriors; warriors that can emulate and surpass even those of the ancient Spartans. *A small tribute to a great warrior by a grateful digger.*



'Warrie' George, it's an honour to have served with you. A proud Aussie Digger who thanks you for the route marches, the parachuting, the jungle training, more bloody training, the endless contact drills, rotten bloody parades, kit inspections, guard duties, and the 'training holiday' in Papua New Guinea (1972) and yes more bloody training.

You old bastard we love you.

AUTHORS NOTE: No matter how hard I try to edit any article, I am bound to have overlooked something. Therefore please accept my apologies for the poor grammar. Constructive creative is acceptable.



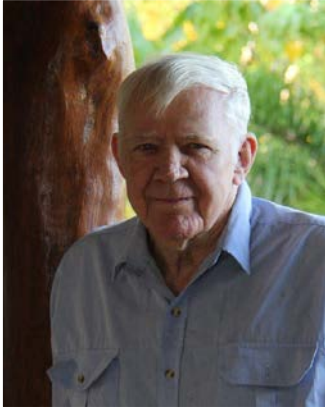
The Voice from the Pavement - Peter Adamis is a (not for profit) Journalist/Commentator. He is a retired Australian military serviceman and an Industry organisational & Occupational (OHS) & Training Consultant whose interests are within the parameters of domestic and international political spectrum. An avid blogger and contributes to domestic and international community news media outlets as well as to local and Ethnic News.

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POST SCRIPT: I encourage everyone to read this book and it matters little whether you have served in a military capacity or not. This book is for everyone. The book is not about battles wars and hostilities. It is written by a man who has reflected much on his life and compassion is the only word that comes to mind to describe him.

There far better men than I to describe 'Warrie' George Mansford, many of who have served with him over the years in his capacity as a young soldier and later as an officer. Many of those have now gone to their maker and wait for their companion to come home when he has finished his duties here on earth.

In life we can only record our memories as we see them through our own eyes and not through the visions of others. Therefore what 'Warrie' George Mansford has done is to give us a brief look into his world, a world rich with life's experiences, many of which we can use and to develop our selves to suit our environment. **Details to purchase the book area shown below.**



The Spirit of Australia

*A Collection of Short Stories & Verse by
"Warrie" George Mansford*

FORWARD BY NEIL WEEKES, AM, MC

The Man from Snowy River is part of Australia's folklore as he embodies that indomitable spirit, that will to have a go, a determination not to be defeated and that Australian larrikinism that we crave for. Within the Defence family, George Mansford is just as well known, and for the same reasons. Mention George "Warrie" Mansford and instantly the conversation becomes animated and stories are recounted about a man who rose from Private soldier to Brigadier but who never lost his humble beginnings. George Mansford is one of those rare men, whose word is binding, a man who is not afraid to speak his mind but does so only after very careful deliberation, a man who will never leave a friend behind and, in country terms, I would ride the river with George Mansford anytime, anyplace.

George Mansford is a laconic, patriotic Australian. He has a great zest for life and his eyes sparkle when he regales his many friends with tales of yester-years. He has proudly served his Nation in Korea, Malaya and South Vietnam. He leads from the front, calls a spade a shovel and was a tough soldier and commander. He laughs often and loudly but he has known sorrow during his life.

However there is much more to George Mansford than presented by this gruff, good-natured Australian. He has that rare talent of being able to express his deepest feelings and emotions in his poems. He is a prolific writer and his poems cover a wide spectrum of topics, often tinged with sadness, many with humour and many recall his experiences while serving in the Australian Army. Some of his poems demonstrate his frustration and disappointment with all Australian politicians in their failure to look after returned and retired service personnel.

George is an outstanding orator and I have seen him take an audience from raucous laughter to tears during a presentation about The Royal Australian Regiment. He is truly an inspiration and he is highly respected and treated with much affection by those who know him.

This collection of stories and verse encapsulates the Australian spirit, from the bush to Canberra, to distant lands, presented with the vitality and richness of George's many experiences and escapades, and of those with whom he served. I hope that it rekindles the reader's patriotism and inspires them to research our Nation's proud history.

I am sure that this collection of George's short stories and poems, will give you a far greater understanding of George Mansford than any character description can. George truly epitomises everything Australian and I am honoured to have George Mansford as a friend.

Neil Weekes, AM, MC
Brigadier (Retired)



For all general enquiries or anyone interested in purchasing a copy of *"The Spirit of Australia"* please contact Jeannette Bartlett direct via

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Phone 0417 515773

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All profits from the sale of the first printing of the book will be donated to the following organisations.

- Legacy
- The Royal Australian Regiment Association (Memorial Walk)
- Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (Memorial Grove)

Your interest and support is greatly appreciated.

If you require any additional information, please do hesitate to contact- Jeannette Bartlett -Phone 0417 515773