

Warrant Officer Class Two Robert James 'Bob' Creelman
3799568
04.06.1950 - 03.12.2020
4RAR, 2 RVR, 8/7 RVR & 3 TRG GP

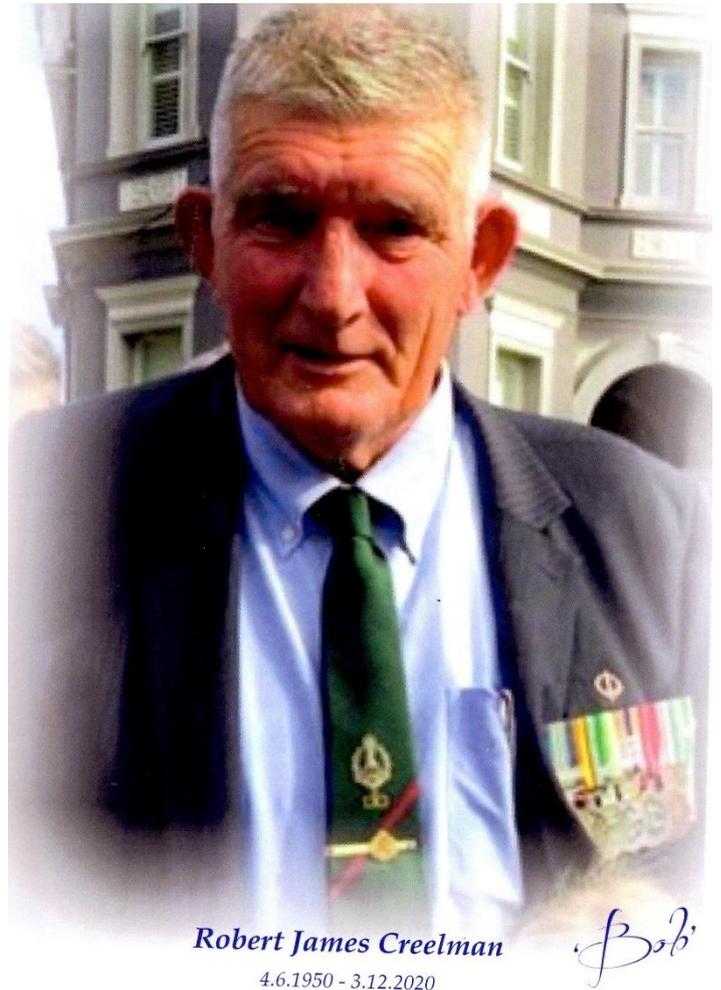
Much loved husband of Karen, loving father of Belinda, Raymond, Robbie, Tess, Danielle, Brittany, Alexandra and Nikita.

Adored Grandpa and Great Grandpa.

Eldest Son of the late Margaret and Raymond Creelman. Adored big Brother of Lorraine, Julie and Stephen. Uncle, mentor and hero to his Nephews and Nieces.

Firstly, let me say to Karen and to the whole family please accept my personal condolences on the passing of Bob, but also from the broader Army family and of course most specifically from the current and former members of 8/7 RVR.

When the padre phoned me up on Tuesday night to ask whether I could say a few words today on behalf of the unit I must admit that my thoughts went along two paths: firstly there is the honour of talking about the military life and times of a stalwart of the unit but secondly there was the daunting prospect of trying to do it justice. I hope I do.



Robert James Creelman
4.6.1950 - 3.12.2020

Bob



As Australians we can tend to focus on the negatives more than the positives, and at a time when some in the Army are receiving negative publicity, the presence of men like Bob Creelman serves to remind us of everything that is special about our little unit from Country Victoria and all its members - soldiers, officers and civilians.

8/7 RVR has an incredibly rich history built on more than 150 years of service to the nation. The unit has had eight of its soldiers recognised with the Victoria Cross – more than any other unit in the Army. Along with some very famous soldiers such as Pompey Elliott. Now, given the length of service that Bob provided to Army it may surprise some of you to know that he actually didn't serve during the Great War, but by God he certainly ensured that the soldiers of today maintained the standards and traditions of those soldiers that did. But Bob also wrote his own chapter in our history and added plenty to its heritage.

For those that don't know, I had the honour of being Bob's last CO.

So, I have known 3799568/8224409 Warrant Officer Robert James "Bob" Creelman on and off for likely 25 years or more, (just a couple of years less than when I first met Karen) this was through his association with both

battalions of the Royal Victoria Regiment but likely also 3 Training Group at Puckapunyal and potentially other units too. Bob's reputation was well known to me before I ever met him, such was his stature within the units in which he served. To quote some words Mark Broemmer wrote the other day "a gruff demeanour (which was a suit of armour), an all knowing and cheeky smile and a devil may care attitude". But there was far more to Bob and this became apparent when I worked with him over the last few years of his service.



Commanding Officers get the honour of being the custodians of the unit for a period of a few years but in some aspects it is intimidating to come into a unit and work with blokes like Bob who are actually the embodiment of the unit. To come in and make your mark on the unit and just know that the approval of people like Bob is what you need more so than anything else. Within 8/7, Bob, probably with just a couple of others, was the point of continuity as COs & RSMs came and went. Along the walls of Ranger Barracks were photos stretching back well into the 80's showing Bob as a youthful CPL Creelman right through to his final year of service in 2018. So as the CO (and with your RSM) you pull a few levers to shift the unit in a particular direction but you just know that you need to pull the correct levers to have Bob and those like him along on the ride.

You see to me in many ways Bob represented to me the then Army Values of Courage Initiative Respect and Teamwork within the unit and I will try and give you a few examples of how he lived this every day that I worked with him.

Courage – it is probably not unfair to say that Bob wasn't afraid to call bulldust on things – he had the courage of his convictions and would not leave you wondering on his opinion. Although there are likely many examples of this written into people's memories from their time with him the

clearest of them to me were probably late on a Tuesday evening when a group of dirty stop outs would be standing in the mess of Ranger Barracks solving the problems that beset Army, Australia and the World. Now I think it is fair to say that Bob didn't mind the odd cheeky beer and with this in mind many things would get discussed and then invariably Bob would chime in with a comment to ensure that in whatever it was that we did that we remembered the impact on the soldiers. His soldiers. Always respectfully delivered but without ambiguity as to what he was thinking.

Respect – Bob was always respectful to the chain of command. He was prepared to speak his mind, but when the decision was made he clicked his heels together and did what he was asked. Mind you I never did get a good look in his discipline file. Bob didn't speak much about his time in Vietnam and usually when he did with me it was in reference to his CO over there, who went on to be MAJGEN Jim Hughes. The respect in which he held that man was incredible and I know that later in life that built even more I expect through associations with veterans groups and the like. When Jim



Hughes passed away a few years ago one of the first things Bob did was take Jim's dogs as his own to ensure they were looked after and to honour the memory of the man.



Initiative – When speaking with the XO of the unit, Stan Carnes, the other day he relayed to me an example of how Bob would just make things happen to benefit the unit as told to him by SGT Glen Ludeman. As a CO you don't always know these things as they just happen. Although the specific reasons are not clear to me the essence of it was that the unit needed to borrow some kit from our friends in the commandos at Williamstown. Bob, of his own volition, drove down, grabbed the kit and returned it, I presume to Bendigo so the activity could proceed. There are probably more and better examples of this but it just illustrates the point that he would see the need, find the solution and then get it done (although probably make others do it was just as true) without seeking praise but because it was the right thing to do for the team.

Teamwork – It was always about the unit and never about Bob. If he could blend into the background and just do his thing he seemed happy. He certainly did not seek recognition and that is likely why we do recognize him. The final example I will give was Bob's last official duty within Army when we had a dining in night at Bendigo at the end of 2018. Bob went up the day before and spent the time ensuring it was set up just right. Helping the soldiers prepare the day before, enjoying an all nighter with them that night and then being the senior escort to the colours as the dining in night proceeded. And then backing up for another all nighter. But again it was about the whole unit – even to the point of arranging for Britney to be a babysitter for families on the evening.

There you have it – just a few examples of his Courage Initiative Respect and Teamwork. The courage to speak your mind regardless of rank or stature, the initiative to see something needs to be done and just get on with it, the respect to accept a decision and to enact the plan and the teamwork that says it takes all of us to get this done.



Bob retired from Army at the beginning of last year – not that he wanted to, but the powers that be decided that at 68 he had probably given all he needed to – and we got to farewell him. A surprise party was arranged for just around the corner here at the Midland's Golf Club and Karen and the family did a sensational job, along with the RSM – Mick Carroll - of bringing this thing together and I vaguely recall hearing Bob's voice come drifting in as we all waited to surprise him and farewell him from Army. Now I am not certain but I seem to recall he was bitching and moaning just a little bit to Karen – anyway he walked in the door and I honestly think it was the first time he was truly lost for words, at least in my memory. We got the chance to thank him for his service and I think a good time was had by all. It was an honour to be there.

Later in the year we got to do it again when somehow the RSM arranged to drag Bob up to the infantry corps conference for farewells. You see as far as we know, and we are pretty certain of it, Bob was the last serving infantryman who had served in Vietnam and was still an infantryman when he finished up. There are usually a few farewells to luminaries of the infantry on the night and in this case there were three major generals and one crusty old warrant officer. Now as much as we respected the work that the generals had done I think it is fair to say that the highlight of the night was the farewell of Bob, conducted in the Sergeants Mess at the home of the infantry, surrounded by the leaders of the corps.

Bob leaves an enduring legacy in Army, most particularly within 8/7, built on the training and leadership he provided to so many of the Army's junior leaders. There still remains future RSMs and COs that he trained, within 8/7, but also across the wider Army who owe at least some part of their professional development to Bob. I am pleased to note that the unit will continue to honour this legacy into perpetuity. This will be by the annual presentation of the Bob Creelman Junior Leaders Trophy to recognize the most outstanding junior leader in the unit. A fitting tribute to him.

Bob – Rest, stand down. Your duty was nobly done and your legacy will endure. Thank you.
