



COBBERS LONG IN THE TOOTH

Abalinx 17 September 2018 Peter Adamis

September 1971 to September 2018 is exactly 47 years. A life time of friendship. I was pleasantly surprised to be visited by an old tried and true mate from a bygone era.

Andy Pring flew in from Perth straight from the airport to see me, before staying with his brother Bill. Andy and I first met at Kapooka, the home of the soldier in September 1971. Andy was from Surrey Hills and I was from Windsor, Prahran, St Kilda region. Although I was four years older than Andy, the age difference meant nothing to brother in arms.

We both were street fighters, both had tattoos, both had a stable family background, and we were both very wild, adventurous, young, immature and a little crazy. But beneath our bravado, we were brothers under the skin. Brothers that would span a life time.

Andy and I went through Infantry Centre at Ingleburn, NSW and then onto the First Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) based in Townsville. That we were wild, is true, but the Army has a way of changing young blokes and managing their aggression into a positive journey of life. That we did silly things together and as a group is undeniably true and if we had regrets, one can truly say that those regrets belong to a past best forgotten. We enjoyed our time in 1 RAR where we found the battalion to be our family and where we learned the art of soldiering from past masters who had evolved into legends of our times.

There were the Mick Strongs', Jack Curries', Blue Hodgkinsons', the Craig Youlls', The Glen Barlows', Mark Stephens', Warren Paynes', John Chisletts', Warrie George Mansfords', Barry Frenchs', Noggie Norriss', Jack Arenas', Sid Gleasons', Jock Brysons', Mick Olsens', and numerous other blokes whose names have not been forgotten but are etched in our memories of those early years.

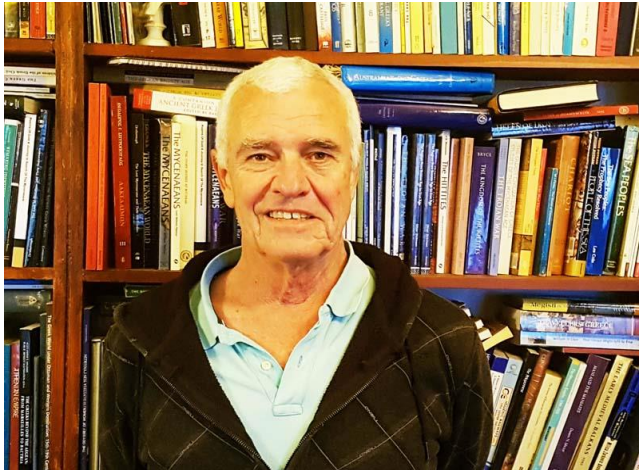


The Vietnam War was coming to a close and the Battalions were being reduced to skeleton staff as a result of all the National Servicemen leaving in droves. Those of us left behind became stronger as a result and later we were reallocated to other sub units when the reinforcements began to trickle in. Not a good time for us regulars, but what could you do but soldier on. The National Serviceman had done their bit and could not see why they had to remain in any longer.

Life may have been tough, but what can you do under those circumstances, but keep training, painting white the rocks around the parade ground, guard duties, going into the jungle to enhance our skills, fighting the civilians, fighting amongst ourselves, getting charged and going on courses. Normal stuff for a young infantry bloke.

As time went by and the battalion was replenished, some of us were reposted, others went completed their three year terms, some on courses and others transferred Corps. Andy went to SASR in WA, I went to Malaya and Singapore, but we kept in touch with one another.

As the years went by we would bump into each other and pick up the pieces as if we had never been apart. The friendship remained as strong as ever, no matter where we were or what we were doing. Andy left SASR and became a policeman, staying in for forty years. Next week he officially retires from the West Australian Police Force and will be seeking else another career to keep him busy.



Today of all days, it was like an anniversary of cobbles. We shared stories, joked, laughed, remembered mates and spoke of our respective families.

We took the time to reconnect with a few old mates by contacting them by mobile and with some luck, Andy was able to catch up with Warren Payne and Jock Bryson, both ex 1 RAR.

We contacted Col Moyle (SASR) and Mick Olsen (1 RAR) but we failed to get hold of them.

Suffice to say, Andy had come directly from the airport, which was much appreciated by me, and the visit had to be cut short because family members were arriving to see me before I left to go overseas. Andy know that as cobbles there is always a place at our table. Mates are mates that is for sure. Until we meet again, life continues.



Peter Adamis is a Journalist/Social Media Commentator and writer. 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. He is an avid blogger and contributes to domestic and international community news media outlets as well as to local and Ethnic News. He holds a Bachelor of Adult Learning & Development (Monash), Grad Dip Occupational Health & Safety, (Monash), and Dip. Training & Assessment, Dip Public Administration, and Dip Frontline Management. Website: abalinx.com Contact via Email: abalinx@gmail.com