



Eyes and Ears

No.0010 – 05/10/09



Arty Tac, LP's, Survey, Radar, Transport and Workshop...

. Long Tan Day – Thursday 18 August, 1966...

This is how it was reported starting two days later in some of the Australian national press...



Now here some comments from some of the guys' memories and published in the order they were received...

- **Bert Blink remembers** it like this –

'Hi Paul, Yes well in August 66 I was still a civilian. So I was working with the Fire & Accident Insurance Underwriters, Flinders Lane Melbourne, as an Insurance Surveyor. My NS started in September 66. Bert'

- **Peter Hopper recalls** it this way –

'Paul, I was at the Jungle Training Camp, Canungra, Queensland on Thursday 18th August 1966. I was with Ken Long and Kanga and a few others from 131 completing the Battle Efficiency Course 9/66. Thursday was the final day of a four day exercise in the bush where we were continually harassed and lived off rations. It rained on the Thursday which also made it very unpleasant. I can remember a rat or mouse crawling over my hat while I was lying on picket duty in the jungle. We arrived back at base camp the following day completely exhausted. I remember going into the mess and listening to the news headlines. It was a report on the Battle of Long Tan. It was a wake-up call! There was a sort of sickening feeling that crept over all of us when we heard that news. Peter Hopper'

- **Ernie Newbold gives his** recollection like this –

'G'day Paul, I don't remember ever being aware of the Long Tan battle in 1966. I was in the 4th intake and "marched" into the 3rd Training Battalion at Singleton on 20th April 1966 and believe that I had graduated from there to Corps training by mid August... I suspect that at that time I was at the Kokoda Barracks at Holsworthy being trained as an Artillery Signaller by WO2 (Percy) Ovenden. When I think back it seems that we were extremely uninformed by the Army regarding what was happening in Vietnam at that time. Especially as the Battery was represented by the guys who were there while we were at Holsworthy. Our training was still based on what must have been theoretical Counter Battery warfare practices as I found many things to be varied in Vietnam from what we had been trained in. e.g. did you ever learn actual crater examination skills in Australia?

I certainly never got to dig up mortar craters until I was in Vietnam.

Perhaps "baggy arsed gunners" were not informed of current or updated practices for some reason or other. Probably a "need to know" part of Army procedures and they decided that we didn't need to know.

I do know where I was on the 1st anniversary of the battle of Long Tan; I was in the same place you were and certainly don't remember any commemoration taking place or in fact any mention of it on the 1st anniversary, do you? Fortunately time and history have made sure that more people are now aware of just what happened on that terrible afternoon in August 1966.

Have you read the book "Through Enemy Eyes" by Dave Sabben or "The Battle of Long Tan as told by the Commanders" by Bob Grandin? Regards, Ernie.'

- **Merv Nairn has** this to say –

'I was at Bravo radar Nui Dat doing the general work required to keep the radar functioning 24/7 and still at that stage building the camp including surrounding the task force with razor wire and at this stage early days still sandbagging. This was only a few days before the mortar attack. I leave tomorrow to return there for the first time; hope to be up at the Long Tan cross on the 18th. I am sure I will cry. Will report all when I get back, scheduled to return on the 11th Sept. Regards, Merv. (Baldy) Nairn' **Ed asks** that you say one and feel free to shed tears for all of us at 'The Cross'.

- **Nick Armstrong remembers** it this was –

'Hello Dicko, I don't remember the exact day, but I would have probably have just arrived, or was preparing to fly to Horn Island in the Torres Strait. This was the base camp for a four month Topographical Survey Operation in New Guinea. I was a sapper with AHQ Survey Regiment, based in Bendigo.

Horn Island was the airstrip for Thursday Island. We camped beside the main runway, as all movement to New Guinea was by air. Also, the Survey operation was to establish mapping control, particularly along the West Irian border. The main equipment used was an airborne version of the Tellurometer microwave distance measuring system. The airborne equipment was mounted in a WW2 Hudson Bomber, operated by a civilian company Adastra.

My job for the operation was to act as Transport NCO. My tasks involved maintaining the generators for the camp, carting water for the camp, attempting to keep track of AVGAS stockpiles around New Guinea, and operating one of two boats running between Horn Island and Thursday Island.

Cheers, Nick'

- **John 'Beau' Roberts has** dug really deep to relate the following -

'131DivLocNews, Attn: Paul Dickson

I read your request for memories of locations etc on Thursday August 18, 1966 and feel I would like to share something with you and the others I haven't been willing to do outside of Bernie Erica and Damien McManus. I was fortunate that every letter I wrote to my parents my mother kept. She offered them to me earlier on in my life and I told her to destroy them, luckily she didn't and recently I read them again and have compiled a document with the letters and comments. The following are extracts from a letter dated August 19th 1966:

"Yesterday I returned from 10 and a ½ days in the donga.....the operation was codenamed Holdsworth and part of the operation was to pacify a village up the road about 8000 metres called Bihn Ba, treat the people with Doctors and leave a South Vietnamese Special Forces Commando unit in charge.....On the first day out.....the platoon to my left saw some Vietnamese and couldn't really tell what they were so they opened up with a machine gun.....our score was one dead baby and seriously wounded mother who took about ½ hour to die.....so we buried them and carried on.....that night we propped ourselves up against trees, soaking wet, and about 2:30am we arose and through pitch darkness made our way to the edge of the village.....other companies had surrounded the village.....We did the sweep.....the result was 17 VC and 77 suspected VC along with quite a number of deserters from the South Vietnamese Army.....the rest of the time we spent roaming around the bush.....one afternoon we moved into position for the night when 3 VC simply walked down a path.....one guy opened up with a rifle followed by a machine gunner.....the VC got away but one of our guys (Kennedy) was reliving his bowels over the path and wore it in the neck.....he died instantly.....yesterday on our return there was a tremendous concert, Col Joye and Little Pattie.....Col Joye came up to Battalion HQ and all of us at B Co decided to kidnap him, which we did and brought him to our canteen.....eventually the CO broke it up as the chopper was waiting to take him away"

The significant part of this letter is of course, the date. I was sent to B Co 5RAR because the LP guys normally stationed with B Co were ill and myself and Bernie Erica were to form the LP on the operation. They did this with us surveyors when we weren't otherwise occupied. The parts of the letter are self explanatory but what is not contained there is what happened on August 17 and 18 1966.

Perhaps the worst part of Kennedy's death was not that he was having a crap, rather that the jungle was so thick that there was no way the Medivac chopper could land and the area was now a hot spot. All they could do was to drop a stretcher, do a loop and come back and winch him out. However, they didn't want to hang around and just took off with him dangling and rotating on the end of the winch rope, one leg over the side.

The CO of B Co thought he knew where the VC or a North Vietnamese unit rumoured to be in the area was most likely located. This turned out to be the reason we were roaming around. On the morning after Kennedy's death the CO called us together and said he had worked out that the most likely place the VC would be was in the Long Tan area. He told Task Force HQ of his thoughts and intention to go there. From memory I think we actually started off in that direction but HQ called him and told him not to proceed. He was so keen to go there that he called them up 3 times requesting permission to go and each time they told him to hold. Eventually they informed him that a Company from 6RAR was headed that way and we should return to base, which thankfully we did. The rest is history.

I am not sorry that we didn't proceed there, I don't have a desire to be a hero, but if we had gone there it wouldn't have been with a better CO or bunch of guys.

Beau (John) Roberts

PS - To Dave Doyle, I wasn't with you for long at the water point LP but Robinson it ain't...'

Ed – I thought I'd insert my reply to Beau, because I appreciated the effort and thought that went into his submission – 'Beau, Thanks for being so humble with your email - it is not only of interest to me, but it will be to a whole range of people. I won't even start to guess at what it took for you to relate this story once more, but I'm so pleased you have. Deep down I'm finding not only what you have written, but what I get from a whole bunch of blokes that I don't/didn't know, thought I knew - or whatever, but am getting know to be bloody uplifting and I'm hoping by what I do is hopefully help a bunch of guys connect with a sense that we share something in common - mateship. I would now really like to get your profile - in your own time - to get to know you better and be able to share it with the rest. Thanks, Dicko'

- **Nick Proskurin recalls** the time like this –

'Yes Paul, I was going home from Kapooka in an Army bus to Sydney for a 4 day break from basic training. The news of the battle of Long Tan came over the radio, the whole bus cheered. Regards, Nick Pro'

- **Merv Nairn responds** from Vietnam, now, with more memories –

'G'day mate from Saigon (Sorry HCMC) - the reason for the confusion is that you have been asking about Thursday when I think you have meant the 18th, which is Tuesday I can tell you exactly what happened on the 18th, Firstly we were at the Col Joye / Little Patty show, during the show we noticed more & more groups of digs getting up & leaving in large groups. By the time we got back to our lines, mine at the time was bravo radar; the shit was really starting to hit the fan. I was instructed to take my vehicle and 1 other of our crew this being George Lane and go to the area where the choppers were dropping the resupply ammo for the guns of 103 battery, and continue to load it on the radar transport vehicles and carry it to the guns as they were on a fire mission battery and ammo had to be dropped up from Vung Tau. I vividly remember that we worked our asses off keeping the resupply up to the guns. I also remember that at the time we were running on pure adrenalin, when we finally got the stand down order we released the tension like a group of little kids we chased one another around the tents and dragged each other through the mud & puddles, It's amazing what grown, supposedly sane men in a situation will do in a situation like this. The upside of the situation is that (and I don't like to make light of the situation) is that as it was early days of the task force it finally gave us sufficient ammo boxes to put floors in our tents and some home-made furniture. I now have a mate in our sub branch who was D Company 6 RAR & every time he gets a few under his belt he comes to me & puts his arm around me & tells everyone that is willing to listen that I helped to save his life. Regards, Merv (Baldy) Nairn'

- **Warwick Brooker gets** involved from his prospective –

'Sorry Dicko, I overlooked this somehow -- dementia setting in. This'll be short and sweet:

On Thursday 18 Aug 1966 I was busily employed in the Bank of New South Wales' Mount Isa branch. I had received the official brown envelope and would have been into the last few weeks of Mt Isa life before heading to Brisbane for some time with my parents before setting off on the adventure of a lifetime. Brookey'

- **David Doyle has some** vivid memories –

'Dicko, My LP was attached to B coy 5RAR we were hot extracted out of the "J" on that day. We had a shower shave and all those things that one does after being in the "J" for three weeks. Jumped in our wagon and went down to the show as you could hear it all over the Task Force. I captured Col Joye and Judy stone at gun point of course and took them back to B coy lines and told that they had to sing for their supper. They appreciated our hospitality as the gun battery had started to engage the enemy and artillery was flying everywhere. David Doyle.'

- **Paul Dickson scratches his head** along these lines with his memory –

'18/8/66 was a Thursday, I was in Holsworthy and it could have been a pay day, having arrived there in late July. It did bring and continues to bring home of what it was all about.'

- **Bob Billiards has come** in with an honest assessment –

'Paul, I have to say that I have no idea what I was actually doing on the date of the Long Than battle. I only heard about it when I was at recruit training at Pucka as there was a tankie there who was in one of the APC's sent to support the grunts. I also have no photos of the ceremonies for the day as I was actually skiing at Thredbo and on Sunday AM totally forgot about the celebrations in Canberra as I was staying at my eldest son's house down there. Regards, Bob.'

- **Bill Finlay succumbed** to some nagging and supplied the following –

'Hi Paul, your persistence can no longer be ignored; here is my story of 18 Aug 1966.

The night of the 17th was the departure eve of Capt Jim Townly the first TFAIO, who was replaced by Capt Barry (Yogi) Campton. We had a farewell barbie for Jim that night, at which I had rather overdone the consumption of beers and went to bed under the weather so to speak. Meanwhile the VC were setting up their mortars and recoilless rifles to make life uncomfortable for the task force. This was a devious plan to draw out the Aussies who were sure to investigate the area from which the fire originated. The VC had noted this reaction and were preparing for the expected response, the battle of Long Tan was the result.

I was blissfully unaware of the attack, snored on through the whole thing. In the morning when I found out what had occurred the previous evening I was rather shocked to say the least, anyway off I went to carry out crater analysis in the Engineers area where most of the mortar rounds had impacted. The ground was soft and the craters were easy to read and grid references were established (locreps), none were provided by the useless Radars during the attack the night before. CB fire was directed at targets from the CB fire plan. This plan was developed by the TFAIO and me earlier, not long after the Occupation of the Task Force Base. I found out later in the day that we had actually hit a recoilless rifle position with CB fire and as no rounds of this type impacted the TF area I can only assume they were hit before they

could get any rounds off. Maybe they would have landed on a tent containing a certain Sgt Finlay sleeping the night away.

I will never forget the carnage caused by one round that impacted at the corner post of an 11x11 tent in which slept an Engineer Officer who was too lazy or dumb to have a sandbag wall around the tent. The tent pole resembled the letter J the blood and gore was splattered all over the place. I do not know who he was or whether he survived or not.

I delivered my report to Arty Tac and the info was passed to D Coy. I then set off to visit the LP's to see how they were all coping etc.

I was in the Bty area when the battle commenced and was called upon to deliver ammunition to the gun bays, as was every other person available, cooks, drivers, orderly room wallahs, the lot. I then realised that my proper place was at Arty Tac and saw out the rest of the day listening to the drama unfold over the Regimental Radio Net. As Arty Int we had little to contribute at that point as there was no use of mortars by the VC during the battle. The background noise when the FO was directing the fire was unforgettable.

This is the first time I have written an account of my involvement in the Battle of Long Tan, I hope you and your readers find something interesting in it. Bill Finlay, ex Cracker Minor, Det 131 Div Loc Bty 1ATF.'

- **Brian Kilworth** being another one of the guys who helped establish our presence in that part of the world puts more deep meaning to the actual day –

'Dicko, During our tour us poor surveyors didn't have a permanent home as such; we were scattered all over the place and came together when an operation required survey. I did time with both radars, a couple of LP's and a stint with the Corp of Surveyor assisting in topographical survey of the Province.

18/08/66. I was attached at the time to Fred Lennon's radar (A or B?). We had been mortared the night before; I with Laurie Gallop spent hours in a water filled weapon pit.

On the morning of the 18th, I was still hoping my waterlogged boots would dry out before the Col Joye/Little Pattie concert. I attended the early afternoon concert. Col Joye sang "Mama"; "Who's the one who shed a tear as you walked down the aisle with your future bride...it was Mama". Never heard the song again until many years later; I then cried!

Back to the tent lines where I again took the bloody boots off to dry.

The shit hit the fan; every artillery piece that could spit out a shell was ripping. Panic and yelling for help from 104 Battery adjoining us. All hands to the pump; breaking out stored ammo, chaos, Landrovers trying to run you over and that torrential rain!

One of the Gun Sgts. said to me, "Fuck off and get some boots on or you'll lose your feet". Pretty smart - I'd turned up to a war with no boots! Running back to get the boots lightning struck radio antennae and blew me over. Felt rather stupid really!

The guns went all night nonstop.

Next morning the stories came - D Company 6RAR. All the infantry guys from my boot camp went to 6RAR, and a lot were involved that night.

I always remembered on my first day of National Service (30/6/65) leaving Central station for Kapooka - on the platform one guy I observed had his girlfriend and a huge family group to farewell him. Talking to him at Kapooka he told me that he was a Pom whose family migrated looking for a better life to raise a family. He married his girlfriend before leaving for SVN with her expecting their child.

Jack Jewry now lay dead in a land a long way from home. It just didn't seem fair!

Anyway, Dicko I've finally got it to you...sorry about the ramblings! Brian Killworth (Killa)'

Ed – again like Beau Roberts I've added my reply in appreciation for a deep felt submission – 'Brian, After drawing a deep breath I can reply. Don't you ever apologise to me or anyone about your 'ramblings'. I found what you've written not only came from your heart but will go directly to others' hearts. I'm proud to include this in the Long Tan edition, and it will make even more meaningful. Dicko.'

- **Cornell, David** has a tale that is fascinating with a twist -

'On a personal note I arrived in Vietnam at the beginning of August '66 as a replacement (Tom Checkley had died accidentally). After ten days at Vung Tau arrived at Nui Dat to a radar between 105 Bty (??) and the engineers water point, the very route the Viets were to take on their way to Task Force Headquarters if they weren't intercepted at Long Tan – so we were all very lucky that evening. Not so, for so many of our infantry comrades who didn't make it home that night and made the ultimate sacrifice – I for one am forever grateful. '

. Long Tan Day – 18 August, a few years ago...

- **Ian Amos comes in with –**

'Paul, A bit of trivia for you. A few years ago Geoff Holden and I went to Pandanus Park, the veterans' retreat north of Cooktown, for Long Tan day. We were at the service on the day when we recognised Pablo standing nearby. He had been working on Cape York and was passing by. Hadn't seen him since 1968. Can't go anywhere without bumping somebody, even in the wilderness!! Ian'

. ANZAC DAY 2008 – LONG TAN

- **Leigh Hemming** was fortunate enough to be at the Long Tan site for ANZAC Day 2008 with his wife Barbara and daughter Ainsley and submits this -

'After encouragement from my daughter, Ainsley, who had travelled to Vietnam several years before, I decided that it would be a good idea to visit this country again.

As years have gone by I have become more disillusioned with what happened to those of us who served in Vietnam and about the reasons why we served there. I won't of course go there as this is meant to be about Long Tan.

From memory I believe I was in the middle of a BE course at Cunungra on that fateful day back in 1966. Like all other Vietnam Veterans this day has come to signify the day means the most about what Vietnam was for all of us. Of course it will mean a lot more to those who were involved in that historic battle.

Taking all of those meanings together I thought it would be very significant to attend the dawn service on ANZAC Day at Long Tan.

My wife Barb, Ainsley and I made arrangements to travel to Vietnam to coincide with ANZAC day. Our arrival date was 20th April 2008 which, as all of you who were in the fourth intake will know, is the day that we had to report to our RCB's in 1966. So forty two years later it was the day we arrived in Vietnam. So to me it was very significant.

After spending a few days in Ho Chi Minh City we toured the Mekong Delta region before heading to Vung Tau to overnight prior to travelling to Long Tan for dawn service on ANZAC Day.

The service was conducted by the Australian military attaché and the Australian Ambassador to Vietnam. It was for me a very surreal feeling to be at the memorial that morning and to remember those who had died in there all of those years ago. Of course at the top of my thoughts were our own Jimmy Menz and other friends of mine who made the sacrifice. After the service we spent some time at Nui Dat where so many memories and names of those who served there during 1967 came flooding back. To stand at the end of the runway and to look up at "The Hill" where I spent some time at 31A was very special. Unfortunately we were not allowed to travel to the top of the hill as to this day it is still used as a lookout by the Vietnamese Army.

To once again witness these areas of Long Tan, Nui Dat, Baria, Vung Tau and others was very therapeutic for me but was I saddened to learn of the hardships that the Vietnamese people have had to endure up until not so long ago as a result of the "American War" as they call it.

It is even sadder to think about all of those lives on both sides that were sacrificed on the whim of politicians. I note nothing much has changed and the lessons have still not been learned.

I have enclosed a couple of photos for those who have not been back there.'



The Long Tan Memorial

Rubber Plantation – Long Tan

. Long Tan Day – Tuesday 18 August, 2009...

- **Warwick Brooker attended** the memorial service in Canberra and reports –

'OK Dicko, here we go... I attended the 2009 Remembrance Service at the Vietnam Memorial in Anzac Parade. There seemed to be reasonable attendance, but I couldn't really judge that, as I haven't attended before.

The introduction and welcome were made by Pete Ryan, President Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia, ACT Branch, 9 SQN RAAF 1968-69.

PM Kevin Rudd was there; so after eight years in Canberra, I've finally seen him in the flesh. The Hunter Valley Locators' claim that K07 looks like me is untrue: he's not nearly as debonair as I am.

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC and Mr Michael Bryce attended; also immediate past G-G Major General Michael Jeffery. Some very senior military figures attended, including Air Chief Marshal Allan (Angus) Houston, Lt Gen Ken Gillespie and... yours truly (retd).



43rd anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. The Chief of Army Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, AO, DSC, CSM lays a wreath at the 43rd Anniversary of the battle of Long tan.

The PM unveiled a new plaque for Pte David Fisher on the Fisher / Gillespie MIA seat.

There were addresses by PM Rudd and David Lewis 3 Sqn SAS 1969-70. David Lewis made special and very serious note at the end of his address that MIAs who are returned to Australia do **NOT** qualify for the Returned from Active Service Badge.

Honour Roll reading: David Sabben 6 RAR 1966-67 and Allan Birch 161 Bty RNZA 1966-67 read the names of a representative group who paid the supreme sacrifice in the Vietnam War.

Following the service, I enjoyed lunch and tonic with other members of the Vietnam Veterans' Federation at the Hellenic Club, Woden. Brookey'

- **Steve Boutlis did us proud** in Maroochydore –

'Hi, Dicko 18th August 1966. Where was I? F'd if I can remember! I checked my medical docks and found that I was at Cunungra at end of July that year, so I had to have been at Holsworthy or doing the Advanced Survey course at North Head. My pay book shows that the 18th was a payday and a Private E. Benbow had authorised the sum of \$53.60 be paid to me as my fortnight's wages and Squiggles was the person who paid me.

This 18th August, I went to my very first Vietnam Veterans' Day commemoration service and lunch. I am a member of the Sunshine Coast Sub Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, as is Barry (Nuge) Nugent. Our sub branch was the host for the day and the lunch was held at the beautiful Maroochy RSL club.

I enjoyed the day even more as my wife Fran, (who is not one for military ceremonies) came with me, and Nuge, Brian (Wirey) Hackett and Kenny (Macka) MacNamara graced us with their company. It was an enormous pleasure to be in their company, particularly as this was only the second time that I had seen Wirey since 1967 and the lads had made such a big effort, travelling big distances to get here. They had arrived on the Sunday and we met up in their unit for drinkies on the Monday arvo.

The ceremony at the Cotton Tree Cenotaph went off without a blemish, (even though the base drummer didn't show). The march from the swimming pool to the cenotaph (about 400m), had Macka puffing and it showed how well ingrained our military training has been with only one Digger that I could see being out of step. Not one square-gaiter!!! We of course, brought up the rear, making sure that we could cover the flanks and the head of the column in case of ambush.

From the cenotaph to the RSL is a hop and jump (longer when you listened to the retired surveyor who hadn't reckied the shortcut recently).

Drinkies were included in the lunch cost prior to and during lunch but the pre-lunch bar was so crowded and Macka and Nuge were so thirsty that we retired to the downstairs lounge and bought our own.

Those who were served the roast were a bit short on the meat component as the bull got up and went before it was properly butchered. The ale and vino flowed freely and the mood progressively mellowed.

Many recollections were shared and a few tales spun around the dinner table. Our group continued its camaraderie after lunch with a few more ales in the downstairs lounge.

Surprise, surprise, Macka laid a few bets and I made a contribution to the "Community Facilities Improvement Fund" (pokies!).

The attached photos show how well the lads scrub up and that Macka still plays with himself in public!!!! Cheers, Boots.'



- **Geoff Blackwell replied to an Ed** email with the following which is part of the full story - the complete email will be in the Sept E&E's - this extract I thought was relevant and worth having here –

'Hi Dicko, I have just returned from a holiday on Lord Howe Island. It's a rare place, just 300 people living there, 2 Viet Vets, one from 131. Garth Nichols - He was one of the reo's at Andersen after Jimmy Menz got killed. Garth and I had a bit of a session at the local club on Long Tan Day in memory of the boys. I should have taken pictures but I think I am more a drinker than a photographer. Both he and his wife Sue showed us fantastic hospitality while we were there, yet I hardly knew him. This army bond thing and the 131 unit in particular, is unreal when you think about it. Regards, Geoff'

- **Marv Nairn gives us** a report from the heart –

'G'day Paul,

We have been pretty busy over here going on tours & such but got a few minutes to spare and a computer available so thought I would drop a note.

Long Tan day for us started with the usual lazy breakfast at Belly's Bar after which we returned to our hotel to get ready for the afternoon. Lunch at Belly's starting at 11.30am. & Belly did us proud with a great buffet lunch of course with something to wash it down. 1400hrs. on to 2 air conditioned coaches wearing our Long Tan shirts belly had made for us with the proceeds going to the kindergartens & orphanages. Arrived at Long Tan about 1500hrs with the service to start at 1530hrs (to coincide with the beginning of the battle) To just walk into that area at this time on this day was something to experience, a shiver ran down my spine and the hair on the back of my neck stood to attention and your mind just went back 43 years. The service was MC'd by Colonel Stuart Dodds who is the Australian Military Attaché to Vietnam, I must be showing my age to me he looked like a young 2nd. Lieutenant. It was attended by Mr. Graham Swift the

Australian Consul-General, Mr. Allaster Cox the Australian Ambassador and Mr. Graham Sims the New Zealand Consul-General as well as local dignitaries. All of the Australian and New Zealand dignitaries had an active role in the service by presenting the addresses and the prayers; the honour roll was read by Colonel Dodds. In total I would estimate the crowd to be around 300. Included at the service was one of the original "D" Company guys who was presented to the crowd before the service and also a contingent of the current "D" Company who are off to Afghanistan in the new year. The service was very moving and the tear ducts certainly got washed out. It's taken me 43 years to come back here and I wouldn't have missed it for the world and to be able to do it and be there at this special time and place made it even better. Merv (Baldy) Nairn



Myself and Ged Carroll at the cross,



The wreath laying ceremony and the cross after wreath laying.



The boys in red shirts are the current D Company contingent.

A poignant close...

- **Ernie Newbold adds** a nostalgic photo (below) taken by him and comment to make –
 'G'day Paul, In regards to your Long Tan commemoration / memorial special the following is an image based on a photograph taken in August 1967, approximately 12 months after the battle (I can't be sure of the exact date that it was taken) . The photograph was taken from the L.P. 31A on top of Nui Dat just after sunrise, looking towards Long Tan. The rays of the rising sun appear to be shining down through a hole in clouds onto the area around Long Tan, just to the south of Nui Dat 2. The significance of this image only occurred to me in recent years after reading various accounts of the battle. If you would like to include this image in your special edition then please feel free to do so.
 Regards, Ernie.'



HOLE IN THE SKY OVER LONG TAN - AUGUST 1967

Ed adds his thanks to the guys who submitted information re:
'18/08/66 - Where were you?'
 I hope the rest of you will find it as enlightening as I have.