



In this issue:

- VALE
- RVRA AGM 19 August
- RAMSI MISSION ACCOMPLISHED
- A touch of Scotland
- RVRA Merchandise orders

RVRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Gentlemen and Ladies, please remember to attend our AGM on SATURDAY 19 AUGUST at 5/6 RVR HQ at 2PM.

We look forward to seeing you all at that meeting. Bring a mate that you served with and get them to join in too. The meeting will include the normal matters and we will conclude with drinks and nibbles in the mess. See you there!

Remember too our Pipes & Drums raffle, The prizes are fabulous including a trip for two to Edinburgh, courtesy of Royal Brunei airlines. The prize also includes accommodation in Edinburgh and two tickets to the Tattoo to see our Ps&Ds in action in August 2018. Other prizes including a TV and other prizes from JB HIFI, a dinner for two, coffee a coffee machine from Beraldo Coffee and a spa treatment from Endota Spa.

Tickets can also be purchased by sending an email to our address below, and at your local RVR depot too and at the AGM. Please buy a ticket or three when the raffle is open, and ask your friends to buy a few too!. Your help will make this a great success.

If you want to be more involved contact us on **rvrassoc@hotmail.com**

RVRA Monthly Luncheon

Please join us at the Kelvin Club on the following dates, for a casual Friday lunch and a beverage with your mates. Last year's lunches were a great success. Be part of it all this year. See you there!

Luncheon dates;

September 8, October 6

November 17, December 8



RVRA WEBSITE RENEWAL

The committee will start a review of the RVRA website to bring it up to date and add new features. One addition will be a library of our newsletters and links to all our affiliated organisations. A video library will also be considered or links to 'youtube' videos or some other cloud based library.

If you have any thoughts, please get in touch.

Cheers, Chris Connelly Vice-President

VALE—Remembering our Fallen

LEST WE FORGET

COL Jim WOOD

It is with great sadness that we advise of the passing on Friday of COL Jim Wood. Jim was a fine officer and gentleman, a friend and mentor to many of us, and a great supporter of the Regiment and MURRA. Our thoughts are with his wife Colleen and family.

His funeral was held at 10:30am on Friday 7th July at the Collins Street Baptist Church.

Jim and Colleen married in 1960 and parented three children. Jim was 2IC of 1RVR, during the Big Desert camp in the early to mid '70's.

Over the period 1967-1984, he held a range of civilian appointments with the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs, with postings in Canberra, Melbourne, Jakarta (Embassy, 3rd/Sec 2nd, Political), Hong Kong (HQ British Forces) and Tokyo (Embassy, Counsellor, Political). He then settled in Melbourne and completed further post-graduate studies. Dr. Wood returned to secondary teaching in 1988 and retired in 2010 as Head of English at Fairhills High School and Coordinator of the Bright Sparks Committee responsible for promoting Gifted Education in the Knox District. Since retirement, he has continued his research and writing on Australia's military history and on behalf of those Australians who served in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF).

He spent thirty seven years as a citizen soldier, enlisting in 1956 in 1 Commando Company in Sydney, qualifying for the Green Beret, as a parachutist and other specialist courses and was commissioned in 1961. As the first Army Reserve Officer to be awarded a Defence Fellowship, he spent a year on full time duty during which time he visited the US and Europe (UK, Sweden, West Germany) and produced a major study on Mobilisation An outline record of its origin and development in respect of Land Forces.

During his final army appointment, 1990-92, as Colonel Project Officer, Command and Staff College, Queenscliff, he updated his studies of mobilisation in the light of the Gulf War in a volume 'Case Studies in Army Mobilisation'; his lectures to the College on 'Mobilisation, the Benefits of Experience' and 'Mobilisation: The Gulf War in Prospect', were published as SDSC Working Papers.

Thanks to Military History and Heritage Victoria Inc.

<http://www.mhhv.org.au/?p=5061>

RVRA RAFFLE TICKETS NOW ON SALE

ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES

Win a holiday for two to the ROYAL EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO - 2018

Royal Victoria Regiment Association Fund raising Raffle for the RVRA Pipes and Drums to play at the 2018 Edinburgh Tattoo

TICKETS \$5.00

Raffle will be drawn by the RSL State President at the Licensed Sub Branches Hall of Fame Dinner on 18th November, 2017. Results published in the Herald-Sun public notices on 23rd November, 2017.

1. Holiday package to Edinburgh Tattoo 2018
(Air content courtesy Royal Brunei Airlines) consisting of two return airfares from Melbourne to London, including transfers to Edinburgh, four nights accommodation and two tickets to the 2018 Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Valued at \$6,000

2. Hisense 55" UHD Smart LED LCD TV smart TV
(Courtesy of JB Hi-Fi) Valued at \$1,598

3. Flight Centre Travel Voucher Valued at \$750

Beraldo COFFEE

JB HI-FI

Turn over for our other prizes

001

TICKETS \$5.00

NAME:

CONTACT:

ONLY \$5 EACH

RAMSI MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Since 2003 Australia has led the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands to restore peace and security to one of our nearest neighbours. On June 30, 2017 It came to an end, marking the conclusion of the longest Australian-led intervention mission in our history. It represents our boldest attempt at state building, and in many ways can be heralded as a success. It should not be forgotten by the Australian public.

By the time prime minister John Howard gave the order to implement "Operation Helpem Fren", the Solomon Islands had descended into anarchy. Ethnic tension had spilled over into open conflict, and had completely compromised the ranks of the police. The economy was nosediving and along with it was the government's ability to pay for services and salaries. Over the four years that "the tensions" plagued the country the Solomon Islands prime ministers of the day had made numerous calls for help from their neighbours. Finally, on July 24, 2003, Australia, along with New Zealand and other Pacific nations, answered the call.

Up until this point Howard and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer had resisted calls to intervene, fearing that it would lead to a protracted Australian engagement with no end in sight and limited benefit to Australian strategic interests. As it became clear that the Solomon Islands was quickly becoming a failed state, Howard and Downer worried that it had the potential to become an incubator for terrorism or transnational crime on Australia's doorstep. The strategic thinking changed.

Against the early advice of the bureaucracy for a more incremental approach, Howard opted for an ambitious "shock and awe" style intervention that would swiftly restore law and justice in the country and engage in long-term state-building.

Over the next 14 years almost 10,000 Australian military, police and civilian personnel along with peers from every Pacific island nation, even tiny Niue, served in RAMSI. Six lives of RAMSI personnel were lost. All up it has cost the Australian taxpayer nearly \$3 billion.

And it was worth it. In many ways RAMSI can be seen as a model intervention. It quickly restored law and order, arrested about 1 per cent of the country's population (not all at once) and recovered and destroyed more than 3700 guns in an amnesty agreement. Since 2003 the Solomon Islands has had one of the lowest rates of gun crime in the world. All of this occurred without Australian forces firing a single shot, and only one lethal incident from the entire RAMSI force.

Popular support. The professionalism shown by the men and women of the intervention is reflected by popular support for RAMSI from the people of the Solomon Islands never wavering below 85 per cent. Even Manasseh Sogavare, Solomon Islands current prime minister and one of the most aggressive RAMSI detractors in 2006 and 2007, seems to have genuinely reformed and has spent the week passionately thanking the intervention as celebrations take place in Honiara. Such positive endorsement for a foreign intervention 14 years on is unheard of.

The effectiveness of RAMSI in restoring and maintaining law and order, which received the lion's share of funding over the past 14 years, is without question. Turning to the objective of state building is where RAMSI's legacy becomes murkier.

The public sector has been restored and institutions stabilised. But the economy has become deeply aid dependent, supplemented by grossly unsustainable logging. Rapid population growth and rampant urbanisation will put further strain on Honiara, while rural areas remain desperate for services. Corruption remains endemic in the political class and little has been done to address the underlying causes of the tensions.

One could argue that had the priorities of RAMSI been different and the resources better allocated, some of these challenges could have been addressed. But many are simply beyond the ability of any external actor or intervention to solve, and remain the responsibilities of the political leaders of a sovereign Solomon Islands. RAMSI has righted the ship that is the Solomon Islands but it is up to their politicians to steer it in the right direction. Unfortunately, strong and progressive leadership that can break the toxic clientelist political culture that fed much of the initial unrest in the Solomon Islands is still lacking.

Critics may still argue that despite these achievements the intervention was both too costly and too long to still be in our national interest. Still, the tangible result of preventing a failed state on our border and improving the welfare of the people of one of our nearest neighbours is more than we can say about other interventions Australia has recently participated in.

The conclusion of RAMSI marks an end to an important chapter of our Pacific story. While its legacy is still to be fully written, it should not be forgotten by the Australian people. It certainly won't be by the people of the Solomon Islands.

The RVR has supported several rotations in the RAMSI Mission. For Australia's Military it was known as Op ANODE, for New Zealand it was Op RATA and RATA II, and for PNG it was KUMUL Force. Tonga and Fiji also sent Military Personnel over the long duration of the mission.

4th Brigade of Victoria lead Rotation 13 in 2007, we sent personnel to Rotation 15, and again lead the deployment for Rotation 18 in 2009 under Command of LTCOL Neil Grimes. After that, 4th Brigade also sent troops to Rotations 22 and 30 which was the end of the Military deployments in 2013. But now too the public servants have gone home, the Participating Police Forces have been dismantled and the Solomon Islands is governing itself autonomously once again.

We will always be ready to deploy into our region in support of Nations and Governments that need us and call for our help. Lets hope we get to stay home for a long time, and see the rise of sustained peace and prosperity throughout the Pacific.

Article courtesy of the Lowy Institute and edited by Neil Grimes

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/australia-prevented-disaster-doorstep>



RVR PIPES AND DRUMS ASSOCIATION



Annual "Touch of Scotland" Luncheon Sunday, 27th August 2017

*We look forward to the pleasure of your company at Malvern East RSL
59 Stanley Grose Drive, East Malvern, 3145*



**From - 12.00 PM
Tickets - \$50- pp*
Dress – Smart Casual
RSVP- 18th August, 2017**



*All proceeds from the day to be applied for ongoing support to 5/6 RVR Pipes and Drums!
For bookings, please contact Ben Tosetto, RVR Pipes & Drums Association Treasurer
BH Phone – 03 9690 6800 - Fax 03 9696 3865 or ben@ams-imaging.com.au*

RVRA. C/- 954 Childers Hamlet, Childers 3824