



JIMMY MILLS RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH 1978

ABALINX 14 February 2018 Peter Adamis

"Millsie" as he was called by us was a very colourful character. Typical lanky Aussie, full of beans, could fight like a rattlesnake, a great mate to have on your side, called a spade a spade. He could drink like a fish, great soldier in the bush and always in trouble in the barracks. He would always have a grin on his face and he would follow Bob Peoples anywhere. They were like two peas in a pod one could say.

He and his mate Bob Peoples were inseparable throughout the years that I knew them both. Sadly my mate "Peops" has also left us to be with his mate up in the big jungle upstairs. Bob would have been the best person to have provided information that would be relevant to the death of his mate. [Old soldiers never die as their memory lives on.](#)

On our first day of arrival, the company (B Company 6 RAR) was instructed by the OC, Bruno Wallis (Ex SAS) that no one was to leave the barracks on the first day. Well to Bob Peoples (an ex Vietnam Veteran and who had also been to RCB before when we in Malaya/Singapore in 1971 to 1973) had other ideas. Bob knew Butterworth like the back of his hand. The OC's instructions were meant to be broken and it was not long before "Peops" and "Millsy" were savouring the delights of Butterworth.



When they returned the next morning, the whole Company knew about it and nothing was said. Wink wink, nudge nudge and it was all over. Well they were both seasoned veterans if I may say so, with typical Aussies humour they led many of the young blokes astray. I say that with the greatest of affection as they were my mates. Apart from Malaya/Singapore we had also trained together for Urban street fighting and terrorism in the United Kingdom in 1976 with B Company 6 RAR as well as being involved in numerous exercises.

On the night that "Millsy" was involved in a terrible accident that led to his death, the events unfolded from stories and reports of that tragic evening. Bob Peoples and Jimmy Mills were out drinking until late in the evening. It was said at the time that on their way back to the barracks, they were trying to cross a busy highway. They were both inebriated but not to the point that they could navigate the route home.

One moment they were stand on the one side of the road and the next Jimmy Mills ran past the back of a passing bus to cross the road. They could not see any oncoming cars in the night environment and who knows whether their state of being had impaired their vision. As soon as young Milly ran past the bus an oncoming vehicle from the opposite direction drove through him at high speed. Young Jim had no chance at all from surviving the direct collision with the oncoming vehicle.



Later during a local inquest into the tragedy, the driver of the vehicle when questioned as to why he did not have his headlights on stated that it was to ensure that the "Devils and Demons did not get at him or recognise him the dark". * See below for a possible answer by Phillip Wolfeden who spent two years in the region.

I am two minds whether to believe this or not as I merely passing on information that was handed down to us. In any event the driver of the car was not charged and the matter put to rest as an unfortunate accident.

Back at the barracks we soon heard of the tragedy and it was the last we saw of young Jim alive and in Butterworth. Jim was still alive when he was hit and kept alive throughout his journey back to Australia on a specially chartered aircraft. We later found out that his internal organs were almost like water, bones crushed and on life support.

It came to pass that we were eventually told about Jim's death which affected everyone back in Penang. (RCB). Jim died in hospital were are led to believe as his injuries were so severe that it was inhumane to keep him alive just on life support. Messages back to Butterworth through normal military channels confirmed his death.

Jim had married a young Asian girl who was of the Muslim faith and as Jim had converted to Islam to marry his bride, we were advised that he was buried in the Muslim fashion in a shroud and inserted upright facing Mecca in the grave. Whether this is true or not is best described by others who were present at the funeral. We all knew that Jim was no Muslim and that he only converted so that he could marry his wife.

Both Bob and Jim left us far too early, I am afraid. I am not sure whether what I have written is 100 % correct as my memory fails me from time to time and I do hope that it sheds some light on Jim. Those who were also there in 1978 may be able to add to the story and help bring to light further information. As for my recollections of this matter are based on personal observations, second hand reports, mate's discussions and reading messages to and from Australia. This was my second tour of RCB. My first was in 1973 as a young digger and the second as the B Company Clerk.

Constructive criticism and additional information and photographs are most welcome from blokes who were present and knew of young Jim. Whatever information is provided, I am willing to change this article to reflect new information on Jim and of the tragic events of his death. Gone but never forgotten. RIP cobbles I miss you both.



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COMMENTS

* The time of year in Malaysia would have been Chinese New Year and the Chinese superstition is that they do not want the evil spirits to follow them home so they turn off their headlights so the spirit cannot see them, they also use the opposite blinker when turning left or right to confuse the spirit and they also place mirrors at the T intersections so if the spirit is following them they will see themselves in the mirror and get frightened away.

I lived there for two years from 1989 to 1991 and had an incident when turning left into my driveway with the left blinker on and the Chinese motorbike rider thought I was turning right and came off second best. **Phillip Wolfenden**