



## *The North-Western Ranger*

8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> BATTALION – 2RVR ASSOCIATION Inc.  
**VICTORIA'S OWN COUNTRY BATTALION**  
(Including the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum Newsletter)



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**JULIANA ADDISON**  
MEMBER FOR WENDOUREE

# The North-Western Ranger



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**VICTORIA'S OWN COUNTRY BATTALION**  
(Including the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum Newsletter)



**Patron:** The Commanding Officer, 8/7 RVR, Lt Col Paul O'Donnell

Vol 29 No 1 March 2025

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## Committee:

President	Dick Wilkie	<a href="mailto:richardwilkie@outlook.com">richardwilkie@outlook.com</a>
Vice President	Chris Liston	
Secretary	Jason County	
and Property Officer		
Treasurer/Welfare/Membership and Warrnambool	Barbara Birthisel	
Editor	Neil Leckie	<a href="mailto:87th2vrassoc@gmail.com">87th2vrassoc@gmail.com</a>
<b>Committee Members 2024/25</b>	Greg Code	
	Bruce McKinnon	
	Ian Nunn	
	Les Taylor	
	Barry & Heather Harris	

## 8/7 Battalion – 2 RVR Association

### Annual Activities:

- ANZAC Day** – Ballarat & Warrnambool
- Annual Dinner** – Warrnambool, October
- Annual Dinner** – Ballarat, October/November
- AGM – Ballarat**, October/November

### Monthly Activities:

Committee Meeting – Normally the Second Tuesday of the Month, Alfredton Sports Centre, Cuthberts Road, or Ranger Barracks, Ballarat.

The Association's Newsletter Editor's email address is [87th2vrassoc@gmail.com](mailto:87th2vrassoc@gmail.com)  
For urgent newsletter matters please use [nkaleckie@outlook.com.au](mailto:nkaleckie@outlook.com.au)

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## RECENT EVENTS

### BATTALION OFFICER/NCO DINNER

For the best part of thirty years, past officers from the old 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2 RVR and 8/7 RVR have been holding Past Officers Dinners. In the early days, the dinners were held at Ranger Barracks when it was in Curtis Street, and later at the new Ranger Barracks in Sturt Street. For many years, Mark Broemmer catered for those dinners. With Mark no longer with us, the dinners are now held in commercial venues, lately the Ballarat Golf Club near the new Ranger Barracks. The officers are following on the tradition of 'keeping the boys (and girls) together'. They are a loosely bonded group who keep in touch through email.

In 2023, the Past Officers group were invited to join the battalion's officers and NCOs at the dinner at RAAF Williams, Laverton. A number attended. In 2024, the group were invited again, and a number again attended. During the 2024 dinner, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Sonogan, and the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Matthew Vermey were farewelled from the battalion. The XO, Major Matthew Ford, was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and was also to be posted out.



Left: Lt Col Sonogan standing, with Major Ford on his right, the Piper on his left and WO1 Vermey seated at right in the photo.



When Lt Col Sonogan was posted in three years ago, the establishment of the battalion was 381. As he leaves the establishment is 496. As the strength of the battalion has grown, so has its capability. A Signals Platoon has been re-raised and at the end of 2024 has nineteen members. There are two Reconnaissance Patrols totalling 14 soldiers and three have now completed the seven weeks of training and have been Sniper qualified. There is a full complement of 15 Lieutenants and the battalion is transitioning into the motorised role. The unit has 7 PMVs (Protected Mobility Vehicles), although five of them are 'in the shop'. 87 soldiers are currently in some form of training. Lt Col Sonogan mentioned the loss to the battalion of WO2 Mark Broemmer in 2023 and the passing of ARA Member Sergeant Brad Turner who had just retired from the Army. The Colonel was presented with the framed battalion flag

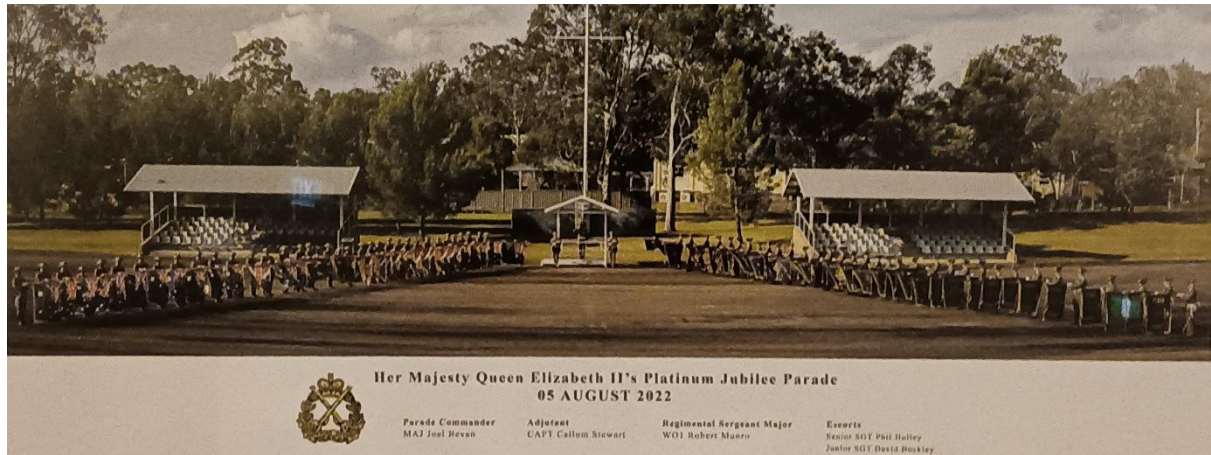
that flew at Ranger Barracks only during his time as CO.

WO1 Vermey said he was first posted to the RVR twelve years ago with 5/6 RVR and then moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade. After spending some enjoyable times with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and, working on the theory that 'you make your own luck', eight years ago he decided that he would like to serve in 8/7 RVR and made all the right moves to get himself here. He was the sounding



board for the CO and has thoroughly enjoyed his years with the battalion. WO1 Vermeij stated that he has absolutely no regrets from his time at 8/7 RVR. He is now posted as RSM of 1 RAR. He was presented with a framed mock-up of a Steyr rifle.

Together the CO and RSM presented the battalion with a framed photograph of all of the Australian infantry battalions' Colours on parade for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on 5 August 2022.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ANZAC DAY, BALLARAT

- 6.00am Dawn Service at the Ballarat Cenotaph in Sturt Street, followed by Gunfire Breakfast at Ballarat RSL Midlands Golf Club. A transfer bus to and from the RSL will be provided
- 8.00am Service at the Ballarat Arch of Victory/Garden of the Grieving Mother
- 8.30am Service at Sebastopol Cenotaph
- 10.30am ANZAC Day March, from Lyons Street North to Ballarat Cenotaph, followed by the Commemorative Service at the Ballarat Cenotaph. Association and Battalion members may march.
- 1.00pm Refreshments at Alfredton Sports and Community Centre. Contact Dick Wilkie.  
or Refreshments and Two-Up at Midlands Golf Club

### ANZAC DAY, WARRNAMBOOL

- 6.00am Dawn Service at the Warrnambool Cenotaph in Artillery Crescent.
  - 11.00am March to Cenotaph and service.
  - 12.00am Luncheon at the RSL. Contact Lyndon King.
- Those requiring a bus pick-up need to ring the Warrnambool RSL on 5562 4634 to arrange a pick-up.

### ANZAC DAY, SHEPPARTON

- 6.00am Dawn Service at Shepparton War Memorial, Corner of Welsford and Fryers St.  
Followed by gunfire breakfast at Shepparton RSL.
- 10.40am Assemble for march at RSL, followed by Commemorative Service at Shepparton War Memorial.  
A bus from the RSL will also be available to help bring those that need help to get to the march.  
Contact Travis Rosenow.

## ANNUAL DINNERS

**WARRNAMBOOL: 11 October 2025**

**BALLARAT: 18 October 2025**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

**Ballarat, 19 October 2025**

**EX-22 RVR-A AGM WEEKEND: 24 – 26 October 2025, location TBA**

## FEATURES

### NOEL SMITH'S REFLECTIONS

Noel John Charles Smith was born at Wentworth, N.S.W. on 8 March 1934. His Smith grandparents came to the district in 1905 to lease land at Curlwaa, which is located some 10kms north-east of Mildura, where the government was building an irrigation system for settlers to grow fruit and vegetables. They cleared and settled on 15 acres. In 1917 Noel's Cresp grandparents came from the Birchup/Beula area in Victoria to Curlwaa and cleared about 12 acres about 300 metres from Smiths. Noel's father was only two and mother eight on their arrival at Curlwaa.

Noel was the third of eight children who, like their parents Ostell and Veronica Smith, attended the School at Curlwaa and Secondary School at Wentworth. While at Curlwaa Noel had his first taste of the Military. W.W. 2 started in 1939, Noel's first year at School. About 1942 the Headmaster and parents decided to dig air raid trenches in the school grounds.

The Mildura aerodrome was opened in 1920 as a landing ground for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, In 1942 a Royal Australian Air Force base opened at the aerodrome and shortly afterwards Squadron Leader, Neville Aherne, was posted to Mildura. He happened to be the Headmaster's nephew and two or three times a week, on aerial photo shoots or bombing training missions, Aherne would do a couple of passes low over the school. These flights were used by the school as air raid practice.

On 21 November.1949 Noel finished his Intermediate exam and started work with Department of Water N.S.W. on the following day. In 1951 he applied to join the RAAF at Point Cook. Noel received a letter, dated 12 September 1951, that effectively said No, 'but thanks for the offer to serve!' He still has the letter. Just over six months later, Noel receive a 'Call Up Notice' for National Service.

On 21 April 1952, Noel joined four of his Curlwaa school and sporting mates John Clarke, Roy Gray, Geoff Holland and John O'Donnell at Mildura Railway Station to travel to Melbourne then another train to Dysart Siding near Puckapunyal. They joined the 15<sup>th</sup> National Service Training Battalion (NSTB) at Puckapunyal on 22 April 1952.

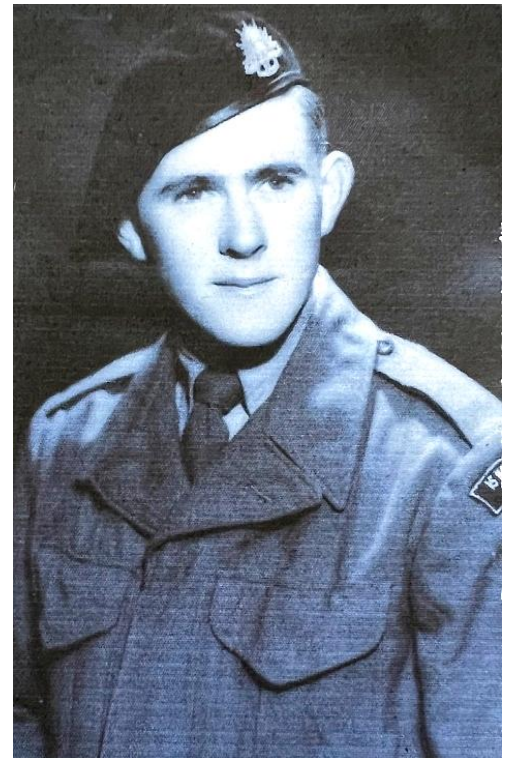
(Noel at Right, 15<sup>th</sup> NSTB, Puckapunyal).

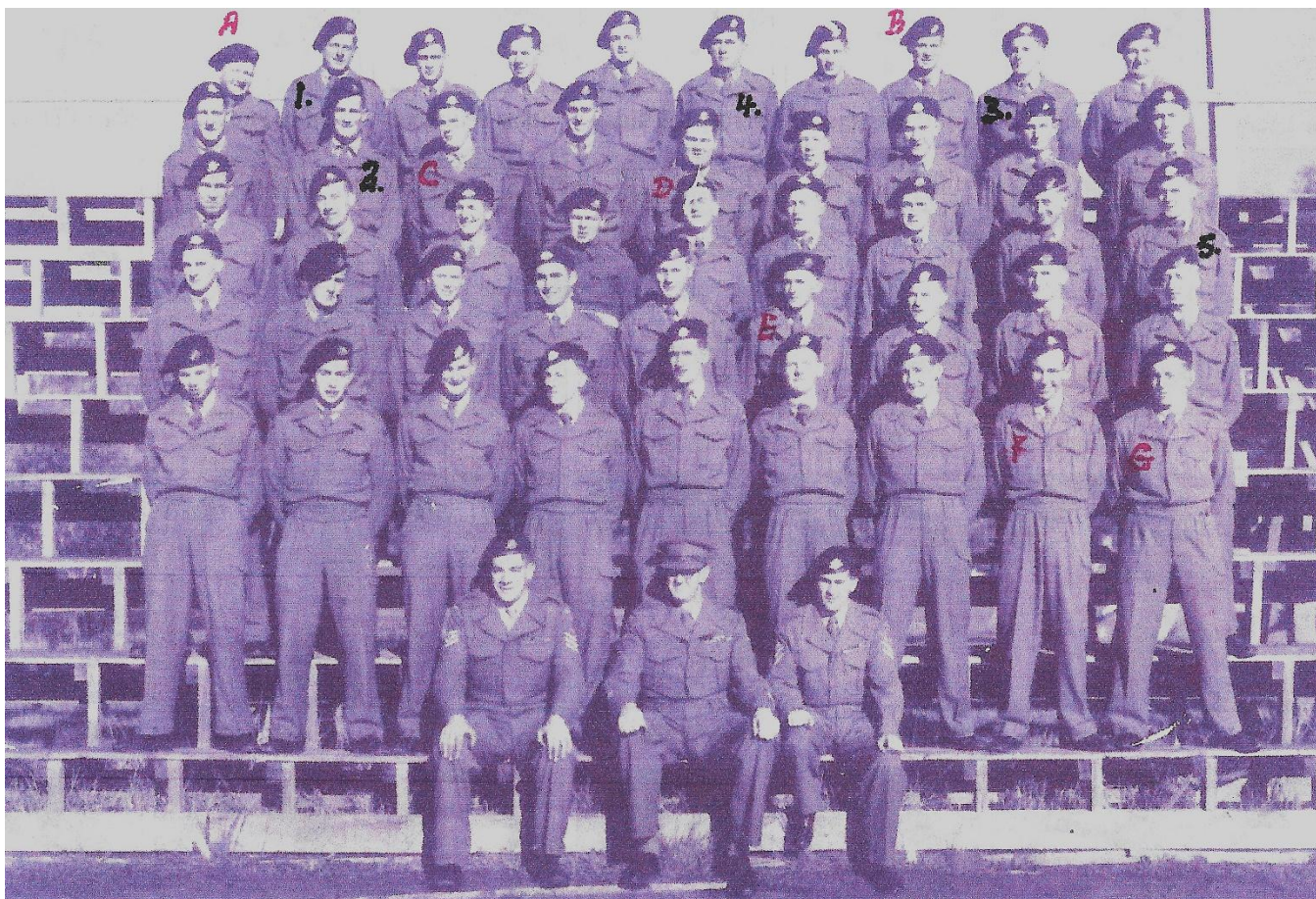
Noel and Ted Crane shared a wardrobe at Puckapunyal. They became lifelong friends. Ted was from Buronga at the N.S.W. end of Mildura Bridge. They both went from Puckapunyal on 25 July 1952 to the C.M.F. on 26 July 1952 where they joined C Company, 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment) at Mildura. They became Corporals together in 1952, entered Annual Camp 1953 as Acting Sergeants, were both commissioned into the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion and both received their Efficiency Decoration (ED) in 1966. Noel's commission was signed by Governor General Sir William Slim on 15 February 1956.

Noel remembered that during his three months at Puckapunyal they learned to:

1. Dress in straight lines when on parade.
2. March in Time, with or without a band.
3. Maintain a Rifle and Bren Gun before and after shooting.
4. Safely prepare and throw Grenades.

They also went to demonstrations of artillery, tanks and other armoured vehicles.





**10 Platoon, C Company, 15<sup>th</sup> National Service Training Battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake, 22 Apr to 38 July 1952.**

**Back Row:** Snowy Moore (A), [John Clarke](#) (1), Max Williamson, Ron Askill, Vernon Birthisel, [John O'Donnell](#) (4), Nelson Jardine, Geoff Matthews (B), [Geoff Holland](#) (3), Keith Shay.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Back Row:** Ted Crane, [Roy Gray](#) (2), Karl Krause, Ray Templeton, Max Davis (D), Jack Cracknell, Arthur Lacey, Frank Doyle, Gilbert Pickering.

**Middle Row:** Colin Barnes, Bob Mead, Bob Alexander, Tony Mauldon, Colin Clark, Max Petty, Percy Freeman, Max Robertson, Noel Smith (5).

**2<sup>nd</sup> Front Row:** Lyle Mayne, John Lillis, Ian Follett, Ted Wiffen, Ivan Lynch, Tommy Sprat (6), Morrie Jones, Bob Walker, Arthur Pantazis.

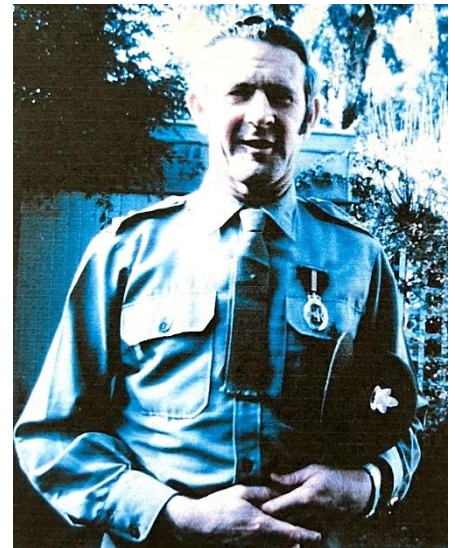
**Front Row:** Ernie Eastwell, Bill Moy, Kelvin Hancock, George Willday, Keith Milne, Bill Wooltorton, John Williams (F), Colin Spry (G). **Staff:** Sgt Jack Littlewood, WO2 Jackson, Cpl Smith.



Left: 15<sup>th</sup> NSTB Marches in Melbourne in July 1952.

To Noel's knowledge he and Ted were the first National Servicemen to transfer at Mildura. Shortly after they arrived, the two Sergeants, part owners of separate motor vehicle businesses, resigned from the CMF, so Noel and Ted took on more responsibility. This included men who joined C.M.F. directly, those who missed 'call ups' and joined the C.M.F. (Ted's brother Peter and Noel's youngest brother Brendan, along with two of Noel's ex-school mates, were in this category) and others who transferred to the CMF after their three months at Puckapunyal. Thursday night Parades and a couple of Weekend Bivouacs were the main training before Annual Camp 1953.

Post W.W.1, in 1929, the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which recruited from areas such as Moonee Ponds through Castlemaine, Bendigo and up to the Murray River, was amalgamated with Bendigo's 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion as the 38<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion. In 1936 the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion was unlinked from the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion and was re-raised in Mildura. The battalion members raised the funds for a set of Colours and following year the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion was presented with a set of Colours. In early 1954 seven Sergeants from Mildura and Red Cliffs Depots went to Canberra with the Colours for two weeks training for 'Troops Holding Ground' duties during the Queen's visit.



Ted was commissioned on 4 January 1955 into the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion (North Western Victorian Regiment). Noel followed on 16 February 1956. Ted was promoted to Temporary Captain on 11 October 1957. Both men participated in the 1958 Centenary Parade in Ballarat where the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion was presented with the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Colours that complemented the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Colours already held in Mildura. Noel and Ted were transferred to the Pentropic 2 RVR when it was raised on 1 July 1960, where numbers of the company had exceeded 100. Both men were then transferred to the Independent Rifle Company, RVR, on the 18 February 1965 reorganisation. Ted was promoted to Captain on 30 June 1966.

Above: Boarding the Aircraft to fly to Canberra in February 1954.

During their social times, Ted and Noel became involved in building and running the Mildura Water Ski Club.

Moving to Darlington Point with his work, and with five young daughters, meant that Noel retired from the CMF on 25 November 1966. In his 14 and a half years, he attended fifteen major activities and only missed the 1960 Annual Camp. Highlights included the February 1954 Queen's Visit to Canberra followed by the Annual Camp in June and in 1958 Officer Training at the Jungle Warfare Center at Canungra, Queensland,

in June and Annual Camp in October. With combined service as an other rank and an officer, Noel and Ted were awarded their Efficiency Decorations (ED) in 1966 (Right). Ted Crane became the Company Commander of the Independent Rifle Company and was still serving on 31 July 1970.

In his civilian life, Noel continued working for the NSW Government, working in Dareton, Darlington Point, Coleambally and Griffith. He retired from the Department of Water on 7 March 1994. Prior to this, Noel had been awarded a NSW Government award for Meritorious Service to the State of New South Wales on 17 April 1990.

In 2006, Bill Moy of Ballarat, one of the 22 April 1952 Recruits, contacted Ian (Ned) Follett in Mildura and Geoff Holland at Curlwaa for a possible 10 Platoon, C Company 15<sup>th</sup> NSTB 55 Year Reunion at Avoca in 2007. This resulted in a "Where Are They Now" Circular, leading to the tracing of Arthur Lacey (Dunolly), Ted Wiffen (Mildura), Ray Templeton (Ararat) and Arthur Pantazis (Bendigo), who had, after 1952, taken up photography. Geoff contacted Noel Smith.



Left: The organisers of 10 Platoon, C Company, 15<sup>th</sup> NSTB at the 2007 reunion in Avoca.

Arthur Lacey (Died August 2024), Ted Wiffen (8 April 2012), Geoff Holland (23 May 2023), Bill Moy, Ian Follett (28 August 2019) and Ray Templeton (9 July 2024).

Geoff Holland helped organise reunions from 2007-2015.



Noel and Helen settled in Wagga in 2006. Noel, a member of this association, retained an interest in military matters and regularly attended ANZAC Day Services. (Left: Noel, wearing the association badge on his beret, at the Wagga ANZAC Day Service in 2015). Noel and Helen went to Puckapunyal on 19 March 2023 for the Nashos Memorial Day. It was 71 years since he was in Camp. There were a vast numbers of new buildings there. Noel hardly recognised the area, especially the Gunnery Range because of the massive planting of trees over 70 years

During ANZAC Day March 2023, Noel had to pull out of the Wagga March at approximately half distance so in 2024 he joined with other Nashos doing the last 100 metres.

Noel had his 90th Birthday on 8 March 2024 and had his five daughters there: two from Griffith (NSW), and one each from Sydney and Tweed Heads (NSW) and Adelaide (SA). The celebrations meant that Noel could not attend the 2024 Memorial Service.

Due to the passing of many of 'the boys', currently Noel only has contact with Bill Moy of Ballarat. Noel hopes to meet up with other 8/7 Bn – 2 RVR Association members one day. Noel was able to attend the National Serviceman's Day at Puckapunyal on 16 March 2025.

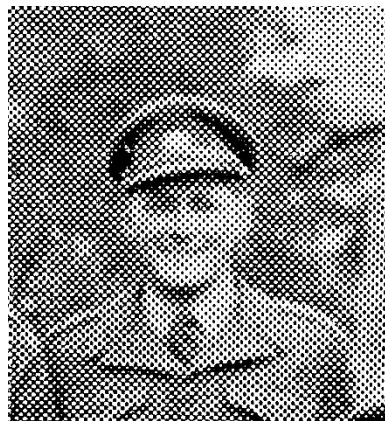


## VALE

**Michael William Fitzpatrick** was born on 11 July 1937 and was living at 8 Merri Crescent Warrnambool when he was 'Taken on Strength' as 3108463, a Sergeant, in 2 RVR on 2 September 1967 from 8<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Victorian Mounted Rifles. Michael's Next of Kin was Mrs P. Fitzpatrick of 12 Davidson Street, Warrnambool. Michael had married Patricia and the couple had four children: Michelle (Dec), Jacqui, Stephen (Dec) and Bernard. Michael was a member of the Bendigo District RSL Sub-branch. He must have had further service after 2 RVR as his RSL death notice showed that he had been awarded the Reserve Force Decoration (RFD) (for fifteen years' service as a Reserve Officer). Michael passed away at Estia Health in the Bendigo suburb of Kangaroo Flat on 17 January 2025. His funeral was held by Bendigo Funerals at St Joseph's Church, in Bendigo's Quarry Hill on 23 January, after which his body was cremated.

**Trevor James Chapman** was born in 1933. He was a member of the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, North-Western Victorian Regiment and by the time of retirement in 1958 had been commissioned and held the rank of Lieutenant and was Officer Commanding the Medium Machine Gun (MMG) Platoon of Support Company. Trevor married Wanda, who became the Mayor of Ballarat in 1988/89. Trevor died peacefully at Nazareth House, Ballarat, in his 92<sup>nd</sup> year. Trevor was engaged to Wanda Archibald in August 1954 and at Trevor's death on 6 February 2025 had been married to Wanda for 69 years. Trevor's interests included the Learmonth Ski and Powerboat Club and the Rotary Club of Ballarat South.

Trevor's funeral was held at Pat Cashin's Ballarat Funeral Centre on 14



February. He leaves behind his wife Wanda, children Peter and Maree, Lindy, Gary and Chris; grandchildren Gemma and Cameron, Camille and Henry; Nick and Alycia, Hannah and Brendan; and Eliza; and great grandchildren Charlotte and Georgia; Xavier and Ella.



Left: Trevor Chapman and Mayor of Ballarat Cr Wanda Chapman. Above: Mayor of Ballarat Cr Chapman, Major Bill Akell, Museum Curator and QM 8/7 RVR, Hon Kim Beazley, Minister for Defence, and Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Ball, CO, 8/7 RVR, at the Ranger Museum opening in 1989.

**Keith Russell Anderson** was born to Les and Anne Anderson at Cobden, Victoria on 2 November 1930, the first of four children: sisters Nancy and Nola before and brother Geoff after the War. He was educated at Cobden and Cobram State Schools and Geelong Tech School. Leaving school Keith found employment with the State Electricity Commission, which led eventually to he and his wife Beverly and eldest son Robert moving to Ballarat in 1956 and also led to a life-long friendship with Ron and Rosemary Holmes and their family. Keith had worked in Warragul, Morwell and finally Ballarat as a Draftsman, retiring in 1986 as the Chief Draftsman for the Mid-Western Branch of the State Electricity Commission (SEC) at Ballarat.

In early 1954 Keith had married Beverly Jean Arnold at Warracknabeal and the couple would go on to have four children: Robert, Jenny-May, Peter and Ann-Maree. On 16 May 1966, by then living at Heather Ave, Mt Clear, and a move probably instigated by good friend Tom Sainty, Keith joined the Citizen Military Forces commencing with 2 RVR on 20 June. Keith and Beverly divorced in 1970. He continued to serve with 2 RVR until discharging at his own request from the then Army Reserve on 20 August 1975. In the 1980s, Keith's oldest son, Robert, would also join 2 RVR.



Keith subsequently married Patricia Cunningham and they lived at Surrey St, Ballarat, Miner's Rest and finally Parkwood St, Alfredton. Patricia, who was a well-known Civil Celebrant, died at Ballarat on 25 Jun 2019.

Keith, a member of the Sebastopol Returned and Service League Sub-branch and a Masonic Lodge member for 65 years, later in life being a member of the Eureka Daylight Lodge, died on 17 January 2025 having lived a good, long life. His funeral was held at Port Campbell on 31 January 2025. He leaves behind his four children, seventeen grandchildren and twenty-seven great-grandchildren.

Above: 2 RVR Camp 1967, Tom Sainty (senior) and Keith Anderson

#### A CATCH-UP VALE:

The association was advised of the passing last year of Ex-Shepparton Sgt Merv McDonald.

**Mervyne Norman McDonald** was born on 17 March 1934. In his younger days Merv was a good bike racer. In the Cobram Courier of 10 April 1952 it was reported that:

**Merv McDonald, Champion. Dramatic final for title.** Before a crowd of 500 spectators, the Cobram cycling track championships were held at the showgrounds last Saturday afternoon. Mervyn McDonald, former Shepparton amateur, won the senior title and Kevin Shadforth the junior.

An avid bike rider all his life, Merv was still competing in 'Masters' events in his early 80's. All bike riders had a knick-name and in his early bike racing days, the others called him 'Chiller'.

As a youngster, Merv found work with the PMG, the forerunner to Telstra. He was called up for National Service and commenced his three month's full-time service as 3/744996 on 1 August 1952 in the 15<sup>th</sup> National Service Training Battalion at Puckapunyal. Merv later served with the 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Shepparton, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He had discharged before the 1960 re-organisation, but re-enlisted in the newly raised 2 RVR on 24 August 1960. In 1964 Merve married his sweetheart Averon 'Merle' Johnson and they moved into a house at 40 Colliver Road where they raised their three children: Barry, Jeffrey (known as 'Jethro') and Katherine. Sadly, aged just 68, Merle died on 10 December 2004 and was buried in Pine Lodge Cemetery, Shepparton. Even sadder, Jethro McDonald died on 16 May 2007. He was buried with his mother. In 1965, when Denis Scott first met Merv, he was a 2 RVR Sergeant Instructor on a promotion course. He retained the rank of Sergeant until he discharged on 30 April 1968.

Charlie Robinson, a former co-worker with Merv at the PMG, stated that 'Merv was a real character!' Others described Merv as 'a great bloke, loyal, friendly, with a great sense of humour, appreciated by all who knew him'. Merv, being the character he was, got on well with all. Picture three blokes standing around

having a quiet beer, a Platoon Sergeant and two of his Section Commanders (Corporals Bryan Stothart and Len Brereton). Bryan says to Merv: 'Here, hold this.' He hands Merv his beer and Merv takes the beer in his free hand and says: 'What are you going to do?' Bryan replies: 'I'm going to punch you!'

Leaving the PMG, Merv worked for Peters Icecream. In the 1960s there were three icecream companies: Sennitts, Peters and Streets. According to the former Streets Manager, Ivan Hall, in 1961 Streets took over the Maude Street Sennitts depot, then in 1966 built a new depot in Broomfield Street. Merv transferred to Streets. They expanded with further depots in Bendigo and Wangaratta, but in 1971 a restructure saw the Shepparton depot close. Merv returned to Peters. The attached 1986 photo shows Merv with his Peters

workmates.

Peters Ice-cream Depot Staff,  
1986 - Max Hehir, Jack  
McCartney, Steve Chambers, Ron  
Knight,  
David Morgan, Lorraine Twomey,  
**Merv McDonald**, Mal McClare  
(or Ivan Langshaw?)  
(Lesley Knight Collection)  
Facebook: Lost Shepparton's Post

After Merle's death, Merv purchased a small farm in the Picola region. He met Eva Mavis at Nathalia. They married and he moved in with her.



Merv passed away peacefully at Irvin House in Cobram on Wednesday 17 January 2024, aged 89. He was a dearly loved husband and friend to Eva Mavis and family. 'A gentle soul now at rest.' His funeral was held at the Owen Mohan Memorial Chapel in Shepparton on 23 January 2024 and Merv was buried in Pine Lodge Cemetery in Shepparton with Merle and Jethro.

## FROM THE PREVIOUS EDITION



**1971 Assault Pioneer Camp from Newsletter 4 of 2024, further names have been added!**

Back Row: Norman Kane/Cain, Eddy Hoy, Max Humphrys, Ky Tinker, Trevor Johnstone, Alan Kidd, Nick Robinson?

Middle Row: Unknown, Bernie Okeefe, Unknown, Unknown, Kevin Harney

Front Row: Arnold Sheedy, Sticks Campbell, Ducka Durstan, Unknown, Max Quarell?

**FROM THE PHOTO COLLECTION** – Can you name the un-named members?



**2 RVR Sgts Mess 1970s** (Tassie Long first period as RSM 1970-73)

- |               |                    |                         |                    |                      |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Rear:</b>  | 1. Gil Richards    | 2. Brian McInnes        | 3. ?               | 4. ?                 |
|               | 5. Bob Lingham     | 6. ?                    | 7. Kevin Fiscalini | 8. ?                 |
|               | 9. John Whatley    | 10. Dick Wilkie         | 11. John McDonald  |                      |
| <b>Front:</b> | 1. ?               | 2. Jack Elliott         | 3. Alan Douglass   | 4. Tassie Long (RSM) |
|               | 5. Noel Sutherland | 6. Jack Littlewood (QM) | 7. Tom Sainty      |                      |

**MEMBERSHIP** – Making it Difficult for the Treasurer!!!

From our last newsletters – no result! “Our Treasurer, Barbara Birthisel has advised that a Cash Deposit for \$55.00 was paid into the Ballarat Branch of the CBA. Unfortunately, there was no identifying reference of either the depositor’s name, or what the money was for. If you paid into the Ballarat Branch, CBA in late October, please contact Barbara and advise the date, how much the amount was and what it was for.”

A friendly reminder – if you have not paid your 2025-2026 Membership (\$25) as yet it would be appreciated if you could do so asap.

Bank Details are:

8/7<sup>th</sup> Bn 2RVR Association Inc

BSB:            Acc No.

Please ensure you use your ‘Member Code’ or surname as a reference

Contact the Treasurer, Barbara Birthisel at [barbarabirthisel@bigpond.com](mailto:barbarabirthisel@bigpond.com)

**MERCHANDISE:**

**8/7 Battalion-2 RVR Association Merchandise as at March 2025. Postage is separate.**



<b>Item:</b>	<b>Price</b>
<b>Polo Top, Black</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>Polo Top, Green</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>Cap</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>Tie</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Lapel Badge</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Association Patch, Green</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Association Patch, Black</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>RVR Emblem Patch</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Cold Weather Jacket</b>	<b>\$96</b>
<b>Cold Weather Vest</b>	<b>\$55</b>
<b>Nametag</b>	<b>\$7</b>



**New Item:**

Winter is coming!  
Well not quite, but the cooler weather is. To help with this we have added a woolen jumper to our range of merchandise.

They are available for \$68 plus postage. If you are interested please send us a direct message or contact Jason via email at [j\\_county@hotmail.com](mailto:j_county@hotmail.com)

**For orders:** contact Jason on email (preferred) at [j\\_county@hotmail.com](mailto:j_county@hotmail.com)



## **EXERCISE WARFIGHTER** Marty Catterall, RVR-A

On Saturday 23 November, members of the RVR-A and 8/7 Bn - 2RVR-A attended Puckapunyal to observe the RVR training and then mingle and chat. Upon collection at the main gate, there was a brief by Lt Col Allen (5/6 RVR) and Maj Powell (8/7 RVR) regarding the Exercise and results of training. Exercise Warfighter was the largest deployment of battalion troops and support elements since 2019. The exercise was designed to test the skills set of those deploying on Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) and those that will be attending Ex Talisman Sabre in 2025.

After the brief, there was a Q & A session. From this discussion a few ideas in how to support the members on RCB and other deployments were raised. The RCB contingent had met all Mission Ready Elements and had departed the Puckapunyal Military Area (PMA) in preparation for their deployment to Butterworth. The remaining elements of both 5/6 & 8/7 RVR members, with support from 4 CSSB, 3 Health, 12/40 RTR and the MPs were concluding their lead up training as part of Task Unit Matilda.

A comprehensive introduction to the newly acquired unit assets was conducted and thanks to the Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV) teams for allowing members to get up close views on the vehicles. Thanks to 4 CSSB teams for allowing viewing and discussion on their assets and task in support of the exercise.

A nice tour of the facilities at PMA was also conducted, bringing back a few memories to the 'old & bold' who may not have been in the area for a few years. The final highlight was assisting in the distribution of the pre-cooked BBQ meals and deserts. FYI the food hasn't changed much! Thanks to 'C' Coy 5/6 RVR for running the bar allowing us to have a nice cold beverage with dinner.

## **BALLARAT RANGER MILITARY MUSEUM MATTERS**

For the next few weeks, the Ranger Museum is closed. It is awaiting a Workplace Health & Safety review, mainly on the container expansion project (which is a 'work in process'). Meanwhile, background work goes on!



The photo at left, taken by a Warracknabeal photographer, was donated to the museum by a man at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne. Examining the photo with a magnifying glass shows that man kneeling with his slouch hat pushed back has the number 73 on his hat. The officer lying casually on the ground is wearing a uniform

that was replaced at the start of The Great War in August 1914. From resources available that officer can only be Lieutenant David Alexander Kinghorn, the only resident Warracknabeal officer in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Infantry (Victorian Rangers), which commenced on the reorganisation of 1 July 1912. The man sitting beside the officer is a Boer War Veteran.

## **WHERE DO WE COME FROM?**

A Trove online newspaper search can come up with some fascinating information (at least for historians)! Bob Prewett sent two articles he had found based on the history of 'The Old Third' when a reunion was held in October 1921 for members of 'The Old Third', which was the number associated with Ballarat's militia unit from 1884 to 1903. When filing these articles in my Military History folder – Newspapers, I found the following article which shows where the history of the current battalion, 8/7 RVR, and the other Victorian Infantry Battalions post-WW1.

**1921 01 13 The Age**

### **THE CITIZEN FORCES. REORGANISATION SCHEME PROCEEDING.**

Satisfactory progress is being made in connection with the reorganisation of the Citizen Forces in Victoria. Indications are that when all units are complete there will be a substantial stiffening of officers and non-commissioned officers with good active service experience. On the appointment of divisional commanders will depend the selection of brigade commanders. It was stated yesterday by the State Commandant, Brigadier-General Brand, that no difficulty would be experienced in choosing commanders for the cavalry and infantry brigades, which will be grouped as follows:

**3rd Cavalry Brigade.** Head Quarters, Melbourne.

8th Light Horse (Benalla),  
13th Light Horse (Warragul), and  
20th Light Horse (Seymour).

**6th Cavalry Brigade.** Head Quarters, Ballarat.

4th Light Horse (Warrnambool),  
17th Light Horse (Bendigo), and  
19th Light Horse (Ballarat).

**2nd Infantry Brigade.** Head Quarters, Grattan-street, Carlton.

5th Battalion (Sturt-street),  
6th Battalion (William-street),  
23rd Battalion (Geelong), and  
32nd Battalion (Footscray).

**4th Infantry Brigade.** Head Quarters, Punt-road, Prahran.

14th Battalion (Punt-road),  
22nd Battalion (Gipps-street, Richmond),  
29th Battalion (Gisborne-street), and  
40th Battalion (Rippon Lea).

**6th Infantry Brigade.** Head Quarters, Ballarat.

7th Battalion (Castlemaine),  
8th Battalion (Ballarat),  
21st Battalion (Ararat), and  
38th Battalion (Bendigo).

**10th Infantry Brigade.** Head Quarter's, Caulfield.

24th Battalion (Surrey Hills),  
37th Battalion (Caulfield),  
39th Battalion (Burwood-road), and  
48th Battalion (Dandenong).

**15th Infantry Brigade.** Head Quarters, Brunswick.

57th Battalion (Seymour),  
58th Battalion (Essendon),  
59th Battalion (Brunswick), and  
60th Battalion (Westgarth).

**The Melbourne University Rifles** will have its Head Quarters at the University.

Note: In WW1, Brigadier Charles Brand from May 1915 was the second CO for the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion and then the Brigade Commander for the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade from July 1916 until the end of the war.

### From the Shepparton Boxes (Neil Leckie)

Some years ago an ARA Member at Shepparton decided that the Depot and the Gordon Ayre MM Club did not need 'all this old stuff' and boxed it and sent it to the Q Store in Ballarat. I was still serving at the time and looked at all the boxes in the Q Store and sorted it out and said that some of it definitely needed to go back to Shepparton. It was Shepparton's military history and not Ballarat. The boxes, however, went as far as the museum's blue container. About two days after the February Association Committee Meeting Sergeant David Logan from Ops said that the boxes were to be returned to Shepparton, finally! Rob Chatfield attended the February meeting as an observer and in looking at the photo below I saw that Rob Chatfield was in that photo (third from right, standing, dark hair, no hat) from the Shepparton boxes. Does anyone recognise the others?



**Names needed:** Rob Chatfield attended the February Committee Meeting at Ranger Barracks in Ballarat. Two days later, Sergeant David Logan (formerly at Swan Hill) came to the museum to pick up several boxes of memorabilia that had been packed up at the Shepparton Depot (by an ARA Member) and sent to Ballarat for 'disposal'. Fortunately, Neil Leckie, the Museum Manager, who was still serving at the time, rescued the boxes and stored them in one of the museum containers. Before handing the boxes to Sergeant Logan he looked at the photographs. The photo above, taken around 1992, which included Rob Chatfield, was among them. What a coincidence!

Can you help in identifying the missing names?

On APC, an 8/13 VMR member.

Standing: 1. [Unknown](#), 2. [maybe Clarke](#), 3. Judd Waters, 4. Robert Chatfield, 5. Neil Campbell, 6. Shayne James.

Kneeling: Robert 'Bear' Morehead.