



**Victorian Scottish Regiment Association**



**FAIR DINKUM**



Issue 19  
2023

Colin Hughes-Smith (*President*), Robyn Luckie (*Secretary*) 0438 449 946, Ben Tosetto (*Treasurer*) 0418 380 038

## REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE SCOTS' CHURCH Nov 11 2022



The service began at 10:30am in the southern courtyard of The Scots' Church on Collins Street. It was attended by the CO 5/6 RVR LTCOL Cameron Warfe, Rev Phillip Campbell Minister of the Church, the OC B coy MAJ Brendan O'Meara, Officers and NCOs of the 'Scottish' Company, a Catafalque Party and Pipers. A dozen former serving members and families also attended. The latter were seated by the kindly forethought of the Church Officers and a goodly number of the public were standing outside on the Collins Street footpath. The weather was most suitable – being overcast but without rain.

The Catafalque Party was mounted around the Cenotaph in the grounds where the memorial had been erected to commemorate members of 5th Battalion lost in the First World War and later updated to include those members from the Second World War.

The Service was ably conducted by WO2 Colin Hughes-Smith. A succinct address was delivered by LTCOL Warfe who referred briefly to the role of the VSR in both wars and concluded with a reminder of the importance of Remembrance and its role in maintaining peace. SGT Luke Johnston recited "In Flanders' Fields" and PTE Joshua Lamb delivered "A Soldiers Prayer". Former VSR member Prof Ian Edwards laid the wreath at the Cenotaph. Colin Recited the Ode and thanked Rev Campbell on behalf of the congregation of the church for the way they had kept in safekeeping the Cenotaph and the Regimental Colours which are hung in the church. Prayers and the Benediction were provided by Rev Campbell. The Service concluded just after 11am with a one minute silence and The 'Last Post' played by MSN Bailey Lake. The National Anthem was beautifully played by the Pipers CPL Ben Casey and LCPL Jess Jeffery. For those of us who served so long ago it was a moving occasion it was encouraging to see the present VSR so robustly presented.

John R Reid



*Left:*  
*The Catafalque Party supplied by B Coy*  
*L to R PTE McGrath, PTE Htoo, PTE Winters*  
*and PTE Harley.*



*Right:*  
*PTE Joshua Lamb, SGT Luke Johnston and*  
*WO2 Colin Hughes-Smith*



*Inside Scots' Church following the service.*

Our thanks go to all who helped us on the day and those who played a part in the truly moving service.

**The VSRA is to hold a service each year on Remembrance Day. See you on Nov 11 2023 at 10:30.**

The back page of this magazine is also dedicated to photographs from the day.

## THE LAST POST

From its origins as a simple bugle call, the Last Post has developed into one of the most enduring, universal symbols of remembrance.

The Last Post is a short musical call traditionally played on a bugle but can also be played on a trumpet.

Historically used by the British Army, in a time before wrist watches, to signify to its soldiers that it was time to stand down for the day, it is now commonly used as part of a remembrance service or other commemorative events.

As well as at Remembrance events, the Last Post is also played daily for its original use. At the Tower of London, the Ceremony of the Key is performed every night when the gates of the historic fortress are locked for the evening. The gates are locked at the stroke of 10 pm each evening, and the Last Post is sounded.

### WHEN WAS THE LAST POST FIRST USED?

Many armies throughout history have used music as a means of communication, from drum beats to keep time while marching to trumpet calls to signify manoeuvres.

The Last Post was published in the British Army in the 1790s as part of an array of calls that would instruct the British soldier day to day. *Reveille* signals the start of the day and roll call, and the *First Post* would signify the end of the day, as it would sound when the duty officer would begin his inspection of sentry posts around a camp.

Once the sentry posts were manned and the final post had been inspected, the regimental bugler would play the Last Post signifying that the camp was closed for the night.

During the 19th Century the Last Post began to take on a new role, played to mark the fallen in conflicts like the Boer War, so by the time World War One started, it had become ingrained in public consciousness as a sound of Remembrance.

### WHEN IS THE LAST POST PLAYED?

The Last Post is often played at Remembrance services, such as Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday events, and at military funerals.

It is also played every evening in Belgium, under the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Menin Gate memorial in Ieper, by members of The Last Post association, who have held a short remembrance service there every evening since 1928.

**In Australia** the *Last Post* is played at 10.00pm when troops are in a standing camp setting such as Puckapunyal. Everyone ceases what they are doing and stands to attention until its completion. Some military barracks may also follow a similar procedure.

Neville Taylor

## What has happened to our Regimental Colours?



Originally, 'Colours' were ornate and colourful banners carried by armies into battle to rally their troops. Later these banners were used to record Regimental battle history and hung in each regiment's home church or base. Our Colours which are now quite old but appear to be in good condition but fragile, are hung in a place of honour at Scots' Church Melbourne.



The tall grey granite Cenotaph in memory of the VSR Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men who fell in the Great War, with its added bronze plaque honouring those of our VSR comrades who served in WWII, stands impressively by the south wall of Scots' Church. Together, our Colours and our Cenotaph are solemn tangible reminders of our VSRA's proud but costly military heritage, and deserve to be honoured by periodic visits by our VSRA members.

The VSRA Committee with the aid of a grant, refurbished the Cenotaph monument several years ago, but the military traditions re the care of Colours are clear. The banners are to hang until they fall. Until they do fall however, the Colours are to be treated with every respect as they are a sobering record of the cost of battles won by our Regimental forebears.

We are reminded of those who established the Scottish Regiment of Volunteers in Colonial Victoria under Colonial Government decree in 1898, as well as those who, through the years since, have maintained the Scottish military and cultural traditions in its various forms within in the Australian Army. Currently the RVR Bravo Company with its Pipes & Drums carry on these traditions. The VSR Association caters for and supports, both past VSR members, their families, current Bravo Coy and the Pipes and Drums members.

'The Victorian Scottish Regiment of Volunteers' was first formed in 1898 at Albert Park with Colonel Otter as CO. Sir Malcolm McEachern succeeded him. The enlistment at that time stated-"No one unless born in Scotland, of Scottish descent, or having served in the Imperial or Victorian forces, was eligible for enlistment. The uniform was national dress—jacket and kilt. At first men wore helmets, but these were replaced by bonnets." (The Argus, Oct. 16 1934, p.40 – article by Major C.S. Cunningham). Under Sir Malcolm, the regiment paraded at Victoria barracks. They were supplied with rifles, bayonets, haversacks and water bottles. After 1899 uniforms included white helmet, khaki jacket, kilt, sporran, hose tops and glengarries. The band was formed at that time and the Regiment of five companies each sixty strong, participated in the ceremonial review at Flemington during the official opening of the First Australian Commonwealth Parliament.

On Oct 13 1900 Sir Malcolm McEachern (then Mayor of Melbourne), gave a concert in honour of the Victorian Scottish Regiment, the Caledonian Society of Melbourne and the Thistle Clubs of Victoria. The programme included VSR drills, Scottish songs and recitations as well as early movie film segments by Mr Alex Gunn of Boer War scenes and actions. This event ushered the VSR publicly into the Federation era in Melbourne.

1902 saw the volunteer enlistment in the army changed to militia enlistment. In 1908 the Victorian Government used the VSR Pipes and Drum Band to accompany the party of politicians on the paddle steamer *Courier* as it sailed out to welcome the visiting 'Great White American Fleet' of 16 battleships and numerous service vessels as it steamed up Port Philip Bay for its seven day "Fleet Week" visit to Melbourne. The choice of the VSR Band was no doubt because the Pipes and Drums sound carries so remarkably well over water.

The VSR also participated in the Commonwealth's welcome and entertainment in the Exhibition Buildings (4th Sept) entitled a "Smoke Night". The surviving menu however, shows that this event was really a grand dinner for the Warrant and Petty Officers of the American Fleet. A Quartet of four VSR band members sang and acted a comedy sketch. The VSR also marched in the Farewell Review at Flemington to celebrate the end of "Fleet Week".

The Commonwealth Government introduced universal training in 1911 and Scottish national dress was abolished for the Regiment. The VSR then became the 52nd Battalion under Colonel Wanliss. The Battalion left Melbourne October 1914 and after training in Egypt, took part in the Gallipoli campaign April 1915. After returning to Egypt, the Battalion was sent to France in March 1916.

In 1919 compulsory military training was reintroduced and the 2nd 5th Infantry was established. This unit became the 5th Battalion in 1921. The old title of the VSR was again granted. When militia training was reintroduced in 1929, the Rampant Lion badge and original motto "*Nemo Me Importune Lacesit*" was officially adopted, but no kilts were allowed. However, by May 1935 Scottish dress was permitted at the wearer's own expense.

During the Second World War (1939-1945) the 5th Australian Infantry Battalion (VSR), being a militia unit, could not be sent overseas. The Unit was first deployed to Western Australia and later to Darwin. However many members transferred to the units which fought with distinction at Kokoda (39th & 2nd/14th Battalions). Others transferred to the AIF 2nd Infantry Battalions, which saw service in Libya, Greece, Syria and Ceylon. The record shows that by the end of the war, the AIF had fought as a battalion against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Vichy France and Imperial Japan. Under LTCOL GR Warfe DSO MC ED, the VSR was raised again in June 1948 with its HQ & Transport Section at Hawthorn, and depots at Dandenong, Kew, Armadale and Surrey Hills. Initially enlistment was voluntary, but the VSR also later trained large numbers of National Servicemen.

There were public ceremonial marching events in honour of the Monarch's birthday and other occasions - such as marching through Melbourne on return from the annual fortnight's training camp, marching drills as part of the programmes at the Royal Show Grounds and slow marching from the Shrine up to the General Cemetery in Field Marshal Blamey's funeral. These were typical events which suited the swing of the kilts to the stirring skirl of the pipes. In the Late 1940s and early 1950s the VSR with Pipes & Drums did attend Scots' Church to pay respects to the Colours and lay a wreath at our own Cenotaph. In 1960 the Regiment was disbanded and its members absorbed into the 5/6 Royal Victoria Regiment. Today Bravo Company of the RVR, along with the Pipes and Drums of the 5/6 RVR, maintain the proud customs and traditions of the Victorian Scottish Regiment which can trace its beginnings back to colonial Victoria in 1898 (125 years ago).

NB Data for these notes -- were drawn from Newspaper articles, the writer's own recollections and the excellent, 'A Brief History, B Coy 5/6 RVR'

Further reading -- past copies of *Fair Dinkum* and 'The History of the Victorian Scottish Regiment and the 5th Infantry Battalion'

Prof Ian Edwards



The colours hang in honour inside the church. When you visit Scots' Church Melbourne do take time to visit the COLOURS.

The Regimental colour of the 5th Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment bears the Battle honours of WWI and South Africa. It is currently carried by 5th/6th Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment. The Queen's Colour of the Royal Victoria Regiment, bear the Battle Honours of WWII.

They were originally presented by His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, Major General Sir Rohan Delacombe KCMG, KBE, CB, DSO, KStJ. on 19 October 1969.

## PIPES and DRUMS of the 5th/6th BATTALION REPORT.

The Royal Victoria Regiment has had a very successful past 12 months, supporting over 63 individual events including large formal parades, commemoration events, dinners, funerals and training courses. Consisting of 28 playing members, mostly serving reservists with seven non-military members, the band is in the strongest position it has been in for many years.

Since our last report in August last year the band has been very busy. Kicking off the period with commemorations for the Battalion's birthday followed by the 2022 VSRA AGM and combined Touch of Scotland fundraising luncheon in September which was well enjoyed by all. The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was marked by the presentation of a new Drum Major's Mace to the Pipes and Drums, the last to display the Royal Cypher 'EIIR' and St Edward's Crown.

A series of solo piping tasks - such as support to the Infantry Victoria dinner at the Kelvin Club occurred through October, before a significant Freedom of Entry to the City of Maroondah Parade for the 22nd Engineer Regiment. The P&Ds performed well despite the heat, and accompanied the Regiment and Corps Banner of the Royal Australian Engineers which had been transported down from Sydney for the occasion.

Remembrance Day was marked with support to numerous RSLs and Scots' Church, where the Colours of the 5th Battalion are laid up. This was also supported by a catafalque party from B Company at the 5th Battalion Monument on Collins St to remember our fallen past and present.

In November, Pipe Major Benjamin Casey led a small contingent to Brisbane to run a Piping and Drumming Basic Course for our Regular Army colleagues at the 8th/9th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. This was very successful with multiple pipers receiving their Piper's Qualification patch. 2022 was closed out with some further Dining in Nights, cocktail parties and farewells for MUR, 4th/9th Prince of Wales Light Horse Regiment and 5/6 RVR.

A light reprieve was had over the stand-down period before the thump of the bass drum would echo again. This year started with a performance at a football match between the 4th Brigade team and the Fitzroy Stars, with the latter successful in the end. Our regular support to the National Serviceman's Association was not missed, with a large number on parade.

The Anzac Period was densely packed with solo piper, bugler, catafalque party drummer and full band support to a number of RSLs and memorial services throughout April. Of particular note was the Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Shrine of Remembrance, where three pipers played *Sands of Kuwait* with the Band of the Royal Australian Navy, and Pipe Major Casey played *Flowers of the Forest* from the Shrine balcony at the end of the service, which echoed over Melbourne. Following this, the full band assembled ahead of schedule to lead the Melbourne Anzac Day March, as a vacancy for a leading band had come up at the last minute. Although a couple of members hadn't made it into position for step off due to the change of timing, all were able to march later in the morning as planned. The day concluded with all bands in attendance participating in a Massed Bands perambulation of the Shrine Forecourt to great appreciation from the amassed general public.

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III was marked by the band with a tour of Government House and group viewings of the Coronation Service. A new mace and baldric have been ordered with the Tudor Crown design (also called the King's Crown due to its traditional emblematic use by past Kings of Australia) and Royal Cypher "CIIIR". The band hopes to be presented with these later in the year.

With the winter lull in parades, focus was shifted to solo piping and drumming competitions with Jess Jeffery, Fin Parsons and Benjamin Casey participating in over four separate competitions, - with Jess placing second overall in Victoria for C Grade. Piper Alex Ross and Drummer Kate Moyle competed for the first time this year also.

More support for Dining in Nights continued through June and July, including to the 22nd Engineer Regiment, the 108th Signals Regiment and the Melbourne University Regiment's officer training sub-unit, Monash Company. The Melbourne Tartan Festival was kicked off with our help as part of a Massed Bands' Parade down Collins Street for Tartan Day. The Pipe Major (who was Australian Drum Major Champion for 9 years straight) was the Senior Drum Major for the day while Drum Major WO2 Hughes-Smith was on leave.

Our last band performance before publication of this article, was the 5/6 RVR B Company Dining in Night held at the Simpson Barracks Sergeants Mess. The night commemorated the 125th Anniversary of the Victorian Scottish Regiment and was titled the 'Waterloo Dinner' in recognition of the link between the Gordon Highlanders who served at the Battle of Waterloo and the Victorian Scottish Regiment who were close allies. An excellent evening was had by all with VSRA President Mr Colin Hughes-Smith as chief guest at the head table and the Pipes and Drums performing as a band in full-dress (including feather bonnets and plaids) for the first time since attendance at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2018.

Finally I thank our civilian volunteers and serving members for their ongoing and tireless playing commitment that helps us attend so many tasks, and to the VSRA and wider community for their continuing support. Together, we are upholding the legacy of the 5th Battalion and writing new history every day. We are looking forward to another

strong year ahead in 2024.

#Photos from this year's highlights are on page 15.

Captain Rupert Vicary

## MINUTES 2022 VSRA AGM

Sunday 18th September 11:00 East Malvern RSL

Meeting opened 11:10 The AGM of Victorian Scottish Regiment Association

APOLOGIES: and ATTENDEES: see separate entries.

VALE : Jack Baker, Jim Barrie, Merv Evans, Bruce Larkin and Iain McKenzie.

The President, **Colin Hughes-Smith** recited the ode.

Lament played by piper **Helen Dilks** (RVRA P&Ds)

A minute's silence was observed. LEST WE FORGET

The recent death of Queen Elizabeth II was acknowledged. Scotland was close to her heart, and it seemed fitting that we respect her passing, on the day that we celebrate our links with Scotland.

WELCOME: **Colin Hughes-Smith** welcomed those who were attending the AGM.

MINUTES of the 2021 AGM (found in FD 2020) and business arising from minutes:

Ian Edwards spoke of the importance of paying our respects to the monument and the Colours at Scots' Church. The Regimental Colours and the Monument are both assets and treasured archives of the VSRA, along with other important objects that are part of our heritage. These include the Silver Highlander statue, the Ed Hawkes sword, the Regimental history books, members and committee of the VSRA, a healthy bank balance, our links with B Coy and the Pipes and Drums, and the flags that are displayed at B Coy Depot and at the EMRSL. Ian proposed that, as a follow up from the discussions at the 2021 AGM, there be a formal vote on permission to go ahead and organise a wreath laying ceremony at Scots' Church Collins Street Melbourne on or close to Remembrance Day each year. Laying of a wreath and paying respects at the site of the memorial at the Church would serve as an appropriate symbols of our respect to the VRSR and its history. He hoped that the event might become an annual event.

He proposed that the Committee be charged with the task of fine-tuning further details of the ceremony. The placing of the wreath would bring the profile of the VSRA to the public notice.

Moved. **Ian Edwards.** Seconded. **Robyn Luckie.** Carried.

A motion that the Minutes and Business arising from the minutes be accepted-

Proposed **Kevin Bolton.** Seconded **Mark Stevens.** Carried.

### PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Colin Hughes-Smith began his report by thanking Cam Johnstone for the strong ground work he did to create the link between the RSL and the VSRA. We as an Association need to constantly work on the linkage between serving soldiers of B Coy and its Scottish Heritage. It was pleasing to see the support of the CO, the OC and the RSM, and so on down the line. We will be working on strengthening those ties and enforcing the esprit de corps. The clear link with the Pipes and Drums is evident. Through the RVRA P&Ds, a completed Scottish Dress Manual has been submitted to RSM Ceremonial. The aim is to have the manual recognised and placed into the ADM. Once accepted, it will acknowledge the Scottish link and ensure that it is maintained.

The tone and the change of soldiering is incredibly different from what it has been in the past. There is an increase in elements, skills, and in the equipment used. Practical exercises are requiring more skills and a greater intensity in training those skills is necessary.

Our link with the RVR is seeing our soldiers as young spirited men and women who embrace that Scottish lineage. Those elements give them a sense of belonging – their '*esprit de corps*'. As Training Officer at the newly formed A Coy in Dandenong, Colin is tasked with creating the '*esprit de corps*' with which our B Coy soldiers are already imbued. He knows that B Coy soldiers already have that feeling of belonging. The overall link is the RVR. A synergy has been created between the RSL, the VSR, the RVR and the P&Ds. This foundation is being built on to continue into the future.

Recently the VSRA conducted the inaugural Piping Recital here at the EMRSL. Although numbers attending were light on, reality is that there were three world class pipers performing. The recital would not have appealed to everyone, but it was pure entertainment. The program might be tweaked to appeal to a wider audience next time.

**Colin Hughes-Smith** moved that his report be accepted. Moved **Hugh Tank.** Carried.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The Secretary welcomed everyone to the EMRSL. She pointed out how proud she was to be at the EMRSL and support its survival, as it does not rely on funding raised from poker machines, but is run with the help of a strong band of volunteers. The newly erected sign gives the VRSA grounding for its survival also.

Over the past 16 months since the AGM 2021, the committee has been working away to keep the Association up to strength.

The main correspondence over the past months has been the production and delivery (through email and postal mail) of *PIBROCH* and *FAIR DINKUM*. We receive publications from other associations and they are always available

for members to read in the members bar here at the EMRSL.

The VSRA continue to send cards of condolence to families of deceased members.

**Robyn Luckie** tabled the correspondence ins/out since the last AGM and proposed that the secretary's report and the correspondence be accepted.

Seconded **Lyn Stevens.** Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Ben Tosetto reported that the VSRA's financial condition was in good order.

Cheque account \$7,145.86 Term deposit \$17, 578. 29 Total funds \$ 24, 724.15

Ben thanked Stewart Wallace and Robyn Luckie for their help and support on the recital night.

Updates to the signatories on the bank accounts will need to be made.

As there were no questions regarding finance, **Ben Tosetto** moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted.

Seconded **Neville Taylor.** Carried

MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLICATIONS REPORT:

Neville reported that there are 97 members on the books - 7 of those being life members. He once again appealed to those sending in their renewal of membership forms to please give the added information of an alternative contact address, so that the membership list does not become clogged with members who have moved on or passed away without us knowing. We need those alternate addresses so as to be able to chase up current addresses from publications that have been 'returned to sender'. There were 7 such cases this year, and we had no alternative but to delete those members from the membership list. The publication of Fair Dinkum was fairly well supported. There is a continuing problem with making the deadline for production as *FD* must be sent out at least 1 month prior to the AGM as it contains all of the relevant details, minutes of the last year's AGM, plus return of membership forms. He appealed to those who have an article promised to the production of *FD*-- then get it in on time! It would save a lot of heartache and angst. Membership subscriptions of \$15 are due on receipt of *Fair Dinkum* each year. Neville had given some time to exploring the possibility of going 'on line' with the publication of *FD*. There are establishment fees and a small ongoing cost to achieve this, but the overall cost of getting the news to the members would be far less costly. Neville regretted that he was not offering his services to committee for the future. He is to collate and hand on the material he has collected from those who have contributed to *FD* in past years. This will assist is a seamless transmission to a publications editor in the future. It had been Neville's pleasure to work on *Pibroch* and *FD* in the past. **Neville Taylor** moved that the membership and publication report be accepted.

Seconded **Alistair Cox.** Carried

The president thanked Neville for his services over the past years.

B COY REPORT:

The President read the report offered by the OC B. MAJ Brendan O'Meara who offered his apologies.

MAJ Brendan O'Meara reports

"B Coy strength stands at 5 Officers and 82 Other Ranks.

5/6 RVR strength stands at 31 Officers and 324 Other Ranks.

CO 5/6 LTCOL Cameron Warfe will at the end of this year be handing over command to LTCOL Brendan Allen. LTCOL Warfe wishes to thank VSRA for the ongoing support shown to 5/6 RVR, Ps and Ds and B Coy, particularly during the challenging previous two years when COVID has had a great impact. LTCOL Allen takes command following his appointment as SO1 Career Advisory Group – South, and recently returning from a deployment to Iraq.

In 2023, WO2 Tim Roseler and I will remain as Company Sergeant Major and Officer Commanding B Coy, and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with VSRA and EMRSL. B Coy said farewell to Coy 2IC Capt Rory McDonald at the end 2022, with his posting to Melbourne University Regiment as an Officer Cadet instructor.

Highlights for B Coy this year include the return to face-to-face training on Tuesday nights and training weekends, celebrating a B Coy Dining in Night in connection with the Battle of Waterloo at the EMRSL and finalising the refurbishment of the Coy Mess.

B Coy has continued its strong commitment to operational deployments over the past 12 months, with members deploying on OP COVID ASSIST, OP FLOOD ASSIST, assistance to Ambulance Victoria and Aged Care Services, and OP RESOLUTE of which B Coy's LT Lachal is currently performing the role of Platoon Commander on Rotation 106 in Darwin.

The focus of B Coy in 2023 will be providing quality realistic training to our soldiers, developing our junior leaders, strengthening our community relationships, and continuing to live and breathe the customs and traditions of our proud Victoria Scottish Regiment history.

All the best."

MAJ **Brendan O'Meara** Officer Commanding – B Coy 5th / 6th Battalion The Royal Victorian Regiment.



### ELECTION OF COMMITTEE 2022-2023

All committee members stood down and **Roy Francis** took the chair for the election. Roy thanked the Committee for their commitment over the 16 months.

Nominations for committee for 2022-2023:

Ian Edwards, David Howell, Colin Hugh-Smith, Cam Johnstone, Robyn Luckie, Ben Tosetto, Stewart Wallace, Steven Ward and OC B Coy.

As there were no further nominations for committee, **Roy Francis** moved that the Committee be re-elected. The Committee was charged with appointing committee positions in due course. Seconded. **Hugh Tank**. Carried

### GENERAL BUSINESS:

B Coy Photographs:

The president suggested that the VSRA fund or partly fund the individual photographs that had recently been taken of B Coy. These photographs were taken with soldiers in full Scottish dress. The photographs are to be displayed at B Coy Depot. This will underpin the 'Scottishness' of B Coy and the part that the VSRA might play in the future.

VSR Plaque DARWIN:

Alastair Cox (RVRA committee member and VSRA member) reported that he had recently been to Darwin where he had visited the plaques that commemorate those defence forces which had been a part of the defence of Darwin in WW II. He noted that the VSR plaque had been vandalised. The RVRA committee has charged Alastair with organising a replacement plaque. There is a foundry in Armadale, NSW that is able to make a new plaque. The plaque will be etched, rather than having raised lettering and features. The new plaque and its installation will cost around \$2,000. Alastair is to apply for a government grant but asks the VSRA to possibly partly fund the establishment of the new plaque.

**Colin Hughes-Smith** proposed that we assist with the funding should it be necessary.

Seconded **Mark Stevens**. Carried.

On behalf of the VSRA **Ian Edwards** formally thanked Neville Taylor for his hard work over the years.

**Meeting closed 12:01**

'A Touch Of Scotland' lunch in the dining room was then served.

John Hall is to officiate over the raffle. We thank John for his enduring support to the VSRA.

### **ATTENDEES AGM 2022**

The 2022 AGM was held at 11:00 prior to the Touch Of Scotland Luncheon.

As this was an altogether different arrangement to those held in the past, where members and visitors were welcome to attending the AGM-- attendance was as follows:

Don Bergman, Kevin Bolton, Alastair Cox, Helen Francis, Ian Edwards, Margery Edwards, Helen Francis, Roy Francis, Colin Hughes-Smith, Graeme Kelly, Sam Kelly, Mark Leary, Lorraine Leak, Robert Leak, Robyn Luckie, Don McKirdy, Ashley Mitchell, Laurie Moir, Josh Moorfoot, Tim Steere, Lyn Stevens, Mark Stevens, Neville Taylor, Ben Tosetto, Hugh Tank, Wendy Tank, Lee Turner and Meryll Turner,

VSRA members attending A Touch of Scotland only (not present at the AGM )

Charles Abrehart , Annette Burns, Jim Burns, Lawrie Carlos, Martin Catterell, John Hall, John Hanlon, Val Hanlon, Jennifer Harkess, Clive King , Mark Leary, Stephen Meaher-Muchien, Joy McCracken, Ian Murray, Maurie Ryan, Tim Steere, Ron Stepnell, and Des Videon.

\*It was noted that many VSRA members brought along their support, friends and family to enjoy the day. We thank those support, friends, family, and for helping to make the occasion such a success. RL

### **APOLOGIES AGM and Touch Of Scotland 2022**

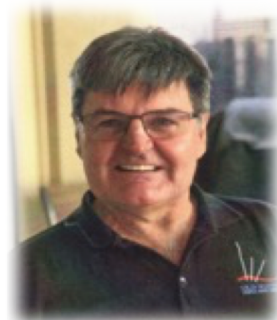
CO 5/6 LTCOL Cameron Warfe, OC B Coy MAJ Brendan O'Meara, 2iC B Coy Cap Rory Mc Donald  
Lola Anderson, John Brownbill, David Connolly, Ross Dickie, Linda Fisher, Rod Fox, Lyn Gardiner, Aron Hayhurst, David Helman, Brian Holzer, David Howell, Cam Johnstone, Pam Johnstone, Betty Ketels, Ann Kirkham, Maxwell Nance, Gary Notman, Lorna Paterson, Anthony Ross, Rhonda Ross, John Waddell and Stewart Wallace.

**VALÉ Stewart Wallace**

Stewart was an absolute inspiration to us all. He was a loyal committee member, an exceptional piper and creative mind.

He instigated the piping and drumming school at EMRSL and the 2022 piping recital.

He will be remembered for his courage and strength of character.



## ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE VSR

John Reid

The following is an eighty four year old's recollections of life in the Army Reserve, 5th Battalion, Victorian Scottish Regiment. While some events are still clear to me, timings are not so clear and documentation has long since gone through the shredder. My time in the Regiment was a comparatively short eight years and unspectacular, but it was an experience I valued immensely.

Soon after passing Matriculation in 1955 I went down to the Burwood Road Depot to enlist, it being the closest depot to home and an 'Australian Scottish' unit. My father had served in the army during WW2 so in a way I just felt we, the younger generation, should be prepared. I had also spent time in the cadets at Scotch College and had some idea of what it was about. Concurrently with the Army Reserve I was doing a five year full time course in Architecture at the University of Melbourne so it was a busy time. I was aware that I could have joined the Melbourne University Regiment but I understood that a member automatically, it seemed, could gain a Commission on completion of one's degree which seemed to me to be a rather impractical way of gaining military promotion, if one did.

Headquarters of the VSR and A Company were based at Burwood Road and Support Coy was at Surrey Hills. The CO at the time was Col Rupert 'Dick' Hamer and many of the Officers and senior NCO's had been in WW2 so we felt the training we were getting would be based on reality. Parade nights had good attendances and the esprit de corps was excellent. We were proud of our Regiment.

*ANZAC DAY 1995*

*Dick Hamer leading the 5th Battalion.*

*John Reid is carrying the Saltire flag and wearing the Australian tartan.*



During the next three years I recall us having a Trooping of the Colours, possibly at the St Kilda Cricket Ground, and being in the party to rehang the Regimental Colours at the Scots Church, Melbourne. During this time I gained one stripe, then two and by 1959 I rose to Sergeant and was posted to the Intelligence Section of the Battalion under Capt Mike Kelly. During 1959 I was sent as an Architectural Exchange Student to the USA working in Hawaii and New York. While in Hawaii the Army arranged for me to be attached to the American Army, in a unit of the 25th Division, 'Tropical Lightning'. This was a fascinating experience, the American troops seemed to be extremely keen and well equipped. At the Rifle Range at home I think we were given 12 rounds. At a Range in Hawaii each member was given a 'crate' of ammunition which I was told contained in the vicinity of 700 rounds. My shoulder gave out well before I got half way through the allocation. I was surprised to find the army culture there quite different to our own. There seemed to be a firm demarcation line between officers and the NCOs and ORs at that time.

On returning home I graduated from University in 1960 and was encouraged to attend an Officer Training Course along with Sgt Joe Davis from VSR. My main recollection of the course was that we had as one of instructors the renowned Col George Warfe – a fearful but fruitful prospect. I was Gazetted on 6 Jan 1960 and posted to our No. 1 Platoon, A Company where my Sergeant was Ralph Demarte who went on to bigger and better things in the Army. By this time Dick Hamer had moved on and the CO was Findlay Patrick, along with the other Officers Howard Taylor, Graham Palmer, Mike Bacon, Bill Kirkham and Clarrie Bell.

My first weekend bivouac as a Platoon Commander was at Wonga Park. The primary exercise was an assault course through which the ORs were put. The last part of the course was a three rope bridge across a dam. As the first men crossed the bridge, explosive charges which had been set in the water to the side of the bridge were discharged, which caused some interruption to their movement. When completed, some considerable pressure was placed on the officers to 'have a go'! We did! As we approached this last obstacle, I just happened to be first, due no doubt to me being the youngest officer. Half way across the bridge the charges were discharged, but this time they had been placed directly under the bridge. The explosion blew my webbing open, my trousers dropped to my ankles, and we never found my helmet. Hobbling, I got off the bridge and in bending down to retrieve my trousers was passed by the bloke coming behind me! A memorable occasion for me and a humorous one for the troops.



The annual camp which must have been in 1961 was at Puckapunyal and the Regiment was involved in Operation Firepower which combined armour, artillery and infantry. One task I had was to close the gate at the end of the artillery range before they started firing. I went out in a quarter tonner with Bob Wood as driver, a bloke I knew in civvy street. I locked the gate but on the return journey the artillery unfortunately opened fire a little early! – I am sure we achieved a land speed record for a Jeep in returning to camp. The other event I recall was when I took a White Scout Car out with a Corporal, and a Section on reconnaissance. I left the White to walk up a hill to get a good view of proceedings, leaving the Corporal to bring the White around to the other side. Reaching the top I looked back to see the White, having tried a short cut, was stopped. So after completing my recce, I returned to find it hopelessly bogged down. Fortunately, a Centurion Tank saw us and came across to check. Being Regular Army they naturally made some slightly dismissive comments about weekend soldiers, however they hooked our White up and dragged it out of the bog, sideways. Leaving us to follow them feeling rather subdued, they vanished over a hill en route to camp. Shortly after, we came upon the tank stopped and on enquiry found they had stripped the gears pulling our White out. We graciously offered the tank commander a lift back to camp for a recovery vehicle.

In 1961 I had the opportunity to return to the States to complete a project and after 3 months moved on to an Architectural Practice in London. There I was attached to the London Scottish Regiment when it was celebrating its Centenary Year, and was based at St James. The London Scottish was a brother regiment to our own, and also wore the Gordon Tartan, and with a very similar military culture I felt very much at home. I attended week night parades and went on one weekend bivouac as an observer, where a Lieutenant and his Platoon had to undertake a cross country orientation exercise.

After about an hour and a half, the platoon was hopelessly lost. On finding a country pub we all decamped to the bar to await a recovery vehicle. This seemed to me to be a very British solution. On returning home in mid 1962 I was sent on a Tactics Course for Junior Officers at Singleton NSW. This was a great experience, especially as I was and still am, very interested in military history. I was then posted to 58/32nd Battalion at Footscray and encouraged to take a Captains Course, which I did not have the time to do.

1963 was a very busy year; I had married and was starting a family, settling into my private architectural practice, and was a visiting Design Lecturer at Melbourne's School of Architecture. Something had to give, and I somewhat reluctantly decided I would have to leave the Army. I was discharged, or put on the Reserve list (I was never sure which) in 1964. I was very appreciative of the opportunities available in the Army and, valued the discipline, weapon familiarity, tactics, and perhaps most of all, the man-management experience, especially because many personnel in the Regiment were so different to those I had associated with in academic life.

In 1988 Brig Ian Lowen was compiling the book *ESTRIT DE CORPS* as a history of the VSR and 5th Battalion. He seconded the well-known Drum Major Johnny Ray and myself to provide illustrations of the variety of uniforms worn throughout the history of the Regiment. It was a thrill to be involved in this very important publication.



## MEMORABILIA

The VSRA is always grateful and willing to accept items of memorabilia.

Graeme Kelly and Hugh Tank passed along some old rampant lion collar pins, silver cap badges and other items of interest. Recently the McCoy family provided us with Jim's kilt, photos and other items of interest. Jim's kilt and other items are displayed at the EMRSL. The Evans family donated a number of Merv's dress uniforms, jackets, kilt, sporran, belt, hose, flashes, boots, and other important parts of Scottish dress. These items will be treated with great respect. Some may be used as display items at the Hawthorn history room. Even the jacket buttons are useful to correctly kit-out the P&Ds and B Coy.

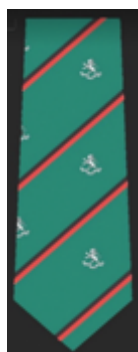
John Hall found a Gordan Kilt for sale in the Springvale Op shop for \$20. He kindly lent this kilt to Ian Edwards to wear on Remembrance Day last year.

Hugh Tank has compiled a substantial photograph album recording some of the history of the 5th/6th Regiment in honour of his Grandfather, Walter Reginald Olifent (who was a Gallipoli Veteran) and in honour of his uncle, Jim Olifent. Both served in the VSR. At the moment the album is on display at the Hawthorn depot, but will live finally at the Gordon Club, Wewak Barracks, Surrey Hills. Our thanks go to Hugh for his time and efforts putting the album together.

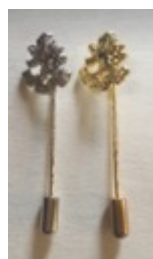
Do keep your eyes peeled for any items concerning the VSR.

RL

### We have a number of Memorabilia items for sale.



Ties \$30



Stubby holders \$10. Rampant Lion pins \$10 (gold and silver). VSRA drink coasters  
(All inquiries through the secretary)

# Items of memorabilia will be on display and for sale at the AGM/Touch of Scotland Luncheon.

#### 125 Years VSR Commemorative Challenge Coin

The 2023 Bravo Company Challenge coin is going to see out past and current members to the end of this decade.

This is a limited edition challenge coin.

To commemorate the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Victorian Scottish Regiment in 1898, the VSRA has organised a limited-edition commemorative Gin through a local Melbourne Distillery. See opposite (page 13) for further details.



#### VSR SIDE

The rampant lion with our original VSR tartan background detailing our century and a quarter (representing our history).

#### RVR SIDE

Features the RVR badge, Gordon tartan and B Coy blue ring. (representing us currently).

**GRAB YOURS NOW at \$30 each**

In person at the Gordon club or bank transfer to the Gordon Club 5 6 RVR Bulk Unit Canteen  
BSB 063 138 ACC. 1003 2116



## B COMPANY REPORT

MAJ Brendan O'Meara, OC B Coy

This year marks my second year in command of B Coy, 5/6 RVR, and my command philosophy remains unchanged from last year. 1) Provide quality, relevant and realist training, 2) Develop our people, 3) Accountability, and 4) Minimising stupidity.

Underpinning the philosophy is the renewed 2nd division focus of foundation warfighting – doing the basics well and being able to step up our soldiering skills if, and when, our Nation calls upon us. As part of this calling, B Coy has provided NCOs and soldiers to fill roles in support of 5/6 RVR's transition from a light infantry battalion to a motorised infantry battalion mounted in Bushmasters, as well as the raising of a battalion mortar platoon capability. Our new Commanding Officer, LTCOL Brendan Allen, is encouraging as many soldiers and officers as possible to partake in the PMV driver training and mortarman courses being conducted throughout the year.

The end of 2022 saw a significant "changing of the guard" at B Coy. Long-time company members CPL Ward and CPL Lockwood internally posted to C Coy. CPL Lockwood was promoted to SGT. CPL Purcell moved to the newly raised 4 BDE Combative Cell to facilitate combat shooting, tactical first aid and army combative courses. Our Training Warrant Officer and B Coy stalwart, SGT Johnston, took up a role in the Battalion Training Cell. Coy Second-In-Charge, CAPT McDonald, took up an instructor role at the Melbourne University Regiment. We also continue to honour the memory of SGT Chris Lam, who was posthumously promoted following his sudden succumbing to an infection in August 2022. B Coy will always remember you Chris. We thank you for your service and dedication, as do we thank all the members who have served B Coy and since moved on.

B Coy kicked off 2023 in a different fashion this year, with several members forming a triathlon team to compete in the Melbourne Corporate Triathlon at Elwood beach. LCPL Maine did a terrific job bringing the team together and wading through the Army 'red tape' to have their participation in the public event approved. It was a great show of teamwork, an opportunity to promote Army in the community, and helped reinforce the healthy fitness habits among B Coy members. We thank Mornington RSL for donating funds towards the team's marquee.

Anzac Day 2023 saw us busy among the community, supporting dawn services in our local area. B Coy provided catafalque parties to services at Surrey Hills Gardens, East Malvern RSL and Cheltenham RSL. Following the dawn services, B Coy hosted a family friendly service at Wewak Barracks which was attended by approximately 80 B Coy friends, family and community members. This was a fantastic event and gave opportunity to former B Coy members to re-engage with their roots – some veterans in attendance commented that they had not been to Wewak Barracks for over 50 years -so welcomed the opportunity to re-connect. We will endeavour to host similar ANZAC Day events in the years ahead when we are not marching in the CBD parade.

On a recent Tuesday night, B Coy travelled to Scots' Church for a history presentation and tour. New and old members alike were in awe of their surrounds, soaking up the beautiful church, the Victoria Scottish Regiment Cenotaph and laid-up King's, Queen's and Regimental Colours. Members also received a detailed lesson on traditional Scottish military dress. We look forward to returning to Scots' Church later in the year in support of the VSR Remembrance Day service. The remainder of the year ahead will see many of our Officers and NCOs completing trade and promotion courses, attending battalion exercises at Puckapunyal and HMAS Cerberus, and continuing to support various domestic operations. We continue to make use of nearby training facilities like the Oakleigh combat causality simulator, Simpson Barracks WTSS and 2/10 Field Battery's all-arms-call-for-fire simulator, to further enhance our training. Finally, on behalf of B Coy, I congratulate the VSR on their 125th anniversary. It is B Coy's privilege to carry forward the VSR lineage, customs and traditions. It is a connection we will continue to honour, preserve, and live by the motto – *Nemo Me Impertune Lacesit Lacesit*.

### 125th ANNIVERSARY GIN

Despite popular misconception that whisky is the only Scottish drink, the Scots have been perfecting gin since the 1700s. This artisanal gin incorporates the finest traditions of highland gin with a combination of Scottish heritage and modern Melbourne flavours. As a herbal and dry gin with traditional juniper, it is brought to life with hints of Tasmanian peppercorn, lavender, orange and angelica root.

The gin features the design of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary challenge coin produced by Bravo Company showing the rampant lion atop the original 1898 VSR Tartan of red over the Government (Black Watch) Tartan. It also includes a short history of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion on the bottle.

Special edition bottles are numbered 1 to 125 with only 1 of each number available. On sale at \$89 (down from \$125) for VSRA members and friends,

sales of this gin promote the legacy of the VSR and support the VSRA.

At the Touch of Scotland fundraiser, bottle number 98 (significant for 1898 being the VSR's founding year) will be available via a silent auction. Please attend the Touch of Scotland for your chance to bid.

To order a bottle, visit [www.nubilum.com.au/shop/](http://www.nubilum.com.au/shop/)

# BRAVO COMPANY SNAPSHOTS



Tuesday night training for harbour drill compete with a realistic downpour of rain.



Reality based training at the new 'airsoft' range at Wewak Barracks for rehearsing close quarter tactics and combat shooting principles.



Members of B Coy attended the 5/6 RVR ball hosted by B Coy at Wewak Barracks Nov. '22.



B Coy Officers and NCOs attended a joint RVR dinner in Ballarat Oct '22.



CPL Lawrence Lockwood promoted to SGT by former 5/6 CO Cameron Warfe.



Dec 22 a new batch of tam o' shaners from the UK ready for presentation to the members of B Coy.



B Coy catafalque party Cheltenham RSL ANZAC Day 2023.



B Coy conducts a VSR/RVR history night at Scots' Church supported by the VSRA P&Ds April 2023.

# PIPES & DRUMS



Altona RSL  
Anzac parade.



Colin presented a trophy to CPL Tom Walter, president of the Gordon Club Mess Committee. Tom won the award for the 'best dressed' at the recent B Coy Waterloo Dinner. He also won the inaugural SGT Chris Lam B Coy NCO of the year award. Our congratulations go to you Thomas.



National Serviceman's Parade at Puckapunyal.



Mini-band at the B Company dinner

Other annual award winners on the B Coy Waterloo Dinner Night.  
 MANARD AWARD (best soldier)-PTE Htoo. BURTON AWARD (fittest soldier) - CPL Aaron Hayhurst.  
 Well done lads!

