

### **VALE Graham John Locke (7 June 1947 – 15 March 2019)**

Graham Locke graduated from OCS Portsea in June 1966 at age 19 and was initially allotted to the Royal Australian Engineers. He trained as a military engineer for 9 months before becoming an instructor at Puckapunyal to train newly arrived National Servicemen. It was here that he transferred to Infantry and applied to become an Assault Pioneer Platoon Commander, a position for which he was ideally suited. Posted to 5RAR in May 1968 and dressed to the nine pins in his army winter uniform and “feeling pretty smart”, Graham met his new Commanding Officer LtCol CN Khan, who looked at him and said quietly: “*You are here to work. Why aren’t you dressed in the correct uniform? You only wear jungle greens to work in this unit.*”

Graham took command of the Assault Pioneer Platoon at Holsworthy and trained it for the remainder of the year before they deployed with the battalion to Vietnam in early 1969. Graham went ahead as part of the battalion’s advance party departing Sydney on 27 January.

In South Vietnam Graham Locke’s Assault Pioneers were involved with the many mine clearance duties, building of the battalion HQ command posts at the various operational Fire Support Bases, general engineering tasks and also as an infantry rifle platoon. It was in this last role in August 1969 that his platoon was attached to A Company and became embroiled in a major battle in the Hat Dich Secret Zone. A Company was operating in two parts, with the Assault Pioneers and 3 Platoon together, a total of 52 men. That day the combined group lost one killed in action (a Pioneer) and 36 wounded.

At the end of the battalion’s tour of duty Graham returned to Australia with the unit’s advance party on 18 February 1970.

Graham was married in 1971 and had two children. He retired from the Army after 20 years’ service. In 1995 he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, a debilitating, life-changing condition.

In 2006 Graham published his book, *Call Sign ‘Tiger 62’; the Story of the Assault Pioneer Platoon – Vietnam 1969*.

Graham Locke died on 15 March 2019, aged 71.

Vale Graham, your duty is done. Rest in peace *Tiger 62*.

David Wilkins



**Graham Locke at Nui Dat on Christmas Day 1969.**



**Graham in later life.**