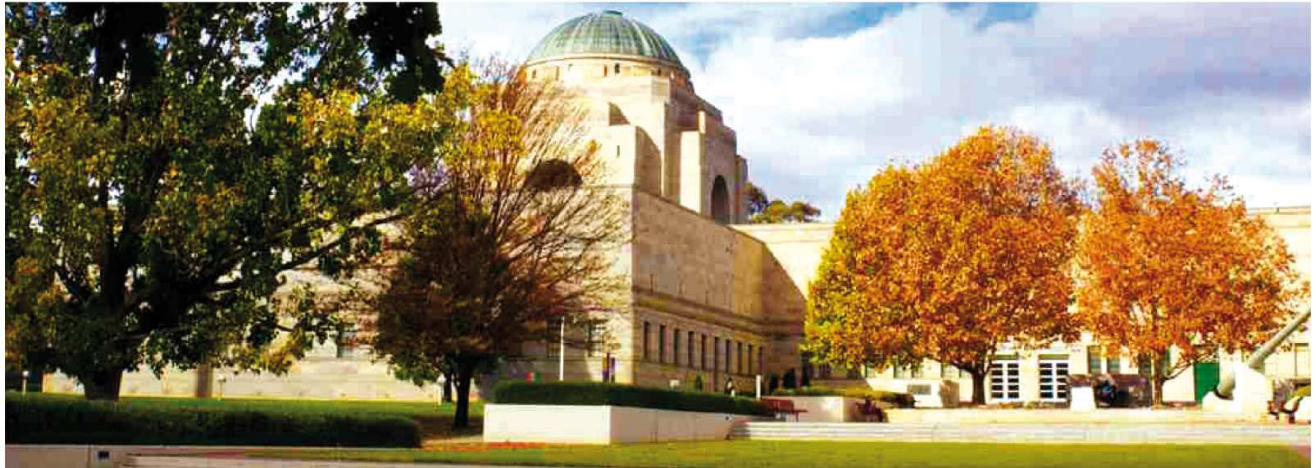


DEDICATION OF
Commemorative
PLAQUE



Dedication of the Commemorative Plaque to
recognise the sacrifice and service of the members of the
**Royal Australian Army Service Corps
(RAASC)
Vietnam 1965 – 1972**

Friday, 26 March 2010

**Western Courtyard
Australian War Memorial**





Par Oneri – Equal to the Task



Order of Service

WELCOME

Nola Anderson
Assistant Director
Australian War Memorial

OPENING PRAYERS

Chaplain Ken Jarvis
HQ 1 ALSG, Vung Tau 1970

A PRAYER FOR THE FALLEN

(Said by all)

Almighty Father, we gather today to remember the souls of those who have given their lives in the service of our country, especially the former members of the Royal Australian Army Service Corps

*Into your hands, O Lord, we commend their spirits. Keep them in Your peace and grant them eternal rest. May we and all who pass this way recall with gratitude the sacrifices of those who have helped to keep our nation free. We make these prayers through Christ our Lord
Amen*

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

Major General David McLachlan AO (Ret'd)
State President RSL Victoria and
Patron, RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoon Association

HYMN – “O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST”

*O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.*

*Under the shadow of thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.*

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.*

*O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guide while troubles last,
And our eternal home.*

UNVEILING OF COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

Brigadier Geoff Christopherson AM (Ret'd)

and

Miss Tracey Kelley
Granddaughter of the late Staff Sergeant Keith Luff, 25 Supply
Platoon 67/68

DEDICATION OF COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

Chaplain Ken Jarvis

*Almighty and eternal God, Lord of the universe and maker of all that is: Sanctify this plaque which we bless in your name. We praise and thank you for all those who laid down their lives for their friends. It is in this same spirit of self-sacrifice that we dedicate this plaque through your name. Grant to those who are remembered in our hearts a lasting memorial symbolised by this plaque in this special place; that their names may be written in your book of life; and to us who remember them grant us the grace to walk in the same love and faith, so that we come at last with them to that eternal kingdom where you live and reign forever and ever.
Amen.*

LAMENT

Mr Bob Stenhouse

THE ODE

Mr Russ Morison, Secretary, RAASC Vietnam Plaque Dedication Committee / Vietnam Supply Platoons Association

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

Response – *We will remember them*

LAST POST

ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE

ROUSE

Lest we forget

Response – *Lest we forget*

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

*Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.*

CLOSING PRAYERS

Chaplain Ken Jarvis

The Royal Australian Army Service Corps Prayer

(Said by all)

*Almighty God, You call Your people to serve You in many
Different ways, help us, the members of the Royal Australian
Army Service Corps to be more than equal to the particular
tasks allotted
to us. Keep us strong and alert in the performance of our
duties and
keep us true to the values of life we are committed to defend,
through
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen*

THANKS AND FAREWELL

Mr Bruce Manning

President RAASC Vietnam Plaque Dedication Committee / Vietnam
Supply Platoons Association

A Brief History of the Royal Australian Army Service Corps Vietnam 1965 - 1972

The first Royal Australian Army Service Corps (RAASC) personnel to serve in Vietnam were members of the highly acclaimed and decorated Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV). Fifty-six personnel served with distinction and pride; two were awarded the Military Medal and one was Mentioned in Despatches.

In 1965, 1 RAR Group was deployed to Vietnam and was attached to the US Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade. Integral to it was 1st Australian Logistic Support Group commanded by an RAASC officer and with a core of RAASC staff. A transport element joined the unit in September 1965. The highly successful battalion group completed its tour in June 1966.

Between April and June 1966, the 1st Australian Task Force, supported by the 1(ALSC), deployed to Phuoc Tuy province. 1 Company RAASC was assigned in support of both formations, with supply, transport, air despatch, postal and workshop elements. In addition, a large number of RAASC personnel filled appointments in the expanded HQ AFV, HQ 1ATF, HQ 1ALSG, and other units. In the ranks was a large element of National Servicemen, all of whom volunteered.

Maintenance of the Task Force was based on the principles of daily resupply, primarily by road, with emergency resupply by road and air and a tiered system of reserves. Support for 1ATF operations was provided as required.

Many challenges were faced and met, with priority accorded to the combat units. The constant need to maintain operational support for 1ATF and security – compounded by inadequate, unsuitable, and unreliable equipment, poor weather, and shortages of food and fuel – required initiative, ingenuity and resourcefulness. Importantly, a detachment of key elements of 1Company with flexible manning deployed forward to provide immediate support to the Task Force.

Initially, maintenance convoys to 1ATF had armoured escort, and air and artillery support. Subsequently the route was picketed and ultimately the need for route protection was largely removed. When serious security threats emerged, or when deploying on operations, full security was arranged, including US gunships overhead. During all movements, strict convoy discipline was maintained.



CH 47 Chinook, US Army 'Hillclimber' unit
Image by a member of Detachment 176 AD Company - RAASC 1966 - 67



1 Company RAASC Archive 1966 - 67

Despite constant ongoing challenges, the operational support and maintenance systems functioned effectively for the full year. Importantly, support systems for 1ATF operations were well honed, including daily air support missions.

By April 1967 operating procedures and liaison systems with the supporting American depots were sound. The ammunition and fuel supply were working well, as were the fresh food and postal systems. On the ground, fuel farms, and fresh food storage with functioning refrigeration, had all been established.

In April 1967, 5 Company replaced 1 Company and continued with the same roles and tasks. New 5-ton GS vehicles replaced the well-worn 2½-ton trucks. The pace of direct involvement in 1ATF operations stepped up. Improved security allowed daily maintenance of 1ATF to be undertaken by smaller convoys (packets) of vehicles. The operational demands of the Task Force continued apace; 5 Company was heavily involved in support.

In late 1967 the Australian Force expanded and December 1967 saw 26 Company deployed to Nui Dat to provide direct support to 1ATF. It placed supply, transport, petroleum, air despatch, postal and cash office elements on the ground. Finally, there were sufficient RAASC resources to provide immediate and effective support.

Headquarters 26 Company was designated HQ TFMA. It commanded all the logistic units at Nui Dat as well as providing a combined HQ TFMA (Forward) for major 1ATF operations. Personnel in the unit were also required to undertake their long-standing secondary role as infantry, by patrolling, laying ambushes, and protecting the 1ATF perimeter. 5 Company continued to support both formations from its base at Vung Tau.

For the 3,500 RAASC personnel who served in the three transport companies, the AATTV, and in other units and appointments, it was a challenging yet rewarding time. The strong focus on operations, and the role played by members of the Corps in providing essential support, was critical to the successes achieved. The impact of casualties within the Force was sobering and felt by all. That said, at every level the professionalism, dedication, initiative, flexibility, comradeship, and outstanding achievements of those who served stood the Corps, the Army, and Australia in good stead. They were equal to the task.

History written by Major General David Ferguson AM CSC (Ret'd)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chaplain Ken Jarvis
1 ALSG Vung Tau

Mr Bob Stenhouse
Piper

Band of the Royal Military College of Australia

Australian Rugby Choir

