



# TIGER TALES

5 RAR TIGERS

## NEWSLETTER of the 5 RAR ASSOCIATION

PP 22620210007

AUGUST 1995

EDITION 6

### Editor's NOTEBOOK

I feel confident in saying that 1995 has been a good year for the 5 RAR Association. The success of our re-union in March this year is positive proof that the Association is live and going well. Membership has improved significantly during the past 12 months and is continuing to increase. If our Association is to remain viable we must make every effort to maintain our membership and continue to seek new members. We all have a role to play in this task; simply encourage non-members to join our Association.

Queensland state representatives, RON SHAMBROOK and MERV FRIDOLF, are very active in this area, and are having considerable success in signing up new members and finding "lapsed Tigers".

The disposition of Association members by states (Mar 95) is listed elsewhere in this edition, and considering the Battalion completed two tours of Vietnam, there are a lot of loose Tigers out there!

Whilst on the subject of Association membership, around 50% of members have failed to pay their fees (\$25). The cost of TIGER TALES is close to a dollar a copy (postage, printing, etc). Therefore, without funds, TIGER TALES has a limited life.

The letters 'FIN' will appear on your address label if you are FINancial. Look for it on your last copy of TIGER TALES.

The 5 RAR Association plaque for the Kapooka chapel will be 'unveiled' on 2/3 March, 1996. Members wishing to attend the ceremony will find further details in this issue.

It was reported that some members have not received their new badges. This should have been rectified by this date. Contact the Association if your badge has not arrived.

It is important to notify the Association if you change your address. Apart from the obvious reasons, it costs the Association 48 cents to collect returned mail.

The Year 2000 re-union is a long way off, however give some thought to the venue.

5/7 RAR (MECH) will be in DARWIN in the year 2000. A discussion paper is included in this issue. Please complete the paper and return it to the Association.

The next issue of TIGER TALES will be published in JAN/FEB 1996.



**REMEMBRANCE SERVICE**  
**REGIMENTAL SQUARE - SYDNEY**  
**5RAR REUNION - MARCH 1995**  
**ADDRESS BY BRIGADIER COLIN KAHN**  
**CO 5RAR 1969 - 70**

The last time we gathered together, to pay homage, was in 1992, in Canberra at National Vietnam Memorial; there we paid national homage and national remembrance to all sailors, soldiers and airmen who died in Vietnam. Today our focus and feeling move closer to us, to the particular dead of our 5th (Tiger) Battalion - in the war which touched so few but aroused such strong feelings in so many.

But why here and at this time? 30 years ago, almost to the day, on 1st March 1965, the 5th Battalion was born here in Sydney - at Holsworthy. On the same day 4 years later, the Battalion re-commenced operations in SVN for the second time. In 1965/66, the then newly raised Battalion trained on the outskirts of Sydney. It did so

again in 1968. In May 1967 the Battalion marched through Sydney on its return from operations. It did so again, in this month, in 1970.

It is therefore entirely fitting, and timely, that we should gather in this city once again. This time in reunion, and today in particular, in memory of those 50 of our comrades, 25 on each tour, who were killed in action. Sadly, each year now we add to the list of our dead those who have died since, and in a number of cases they have surely died from the debilitating, often intangible effects of war - their deaths, we could in many cases, classify as 'died of wounds'.

And so today we gather as a battalion to once again bridge the gap of time between we who remain, and those we once knew, and still honour. Once again, we bond back into that closed and close brotherhood of battle, that only those who have been there can fully understand. It is that brotherhood which I believe helps us, as the historian Manning Clarke said, to remember "what it really means to be Australian."

And within that brotherhood, we now once again reach into our battalion's operational memory, as we recall the actions in which these men died.

It started on 24th May 1966, a wet day at Nui Dat with Operation "Hardihood" with the battalion's first killed in action and Australia's first National Service soldier to be killed in Vietnam. In the same general area, in March 1969, it restarted with Operation "Quintus Thrust" and three of our members killed in action.

Continuously, until April 1967 and February 1970 the Battalion was in combat on Operations such as Sydney, Beaumaris (at An Nhut), Holsworthy (at Binh Ba), Darlinghurst (at Long Tan), Canberra, Queanbeyan (in the Nui Thi Vai Hills).

Then there was Operation Overlander (in Long Binh and Long Kahn), Surfside (in Long Green), Twickenham (Nui Thi Vais), Hammer (Binhba), Ezzo (Dat Do), Camden, Kings Cross and Bondi (back in the Hat Sic zone).

So today, 25 years since the final return of the Battalion, some memories of those operations and our time together fade. But there are some memories, some elements in the mystique of that war in which we played a significant part, which I believe will never fade. You who were there will understand. You will recall how daily you took the supreme risk and how we placed a trust in each other, when, on most occasions, all there was to offer in trust was each others' lives. That bonded us together in our sections, sub units and units, and that bonding brings us together today, for that supreme risk resulted in too many paying the supreme price. Time can never dim our memory of our dead and we will forever be sad for their un-lived days.

It was Oliver Wendall Holmes in 1895 who said about war and sacrifice - "I do not know what is true, but in the

midst of doubt, there is one thing I do not doubt and that is the faith is true which leads a soldier to give his life in obedience of an accepted duty, in a cause which he had little understanding, and in a plan of campaign of which he has little notion".

That could have been said of us in the 60's. I believe the great thing about our Battalion and we who served in it was our "obedience of an accepted duty" - a duty to each other, above all to our section and also to our platoon, company and Battalion. Our duty was to our mates who you could not and would not let down - the requirements of the individual were transcended by the requirements of the team.

While it is we who celebrate - this is their day and we remember with affection those members of our team who did not return.

## DUTY FIRST

### WEEKEND AT WAGGA PROVISION OF PLAQUE AT SOLDIERS CHAPEL KAPOOKA

Some months ago, Ken Watson, who lives in Wagga Wagga, suggested that there should be a 5RAR plaque at the Soldiers Chapel, Kapooka, as the majority of the members of the Battalion completed their recruit training at 1RTB Kapooka.

The National Executive Committee of the Association agreed with the proposal and the plaque is to be unveiled on Sunday, 3rd March, 1996.

The programme for the weekend will be as follows:

**Saturday, 2nd March '96.** 7.30pm for 8.00pm.

Buffet dinner at the Wagga Leagues Club.

The cost per head will be \$25.00 plus drinks at club prices. This is a mixed function to include wives, partners and families.

The cost of the dinner needs to be paid in advance.

Please complete the pro-forma and return it to the secretary with your cheque. The necessary tickets will be mailed to you.

**Sunday, 3rd March '96.**

11.00am Ecumenical Church Service at the Soldiers Chapel, 1RTB Kapooka. The Queen's and Regimental Colours of 5RAR will be paraded.

Members and their families will need to provide their own transport from Wagga to Kapooka.

12.30pm

**BBQ lunch at 1RTB Sportsmans Club, Kapooka.**

Cost is \$5.00 per head which must be paid in advance.

Please complete the pro-forma and return it to the secretary with your cheque.

Drinks at very reasonable prices will be available.

ACCOMMODATION

DETAILS OF MOTEL ACCOMODATION AT WAGGA WILL BE ADVISED LATER. SINGLE ACCOMODATION IS NOT AVAILABLE AT 1RTB.

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**FUTURE TIGER RE-UNIONS**

Your association has held a number of very successful reunions in the past, due very largely to the generous support of the Officers and Soldiers of 5/7 RAR (MECH). Most of you know the Battalion will be relocated to Darwin, currently expected during 2nd half of 1998.

Hence any future Sydney Re-unions will lose the invaluable support of the Battalion and also the facility for Re-union Dinners and other events in the Battalion Lines. We are now faced with some important decisions about future re-unions and seek feedback from members.

- Should we stay with events every 5 years?
- Should we keep Sydney as the location?
- Should we have future events in Darwin?
- Should we schedule in other capital cities?

Even if we 'moved' with the Battalion, their mess and accommodation support would not be available in Darwin. The facility there is designed for the entire Brigade, with common messing for all units. Thus any re-union in Darwin would certainly have organisational help from the Battalion but locations for events would have to be in commercial venues, indeed this will be the case for ANY option we choose after the Battalion moves.

The planning and organisation always requires an active and energetic committee on the ground in the location, hence moves away from Sydney will require support from you, the 'locals' in the chosen location. This did work well for us in Canberra, and as some of you march on in life, you may well find time to more actively provide voluntary support in the future. We can choose anything we want so long as members are prepared to commit help and support in the planning and organising of events.

You may be interested to know disposition of members throughout Australia:

NSW	343	46%
VIC	128	17%
QLD	110	15%
WA	58	8%
SA	49	7%
ACT	27	4%
TAS	18	2%
NT	4	0.5%
Overseas	4	0.5%
Total	741	100%

A number of members have suggested we hold a "Farewell Reunion" when 5/7 march out of their Holsworthy lines in 1998, this would probably need to be done in combination with the PIGS!!! (7RAR Association). Your committee feels strongly that some form of event should be planned to farewell the Battalion from Sydney.

Future events will cost more, commercial rates for Reunion dinners and all accommodation at commercial rates. The main issues seem to be preparedness to incur substantial travel costs to other locations such as Darwin or other cities, and the need to establish effective event committees in the location. In terms of Darwin the lack of membership numbers is a serious limitation. In future there could be greater negotiation with travel and tour operators to package events for both vacation/sightseeing and the Reunion, again be prepared to pay more. If this was to be the approach then inclusion of our partners will become more prominent, even mixed Reunion Dinners should be seriously considered.

Enclosed in this issue of TIGER TALES is a survey form seeking your feedback and view, PLEASE RETURN IT. Your committee is not prepared to act on feedback from only a few members, this is one issue when you need to have your view recorded. Each of you will have a view, so how about letting us know so the committee can be better informed of membership views.

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**SUNRAYSIA VIETNAM KOREAN AND SOUTH - EAST ASIAN VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

Correspondence from the memorial committee contained several pages of information on the memorial dedication AUGUST 18 to AUGUST 20 1995. Unfortunately, TIGER TALES cannot print all the information received. A brief outline of the dedication is as follows:

- \*Dedication MILDURA VICTORIA
- \*Muster for March - HENDERSON PARK 1300hrs Saturday 19th August 1995.

\*OFFICIAL DEDICATION - 1430 hrs

\*MEMORIAL CONCERT - 1900 hrs - Noel  
Watson, Normie Rowe & others.

\*ACCOMMODATION - Sunraysia Tourism  
- 008 039 043

Other activities include BBQ on Sunday, 20h August,  
Dawn Service Friday, 18th August.

Further details can be obtained from the secretary, phone  
(050) 219 303 or (050) 221 139 (AH).

*Editor's Note: late notice unavoidable due to date of  
publication of TIGER TALES.*

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5 RAR ASSOCIATION  
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SA Mr R H Naismith Bob  
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PENNINGTON SA 5013  
Tel : H. (08) 326 1813

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WA Mr J D BurrigeJohn  
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CLAREMONT WA 6010

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TAS Mr C M Illman Colin  
20 Blackstone Road  
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

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ACT Mr G Negus Greg  
3 Daplyn Close  
WESTON ACT 2611  
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(06) 288 2070 B.

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Brian London EDITOR  
PO Box 422,  
BATEMANS BAY  
NSW 2536  
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Last 'Cracker Night' (the old Empire Day....24th May) was the 29th anniversary of the death of Errol Noack (the first member of 5RAR to be killed in Vietnam). I was speaking with his father (Wally) on that occasion and made mention of the fact that I had recently re-visited Nui Dat and found the old 5RAR lines. The road leading down from BHQ to the airstrip of course was called Noack Avenue and Wally was most interested to learn that it still exists.... nothing will grow on it due to the ironstone gravel that the engineers must have crushed into it some time after 5RAR's first tour had finished. I retrieved one of the ironstone rounded boulders (about 6 inches in diameter) and despite problems at Saigon airport when a Customs x-ray of my baggage suggested I might be taking a grenade on board, I managed to bring it home and have promised it to Wally as a memento.

Incidentally, the rubber plantation has all been cleared except for the B Company area to the north east. Battalion Headquarters is now a cemetery for the local farming community and Australian gum trees have been planted along the margins of the old airstrip. All the mountains (Nui Dat 1 and 2, Nui Nghe, Wolverton, Long Hai, Long Son and Vung Tau) are bald except for some very low scrub growing in patches upon them. As a matter of interest or perhaps as a point to consider, we met up with an American (ex-colonel, Engineers) who spent several years in Vietnam during the war and worked with the Australians at various times. He is married to a Vietnamese and has been living in Saigon/Vung Tau working as a construction engineer. He strongly contends that the mountains were not denuded to their present status (bald) by Agent Orange, arguing that as a defoliant, it was not a herbicide designed to kill plants. If that had been the case, where then are the remnants of the giant tree trunks and roc systems that should still be evident? Rather, he suggests (with the backing of several local Vietnamese businessmen who were party to the discussion) that during the post-war 1975-85 period the government introduced socialistic practices to such an extent that many of the people were literally starving during this time and so were forced to go out and rip up every living plant they could find for shelter, fuel and food. An interesting alternative hypothesis!

A scattered farming community has sprung up long the road between Hoa Long and Binh Ba, the latter having sprawled into a large town with a thriving market....Hoa Long is basically unchanged. A giant military complex has been constructed about 2 k's south east of Nui Dat....it is the headquarters of the old D445. The Long Tan plantation around the battle zone has been cleared and the memorial stands out in the middle of an open paddock some hundreds of acres in area. The Da Bang Creek has been dammed so that between the two Nui

Dats there now lies a giant winding lake (1 k wide and several long)....the fields are now green in Vietnam during the dry season.

I have included a few of the hundreds of photos we took and a couple of poems from the book 'ONLY A NASHO'. One is a tribute to the parents of those killed and is an attempt to empathise with the shabby way in which they were treated and how they must have coped over the years. The other was inspired by my trip. I trust your readers will be interested.

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## LETTERS to the EDITOR

### PAUL LA FOREST - LISAROW

Dear Paul

Thank you for your letter and photos of your recent trip to Vietnam. I would like to publish your letter in its entirety, however it is quite a document and as this is the last issue of TIGER TALES for 1995 there is just not enough space in this issue.

Dealing with the salient points of your letter, firstly we are 'proud to be members of the Association and none of us would intentionally conduct ourselves in such a way as to bring discredit on the Association or to degrade the spirit of ANZAC Day. Unfortunately there are a small number of people who perhaps have a little too much 'cheer' before the actual march, making fools of themselves and embarrassing others. We, the Association, have no control over people's behaviour and can only suggest that they refrain from drinking to excess before and during activities such as ANZAC Day.

The second point you make is your dislike of the 5RAR caps (the colour). Well, again, Paul, what can we do? It is a bit late now to change the colour or the style.

I will publish the remainder of your letter as I'm sure our members will be interested in your overview of your recent trip. (See above)

Regards

Brian London Editor

- The poems are great - next issue!

### W.E. JENNINGS - MARS DEN

Dear Jack

Pity you could not make it to the re-union, it was a great weekend. Thanks for the poem, I will try to get it published in the next issue of TIGER TALES.

I don't think the poem from 'Taffy' will make it, somehow. Although it's good it might upset a few people!

Keep in touch Brian

### AYB BROWN - BOXHILL VIC.

Dear Ayb

Thanks for your letter and I'm pleased you approve of our newsletter. Yes Ayb, I remember you well (Ayb was the 'Blowfly' 66/67). I hope you have received your book 'VIETNAM TASK'; and yes, there are more available if you require other copies.

I will try and write to you in more detail soon. Sorry to hear about your health, let me know how you progress.

Regards for now Ayb, and thanks again for your 4 page letter, keep in touch.

Brian London

Editor

### KIWI HILL - TASMANIA

Dear Kiwi

Thanks for your note and photos of the pig with 5RAR stickers on his rear end. Yes, it was a great weekend in spite of the weather. As far as the photos of the re-union are concerned, it appears that the quality was very poor. I spoke to John Warr tonight and he confirmed that the Association would not go ahead with any orders for prints. A shame really, but that's how it goes.

The success of the re-union was due to the superb effort of the committee and 5/7 RAR (MECH).

We are indeed fortunate to have a committee willing to spend so much of their own time with the organisation of our Association.

Best wishes

Brian London

Editor

### J.T. EDWARDS - KATOOMBA

Dear Editor

Could you please put the notice below in the newsletter: The whereabouts of all members of RECCE PLATOON 1st TOUR 5RAR. (Only two members attended 30th Anniversary re-union.) CONTACT:

JOHN (BLUEY) EDWARDS

313 CLIFF DRIVE

KATOOMBA NSW 2780

(047) 826 818

*Editor's note:*

*Dear John - hope this gets results - let the Association know of anyone not yet a member of 5RAR Association.*

### ROBERT BIRTLES - VICTORIA

Dear Robert

I received your letter and details of the Trooping of the COLOUR in 1937. (5th BATTALION A.M.F.). I will publish the programme in the next issue of TIGER TALES.

Brian

### TOM CASE - NSW

Dear Tom

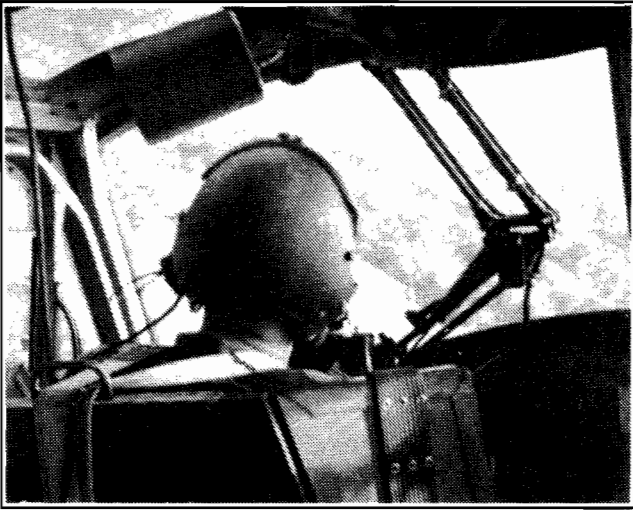
Thanks for the photos and slides. It will take me some time to sort them out, but I'm sure we can use them in TIGER TALES in the future.

Regards

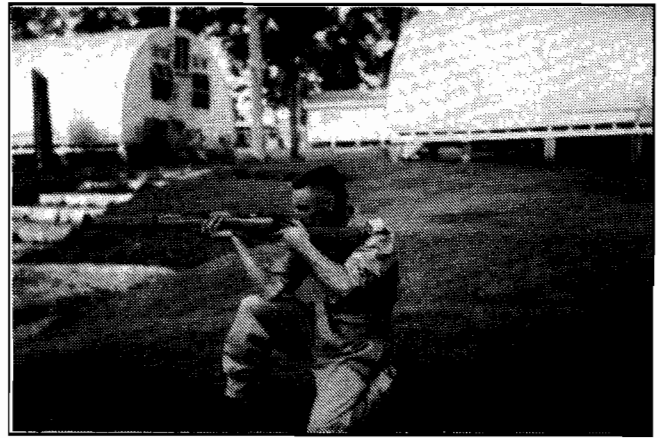
Brian London

Editor

# VIETNAM - PAST AND PRESENT



INBOUND TO LZ 66/67



GEORGE G. GILBERT  
WACOL 1958 NATIONAL SERVICE  
KILLED IN ACTION  
5RAR 1969



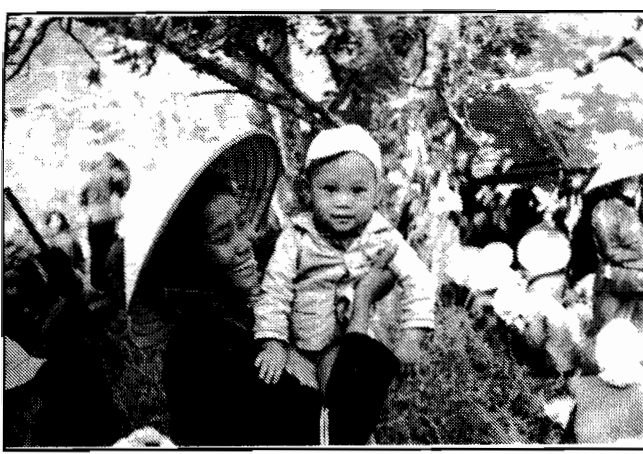
SELF & INTERPRETER ENJOYING SEAFOOD NEAR BARIA  
(PAUL LaFOREST)



NUI DAT 1966/67  
SIGNAL PLATOON



1995 - BILLY JARRET EXAMINING DOG  
TAGS (OF TOM BLACKHURST K.I.A. IN 1971)  
FOUND BY LOCAL FARMER. INSIDE MR.  
TOM'S HUT ON EDGE OF AIRSTRIP.



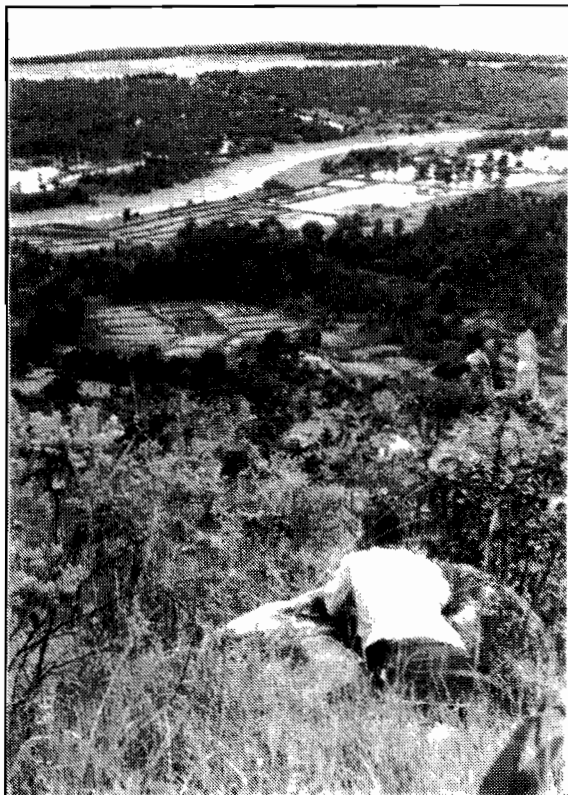
CORDON AND SEARCH 66/67



BINH BA 66/67



1995 - LONG TAN MEMORIAL.  
NUI DAT 2 IN BACKGROUND.



1995 - JOHN O'CALLAGHAN ON TOP OF  
LONG SON ISLAND ADOPTING SAME  
POSITION FOR HIS M60 AS IN NOV. 1966 AS  
10 V.C. CROSSED THE CREEK BELOW.



WEAPON CLEANING  
69/70 VIETCONG HAMMOCK  
THE EDITOR 10PL D COY



# VIETNAM TASK

The 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment

Robert J. O'Neill



On 24 May 1966, eight hundred men of the Fifth Battalion landed at Nui Dat in Viet Cong territory. For the next twelve months they were faced with the task of restoring peace, civil law and regular commerce to the Vietnamese of Phuoc Tuy Province. This book is a detailed record of those months in the monsoon jungles – of the problems that were faced and the solutions that were found.

Major O'Neill's position as Battalion Intelligence Officer enabled him to view the war from the standpoint of the Battalion as a whole. However, he does not omit description of personal feelings – towards the Viet Cong, the jungle environment, the Vietnamese people and the other allied forces involved in the war.

Most of the book was written on the spot in Vietnam. On operations or at Battalion Headquarters, Major O'Neill jotted down details of the war against the Viet Cong; putting the events of each day in order, often in the small hours of the following morning. Thus not only is this a factual account of the Fifth Battalion's activities over the year, it is also a vivid and compelling picture of the war in Vietnam from the soldier's point of view.

## NOW AVAILABLE!

**A SUPERBLY REPRINTED  
HARDBOUND COPY OF  
THE HISTORY OF THE BATTALION  
ON ITS FIRST TOUR  
SIMPLY ORDER ON THE FORM  
IN THIS COPY OF TIGER TALES**





# The Fifth Battalion

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## The Royal Australian Regiment

### Operations in the Republic of South Vietnam

#### First Tour 1966-1967

HARDIHOOD	24-5 to 4-6-1966
SYDNEY ONE	6-7 to 7-7-1966
SYDNEY TWO	19-7 to 20-7-1966
HOLSWORTHY	7-8 to 18-8-1966
DARLINGHURST	26-8 to 31-8-1966
TOLEDO	2-9 to 8-9-1966
CROWS NEST	1-10 to 3-10-1966
CANBERRA	6-10 to 10-10-1966
ROBYN	11-10 to 16-10-1966
QUEANBEYAN	17-10 to 26-10-1966
YASS	6-11 to 7-11-1966
HAYMAN	8-11 to 12-11-1966
INGHAM	18-11 to 3-12-1966
CANARY	4-12 to 14-12-1966
CAMDEN	1-1 to 31-1-1967
CALOUNDRA	9-1 to 10-1-1967
BEAUMARIS	13-2 to 14-2-1967
RENMARK	18-2 to 22-2-1967

#### Second Tour 1969-1970

QUINTUS THRUST	1-3 to 9-3-1969
FEDERAL/ OVERLANDER	10-3 to 8-4-1969
DEERSTALK	12-4 to 18-4-1969
SURFSIDE	12-4 to 2-5-1969
TWICKENHAM 1	2-5 to 13-5-1969
ROADSIDE	13-5 to 22-5-1969
TWICKENHAM 2	22-5 to 2-6-1969
HAMMER	6-6 to 8-6-1969
TONG	7-6 to 8-6-1969
ESSO 1 2 3	15-6 to 15-7-1969
DISTANT	
TRUMPET	21-7 to 25-7-1969
CAMDEN	29-7 to 30-8-1969
KINGSTON	14-9 to 15-10-1969
KINGS CROSS	31-10 to 12-12-1969
BONDI 1 & 2	27-12-1969 to 16-2-1970



DUTY

FIRST