

## BATTALION HEADQUARTERS PLATOON



1st Row (L to R): Capt J. Black, Pte P. Ayton, Capt R. Rowe, Lt Col P. Stokes, Maj G. Mansford, WO1 J. Husband, Lt A. Taylor, 2Lt G. Pike.  
2nd Row (L to R): Pte M. Woodbury, Cpl I. Twomey, Pte W. Hancock, Cpl F. Mott, Sgt N. Lindsay, Sgt P. Kent, Cpl S. Purdie, Sgt R. Spain.  
3rd Row (L to R): Pte G. Smith, Pte G. Clarke, Pte M. Russ, Pte B. Wilson, Pte D. West, LCpl G. Parker, Pte J. Butler, Pte M. Joffries, Cpl N. Kelly, Pte P. Adamis, Pte J. Brooks.  
4th Row (L to R): Cpl D. Lansley, Pte J. Humphries, Cpl G. McLean, Sgt M. Upton, Sgt R. McGregor, Sgt P. Squire, Cpl W. Brennan, Pte E. Black, LCpl B. Guthrie.

# Memories of BHQ 6 RAR

Abalinx 24 February 2020 Peter Adamis

Recently a photograph was posted onto the 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Association Face book page. The image brought back many wonderful memories. Memories that were also associated with sadness as some have since passed on to the big jungle upstairs. I will only describe my thoughts on those I can remember well and apologies to those I have forgotten. Many are Vietnam veterans and as such we youngsters learnt much from the experiences handed down to us. The image itself was taken in 1975 after my favourite Commanding Officer LtCol [Harry the Hat] Tony Hammett had been posted to Infantry Centre I believe on promotion. The battalion had supported the Civil Powers during the Brisbane floods, Cyclone Tracey, fought fires in the hills behind the Army Barracks at Enoggera and still continued with their normal training schedule. Warrie George Mansford was the driving force behind many of our training exercises and he was loved by all the diggers.

When LtCol Stokes took over he went on a purge of soldiers who had numerous charges and offenses associate with their name. Not a good time to be playing up. Central army records Office was sending out messages to Battalions with those that had a record of charges and with that message was a warning to behave or expect to be discharged. Yes I received one and was counselled. By that time I was married and beginning to settle down, still wild, but slowly succumbing to the life of peace time Army.

Warrie George Mansford. What a terrific officer. Served with him in 1 RAR (Townsville) as well as 6 RAR (Singapore/Malaysia). Visited him on a couple occasions in Cairns. Still keep in touch with him. I still receive his poems and keep them for the future. Like Bill Charlton, Warrie George has a flair for capturing the mood and the moment. Both men are very good at describing life in and after the Army.

The comments against each member are as I remember them some 45 years ago. I apologise in advance for not remembering all of the blokes and the legend below helps to uncluttered the webs of age from a once active and inquisitive brain. I guess that is what age does to you. The members mentioned are in no particular order.

Norm (Ned) Kelly passed away some years ago. He was also Godfather to my number three son. A good man who assisted and mentored me in the early stages on my return from Singapore/Malaysia in end of 1973. We last met when he was posted to a unit in Melbourne and it was there that he was diagnosed with cancer. Had he lived today he would have been saved due to the advances in therapies. When I was diagnosed with cancer in 2015 and I was laid up in hospital for some six months, my thoughts were of him and wondered how he had coped. I saw him in hospital before he was posted to 8/9 RAR and I found him stoic through it all. It was the last time we would see each other.

Jim Black was also a joint God father to my number four son. Last saw him in WA where he had suffered a stroke. A good man. Lost track of Jim after we returned back East after a two year posting in WA.

Peter Kent was an excellent horseman and as such enjoyed the comrade that went with it. The CO was another who enjoyed horses and introduced them into the battalion. Maybe he was a cavalry man at heart.

Richard (Dick) Spain was Chief Clerk. Ex policeman and Bravery medal. Died of cancer. A very good bloke. I remember he and Peter Stammers as a team prior to this photograph was taken.

Pam Ayton was the female working at BHO. Pam was a good soldier. Jim Husband (RSM) had called me into his office and tried to intimidate me accusing me of harassment. (I was not a happy chappie back then when this occurred). I denied it because it was not me. I was wrongly accused of harassment until the RSM identified the culprit as Mick Wills. Mick wills was probably skylarking and the bastard never apologised.

Greg Pike was/still is a great bloke. Many fond memories. He was born in PNG, well liked by all and I consider him a very good friend. I look forward to his visit to the Hellenic ANZAC Memorial in Greece.

John Humphries a good bloke, last saw him in the early turn of the century while was working on the RAR Memorial Wall. I believe he also went to East Timor. I remember he had a great moustache and always smiling.

Graham (Mac) MacLean always around mentoring us young blokes. Great BBQs at his home with his wife Mary. Their BBQs' were legendary. Very understanding and a good hand to have. Mac and I went to the UK in 1976 where we undertook anti terrorist training and suburban warfare. The Brits were brilliant at this as they were still serving in Northern Ireland.

John Butler was a great digger and unit photographer. Sadly John died on an exercise in New Zealand when the armoured personnel carrier he was on overturned and he drowned. He and his family just outside Enoggera Barracks.

Geoff Parker a good mate over the years, lost touch as we continued in our careers. Very good in his job and I believe he went on to bigger and better things. A good hand.

David Rowe a good bloke in the battalion to all the diggers. Strong, silent but a good officer. Don't know what happened to him after I left the battalion.

The Officer in between Jim Husband and Greg Pike was Lieutenant later Captain Taylor who was in the education Corps but was enticed by Peter Stokes to change Corps to Infantry. A good friend to me and my family. Sadly the years have gone by and I have lost touch.

Gus Guthrie was always a favourite son of the battalion. Loved by all and always there when you needed a mate. Saw him a couple of times at reunions. He was a great friend of Willie Killick.

Stew Purdue, excellent soldier, served with him in A Coy. A great hockey player and last saw him in Melbourne in the nineties. Stu had many friends in the battalion and was like. He was good mates with Tom Crummy and "Pomme" (Surname forgotten).

Eddie Black my best man and mate at my second marriage. We still keep in touch after all these years. He travelled all night from Brisbane to Melbourne to attend the wedding. Over the years we kept in touch no matter where we were. He was very good at his job, rose through the ranks to Major and went to Cambodia with the training team. Misunderstood at times due to his demeanour but I knew he had a heart of gold that he hid very well. Many a soldier owe their careers to him when Eddie became a Careers Adviser. A very good mate throughout the years. Last saw Eddie and his lovely wife Lisa when we returned for a quick trip to New Caledonia mid last year. I could never have asked a better cobbler.

Peter Stokes, I remember him as a tough CO, did work at his home as I was a qualified electrician. Last spoke to him in 1994. Remember him on exercise ordering everyone out of our defence pits to toughen us all up. Stokes was responsible for discharging Bonny Wasiu and another mate of mine during the ADF purge at the time. I was never happy with Peter Stokes after that. Nothing personal as he a job to do.

Doug Lansley, a good hand. He along with Grant Coultman-Smith (joined the Victoria Police) and Fred Mott introduced me into the Administrative side and served with them in A Coy. Lost track of Doug over the years which is not surprising giving the postings at the time.

Ross McGregor took over from Peter Stammers as the BHQ Sgt under Dick Spain. Peter Stammers had a positive effect on my life and career. I believe that Ross ended up being Chief Clerk of 1 RAR at some stage in the future. A good hand.

Mick Jeffries Jim Brooks both good men. I don't know where they ended up. Lost track of them over the years.

Ian Twomey was an interesting bloke. Tough but a good soldier with always a smile on his face. Did not suffer fools gladly.

Wayne Hancock a good digger and mate. He would lick up from the flat that I was living in with my first wife and take me to work. Lost track when I left the battalion in late 1978.

Peter Brennan I remember but never associated him with his recent passing. I remember him as a big bloke always smiling.

Fred Mott, a very dear friend. We often met throughout our careers and served together in a couple of units. A great family man. An excellent hockey player. Sadly he lost his young daughter in Melbourne. He and Beverly separated and he died soon after. I would see him near Watsonia shopping area from time to time before he passed away.

Although I knew the others, unfortunately my memories of them have dimmed over the years. I feel rather sad that I will not be attending the reunion this June (2020). I was looking forward to it , however I will be in Greece again for health related reasons but also to further develop the Hellenic ANZAC Memorial located in my place of birth.

As always I wish everyone well, stay strong always, never give up in the face of adversity and enjoy what life we have left.



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](http://abalinx.com) Contact via Email: [abalinx.com](mailto:abalinx.com)