

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

August 2023 Edition



1 Commerce Ave, Armadale, WA 6112
PO Box 697, Armadale, WA 6992

Ph: (08) 9497 1972

email: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

Website: www.armadalersl.com.au

Social media: [Facebook](#)

General Meetings: Second Sunday of the month at 1030hrs
Annual General Meeting: Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armadale Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Ken Hepburn
Vice President	Mr Hans van de Velde
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Assistant Secretary	Mr Mike Fairweather
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Assistant Treasurer	Vacant
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Mr Bob Giles
Membership Officer	Mr Tom Rynn
Committee	Mr Laurie Sargeson
Committee	Mr Keith Northcott
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE REPORT

(ERRO)

I currently am available as follows:

Operating out of RAAFA: Mondays and Fridays

between 0900 – 1230hrs and also at

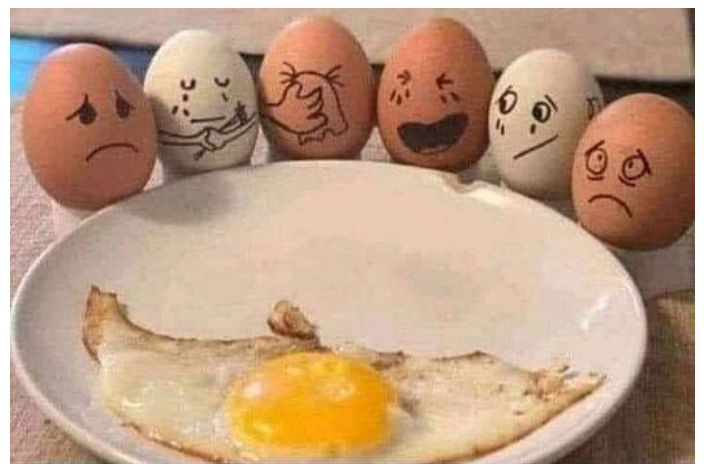
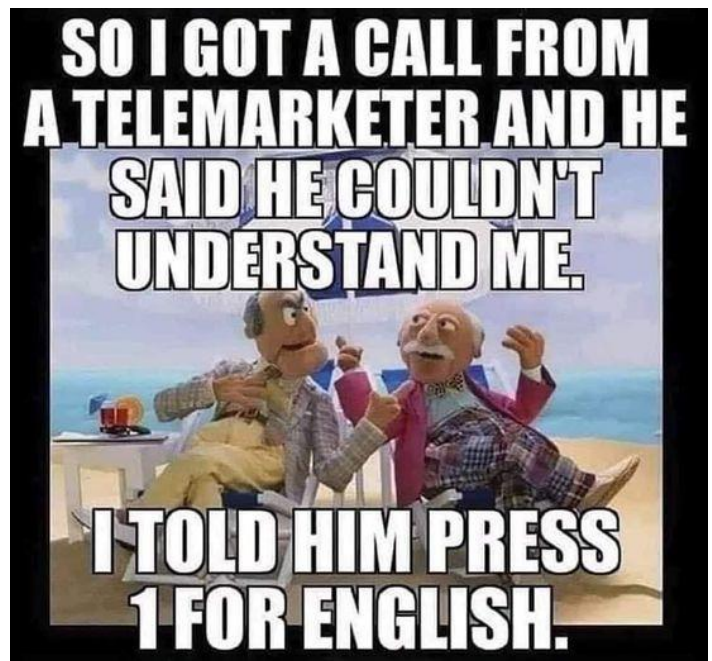
Armadale RSL Sub-Branch between 0900-1400hrs on Thursdays

Contact Details: *Mobile: 0407 449 150*

e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for August

Day	Date	Event	Time
Sunday	6 th	Social Committee Meeting	1100
Tuesday	8 th	Management Committee Meeting	1830
Sunday	13 th	General Meeting	1030



He died last fry day. Thank God he wasn't beaten. Don't worry, he went over easy. He's now on the sunny side. He's definitely in a better plate.

Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

We've had another busy month with a very successful Quiz Night being conducted. Our sincere appreciation to Lois and her team for their efforts in the lead up to, and on the night.

The new Sub-Branch By Laws which were handed out at the GM in July will be passed at the upcoming General Meeting. This is required before we formally close down Club Inc.

We have now received the approval documentation from the City of Armadale approving the Sub-Branch to hold the Liquor License, so the next step of closing Club Inc. is now imminent.

The Annual General Meeting in September will be conducted in accordance with the updated Sub-Branch By Laws. The positions of President and Treasurer will be declared vacant. Nominations for these roles for a two (2) year period will be available on the Board during this month. Vice President and Secretary are in the middle of their tenure and will remain in office until 2024.

Nominations for the six (6) Committee positions will be requested from the floor at the AGM and voted on if necessary.

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary

Went for a ride last night, but had a bit of engine trouble.



PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hi Folks,

The Sub-Branch will be holding an Afternoon Tea, on Friday 18th August 2023 for our Korean and Vietnam Veterans, to mark 70 years and 50 years since the end of hostilities. The Afternoon Tea will be start at 1500 hrs, (3 pm) for those who've forgotten the 24-hour clock. If you are attending, please let me know for catering purposes, my phone number is at the bottom of the page.

We held our Quiz Night on Saturday, 22nd July 2023 and it went very well, and I would like to thank the Committee and Social Committee for all their effects in setting up for the night, running the event and then restoring the club rooms back to their normal state. Certificates of Appreciation will be handed out to the 39 Businesses who Donated Goods and Services as Prizes for the night. Well done to Lois, who co-ordinated the Quiz Night.

Work is still ongoing around Armadale Station and is influencing parking being available and this will continue during the month.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be on Sunday 10th of September 2023. If interested in standing for a position on the committee, information will be available from the club rooms.

At the August General Meeting we will be passing the new Armadale Sub-Branch By-Laws.

Regards,

Ken Hepburn

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch
Ph: (08) 9497 1972. M: 0428 001 949

email: president@armadalersl.com.au
Website: www.armadalersl.com.au

Father's Day
Sunday 3rd September

Looking for a gift ?

***How about buying Dad a
ticket to our
Austen Tayshus
comedy afternoon to be held
in the RSL Hall on that day***

***Tickets now on Sale
from the Bar for only
\$25 each***

**A bear walks into a
bar and says, "Give me
a whiskey and...cola."**

**"Why the big pause?" asks
the bartender. The bear
shrugged. "I'm not sure;
I was born with them."**



ANGRY MESSIAH PRESENTS
40th ANNIVERSARY OF
"AUSTRALIANA"
NATIONAL TOUR 2023

**AUSTEN
TAYSHUS**

NEW DOCUMENTARY

**"AUSTEN TAYSHUS
SKIN IN THE GAME"**

Now streaming on FOXDOCOS & BINGE

www.austentayshus.com

Father's Day - Sunday 3rd September, 2023

2:00pm

Tickets: \$25.00 each (Available from the Bar)

What do you call a large, amphibious invasion by the Australian military?

G-Day

The difference between "guts" and "balls" according to the British military.

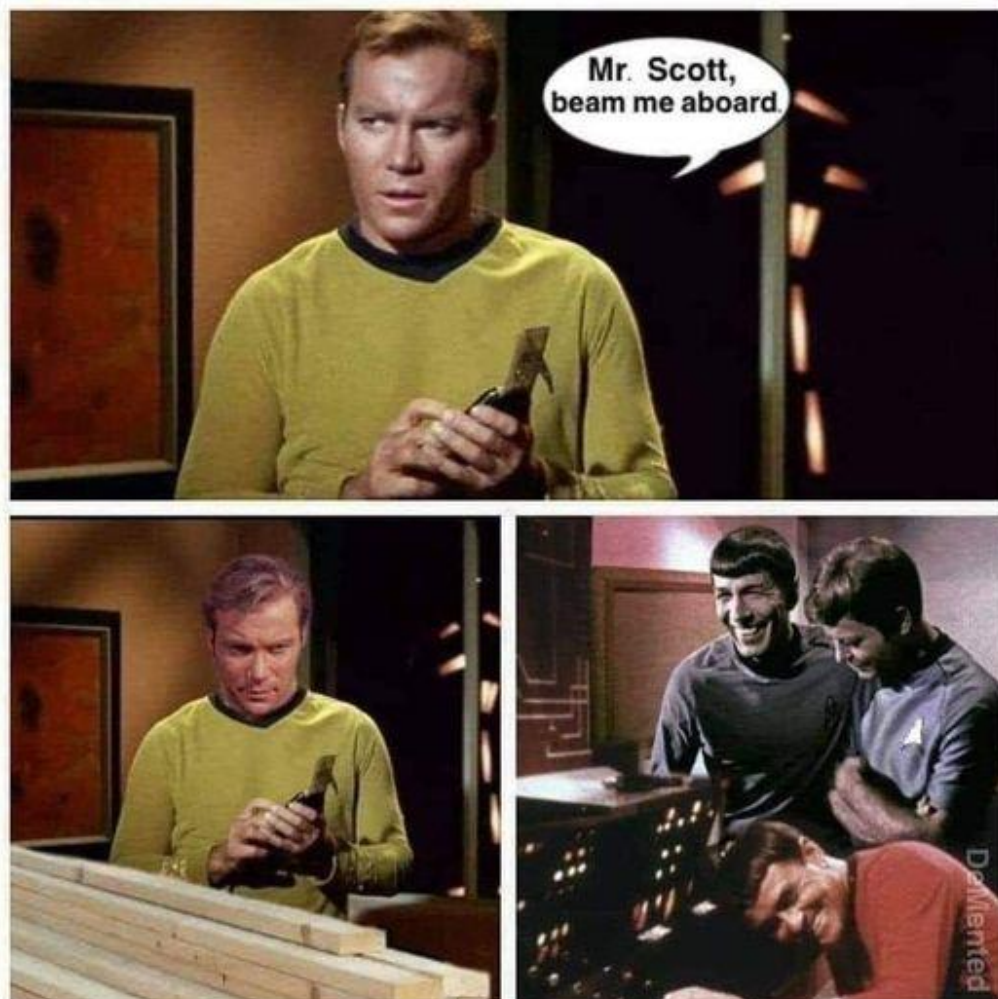
There is a medical distinction between "Guts" and "Balls", according to the British military. We've heard colleagues referring to people with "Guts", or with "Balls".

Do they, however, know the difference between them? Here's the official distinction; straight from the British Medical Journal: Volume 323; page 295.

GUTS - Is arriving home late, after a night out with the lads, being met by your wife with a broom, and having the "Guts" to ask: "Are you still cleaning, or are you flying somewhere?"

BALLS - Is coming home late after a night out with the lads, smelling of perfume and beer, lipstick on your collar, slapping your wife on the bum and having the "Balls" to say: 'You're next, Chubby.'

Medically speaking, there is no difference in outcome; both are fatal.



Membership Update

as at 31st July, 2023

Service Members: 178

Affiliate Members: 44

Social Members: 62

Total: 284

SNAPSHOT OF MEMBERSHIP CHANGES SINCE 2015

<i>Year Ending</i>	<i>Service Members</i>	<i>Affiliate Members</i>	<i>Social Members</i>	<i>Combined Total</i>
2015	275	132	45	452
2016	266	137	46	449
2017	251	122	51	424
2018	237	130	61	428
2019	234	101	56	391
2020	199	70	53	322
2021	223	59	53	335
2022	196	44	50	290

Please contact me for any information on membership.

Tom Rynn

Membership Officer: Mobile:

0439 934 285

E-mail:

tomrynn@bigpond.com



August Service Members:

Armin-Grimm	Mr	Roland	02/08
Briggs	Mr	Mark	15/08
Buti	Mr	Antonio	20/08
Curry	Mr	Robert	06/08
Devries	Mr	Christopher	15/08
Gardiner	Mr	Owen	27/08
Knight	Mr	Michael	09/08
Livesey	Mr	Adam	05/08
McDonnell	Mr	Graeme	04/08
Rynn	Mr	Thomas	31/08
Smith	Mr	Paul	09/08
Smith	Mr	Robert	20/08
Tooth	Mr	Geoffrey	11/08

August Affiliate Members:

Galvin	Mrs	Joan	18/08
Kostin	Ms	Vicki	12/08
Lewis	Mr	Steve	29/08
Symonds	Mrs	Karan	28/08

August Social Members:

Borger	Mr	Hank	06/08
Craven	Mr	Vince	02/08
Gunjila	Mr	Stjepan	19/08
Oates	Mr	Simon	08/08
Ryan	Mr	Daniel	15/08
Thornton	Mr	David	20/08

*If anyone has been missed off the list, please advise
Tom Rynn (Membership Officer)*

*These members may collect a free drink of their choice
during the month*

We hope you have a very special Birthday

Bar Manager's Report

G'day All,

Another month has gone by and we are getting closer to the closing of Club Inc.

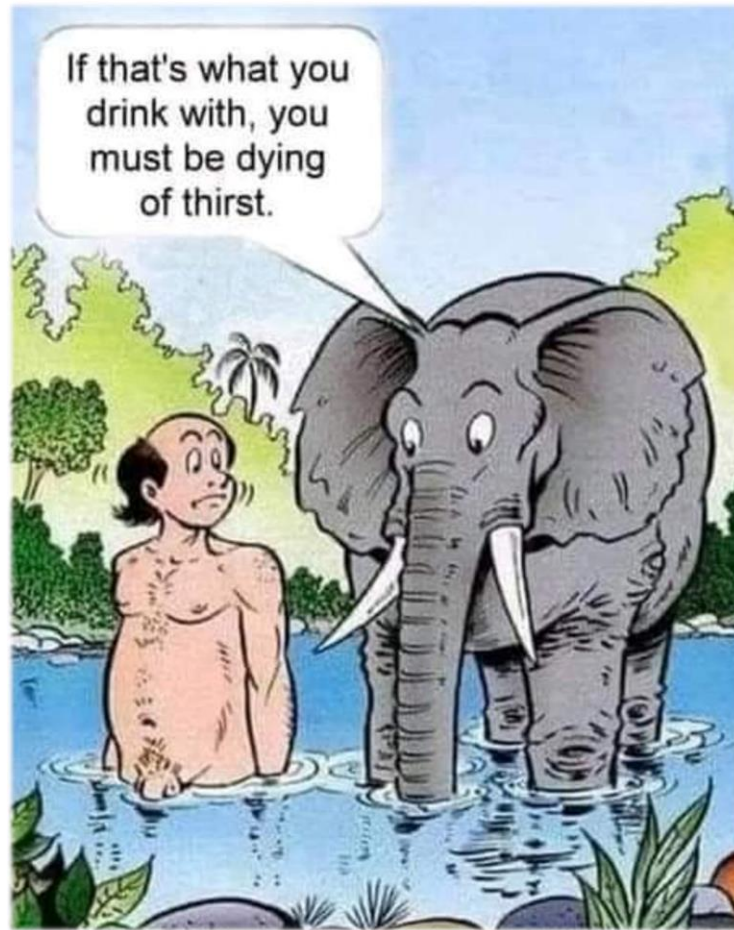
The Bar is holding its own at the moment and the new Price rise from C.U.B and Lion will be effective from 1st August which unfortunately will necessitate increases in our prices.

Cheers,

Stormy



The Miles M.39B Libellula, a distinctive twin-fuselage, tandem-wing aircraft, originated in the heart of World War II. The brainchild of British aviation engineer and designer Frederick George Miles



When a 75mm isn't enough...



The M26 Pershing assembly line at the General Motors Grand Blanc tank plant in Michigan, 1945.

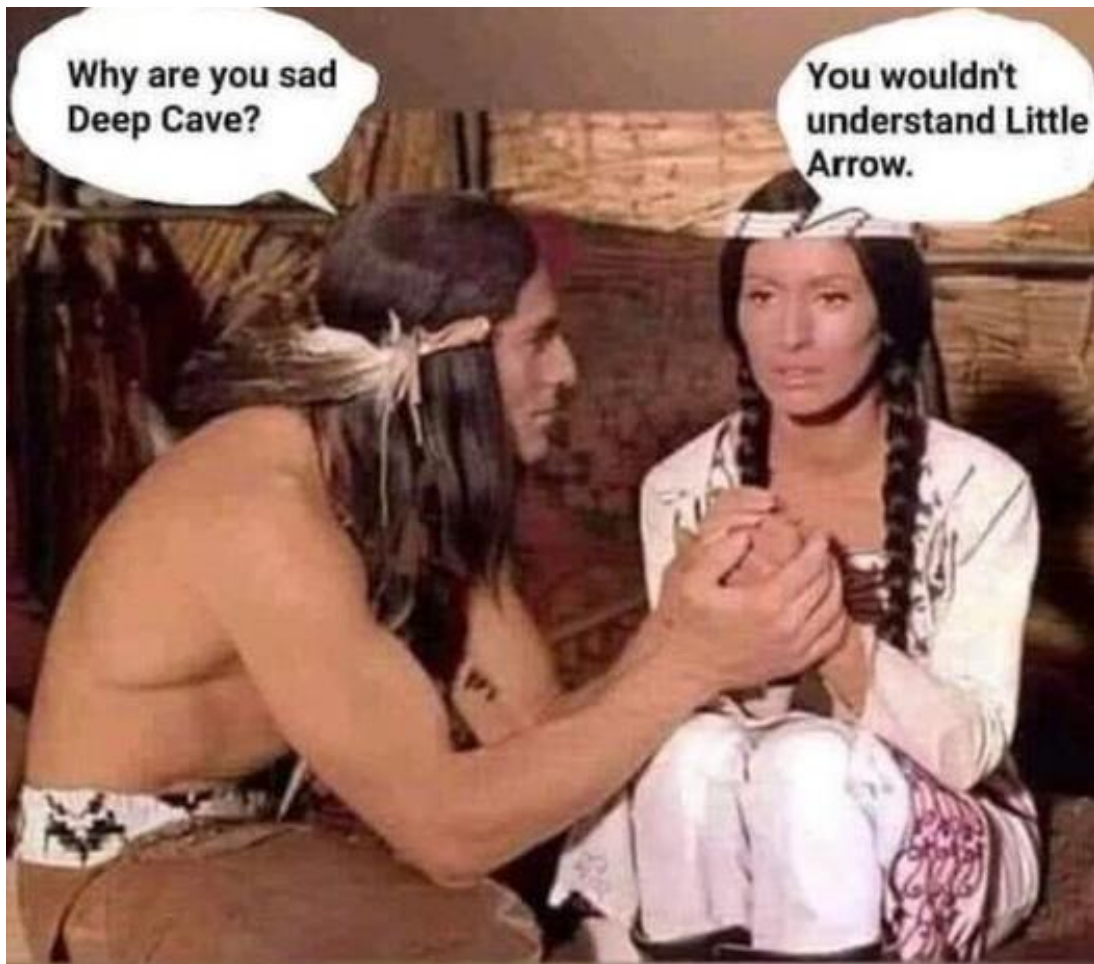


Happy birthday to Bruce Nelson who was born in Guildford, Western Australia (WA), 100 years ago. Bruce was working as an apprentice butcher when he enlisted in the Australian Army during the Second World War in Claremont, WA, on 18 December 1941. He commenced fulltime duty with the Militia (CMF) five days later with the 9th Auxiliary Horse Transport.

In October 1942, Bruce volunteered to transfer to the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and was posted as a driver to the 124th Australian General Transport Company, which was part of the Australian Army Service Corps and was involved in delivering supplies and equipment to military camps in WA.

Bruce discharged from the AIF in June 1946. He continued in the meat industry and became the owner of a large meat business with many shops and staff.

In 1950, Bruce married Gwynneth and they had two daughters. Sadly, Gwynneth passed away in 2019. Bruce enjoys watching football and going out for drives and lunches. He credits his long life to keeping his mind active.



Byford Rail Extension - Update



Planning submissions relating to the new Armadale Station and associated area are now available on line for those who are interested in viewing them.

Car Park line marking has been delayed due to inclement weather however it is expected this will be completed and the parking area open within the next week.

A reminder that there may be a small charge of \$2.00 on a Friday afternoon if you choose to park in that area however weekends are free.

Significant August Event

The Battle of Long Tan

The battle of Long Tan was Australia's most costly battle in Vietnam.

Australian soldiers fought in scores of fierce actions during the war in Vietnam. Few were as intense or dramatic as the action in the Long Tan rubber plantation on 18 August 1966. An isolated infantry company of 108 men, cut off and outnumbered by at least ten to one, withstood massed Viet Cong attacks for three hours. They suffered the heaviest Australian casualties in a single engagement in Vietnam, but prevailed against the odds. Their valiant stand became a defining action of the war.

In the early hours of 17 August, the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat was shaken without warning by enemy mortar and recoilless rifle fire. The bombardment lasted just 22 minutes but it left 24 soldiers wounded and raised fears that it could be a prelude to a full-scale enemy attack on the base, established in the heart of Phuoc Tuy province just two months earlier.



Official war artist Bruce Fletcher compressed some aspects in time and embellished others: the ammunition re-supply was free-dropped from helicopters, not delivered by slung load; and the armoured personnel carriers did not use their headlights in the initial assault

No attack followed. At dawn, rifle companies of 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) were sent out to search for the enemy. Soldiers of B Company located the mortar base plate positions and followed several enemy tracks, but they encountered no Viet Cong. The search continued, although the threat now seemed to have passed. Companies harboured overnight in their search areas and the next day B Company sent 48 men, who were due for leave, back to the base where a visiting Australian concert party with Col Joye and Little Pattie was due to perform.

D Company was next ordered out to search and left the base at 11 am on 18 August. Company commander Major Harry Smith recalled that he and his men were “not real happy at missing the concert” as they pushed through tall grass to the sound of the music from the base (as reported in Wartime Issue 35). The enemy, estimated to be a heavy weapons platoon of the local D445 Battalion, numbering some 30 to 40 men, was by now “thought long gone”. D Company relieved B Company at about 1pm at the edge of the Long Tan rubber plantation, 2,500 metres east of Nui Dat. After inspecting the area and a quick meal of combat rations, D Company entered the rubber plantation at about 3 pm to search eastwards. “We did not expect action,” Smith recalled, “but nevertheless, we set off in two-up formation, widely dispersed, alert, watching for the enemy.”

What Smith and his soldiers did not know was that the task force headquarters signals intelligence unit, 547 Signal Troop, had been monitoring the transmissions of a radio set belonging to the Viet Cong 275 Regiment. This highly classified signals intelligence was restricted to operations and intelligence officers and the task force commander. For the past two weeks, tracking by radio direction-finding had indicated that the radio—and with it presumably the enemy main force formation—was approaching Nui Dat from the east, advancing a kilometre every day. The transmissions had apparently ceased on 14 August, when the radio was near the Nui Dat 2 hill feature, 5,000 metres east of the task force base. Earlier patrols sent out to investigate had found no signs of the enemy in the region. Now D Company was patrolling towards the same area.

At around 3.40 pm rifle platoons had their first fleeting contacts with scattered groups of enemy. The enemy uniforms, equipment and weapons, including AK47 assault rifles, should have warned the Australians they were enemy main force soldiers, not local guerrillas, but at first “the penny didn’t drop”, Smith said.

Contacts increased rapidly and it was soon obvious that the Australians were facing a large enemy main force regiment. The Australians were used to short, sharp enemy actions in which local guerrillas quickly struck, then slipped away. But the enemy were standing and fighting, not avoiding contact, and they were massing for attack with large volumes of fire.

11 Platoon was almost surrounded and pinned down by heavy RPG and automatic weapons fire from an estimated company strength force of Viet Cong. At about this time, the monsoon broke and the battle continued through a torrential downpour. Within 20 minutes, the platoon commander and one-third of his platoon of 28 men were killed or wounded. The survivors were forced to pull back and rejoin the other platoons who were also fighting off heavy enemy attacks and manoeuvring to counter enemy flanking movements.

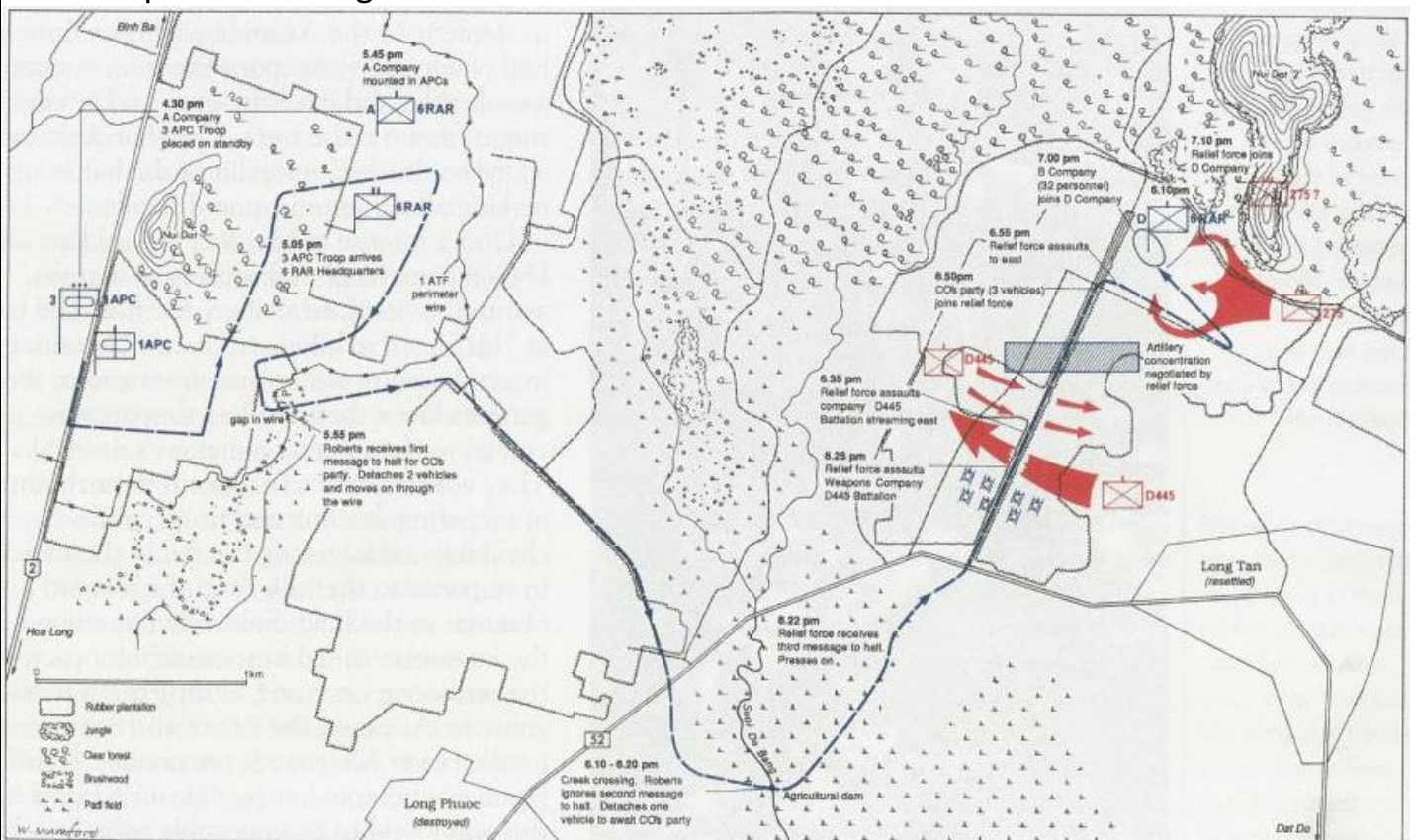
As the enemy continued to press their attacks, the dispersed platoons called in artillery fire support but communications were impeded as their radios were hit and damaged by enemy fire. One soldier ran forward to 10 Platoon under heavy enemy fire carrying a spare radio.



A wounded Viet Cong prisoner, one of three found on the battlefield after D Company 6RAR returned to the Long Tan rubber plantation is questioned by 6RAR intelligence officer Captain Bryan Wickens, with the help of a Vietnamese interpreter

Major Smith managed to draw his platoons together and organise his force into a defensive perimeter around the company headquarters. Soldiers went to ground there and withstood repeated enemy attacks, including massed human-wave assaults. They held firm and controlled their fire, taking a steady toll of the assaulting enemy. Any movement by the Australians drew a furious hail of automatic weapons fire from enemy assault rifles and machine-guns and enemy sniper fire from the trees. The thunderstorm added to the deafening din of the battle, making all communication difficult.

Under intense enemy fire, the soldiers of D Company fought off successive assaults, assisted by accurate artillery fire from the base at Nui Dat five kilometres away. Labouring in acrid cordite smoke and driving rain, the gunners knew their artillery support was crucial to the infantry company's survival. They worked hard to maintain their rhythm of preparing, loading and firing while checking and adjusting the fall of their shells in response to the calls from the forward observer in the field. Soldiers from around the base were called in to assist in unpacking the artillery rounds and feeding them to the gunners. At times, the fire of all 18 guns totalled over 100 rounds per minute. Fighter-bombers attempted to provide air support but this was found to be impossible owing to the low cloud cover and the thunderstorm.



Progress of the relief force from Nui Dat to the besieged D Company in the Long Tan rubber plantation

Meanwhile the soldiers of the besieged D Company fell back on their training and teamwork. Men know what they had to do and were sure from their training of what their mates alongside them were doing, and so worked together as a unit.

As each wave of Viet Cong came forward they fired as a team, providing covering fire for each other. One soldier recalled:

A solid line of them—it looked like hundreds—would suddenly rush us. The artillery would burst right in the middle of them and there would be bodies all over the place. The survivors would dive for cover beside these bodies, wait for the next attacking line, get up and leap over the dead to resume the rush. They were inching forward all the time over their piles of dead.

Radio messages from D Company, recorded in the 6RAR log at Nui Dat, conveyed the company's increasingly desperate situation:

4.26 pm "Being mortared . . . Want all artillery possible."

4.31 pm "Enemy [on] left flank. Could be serious."

5.01 pm "Enemy ...penetrating both flanks and to north and south."

5.02 pm "Running short of ammo. Require drop through trees."

With soldiers almost out of ammunition, the artillery briefly halted fire while RAAF helicopter crews flew a daring resupply mission. At 6 pm two RAAF helicopters succeeded in dropping boxes of ammunition to the company while hovering at tree-top level, despite the heavy downpour and the risks from enemy ground fire.

Company sergeant major Warrant Officer "Big Jack" Kirby handled the distribution of the rounds to soldiers lying in the mud under constant enemy fire. Kirby was the mainstay of the defence and an inspiration to soldiers, his burly figure moving among the men as he distributed ammunition, organised the collection of the wounded, encouraged soldiers and even joked with them on occasion. At one stage, when the enemy attempted to set up a heavy machine-gun post only 50 metres from the company perimeter, Kirby moved out and personally silenced the weapon by killing the crew.

The enemy continued to press their attack and soldiers began to wonder if the promised relief force would arrive in time. For over two hours they had been fighting a ferocious battle against overwhelming odds and they were now virtually surrounded by a determined and well-equipped combined Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army force estimated at over 2,000 men. At 6.20 pm, as daylight was fading, D Company radioed to the base: "Enemy could be reorganising to attack. Two platoons are about 75 per cent effective. One platoon has been almost completely destroyed. [We] are reorganising for all-round defence."

Annihilation seemed imminent. Then, just before 7 pm, as the enemy were apparently forming up for a final assault, the relief company of infantry, mounted in armoured personnel carriers, broke through the enemy lines and drove them off.

The battle ended and the monsoonal storm abated, as suddenly as both began. "All firing ceased as though the tap was turned off," Major Smith recalled. Under cover of darkness, the Australian units withdrew and regrouped while the dead and wounded

were evacuated by helicopters. Soldiers spent a restless night as artillery and air strikes continued to pound the battle site and likely enemy withdrawal routes.

The next morning, a combined force of infantry and armoured personnel carriers went back into the battlefield to conduct a thorough clearance. For the men of D Company this was a harrowing experience. The rubber plantation was a scene of utter devastation and carnage. The bodies of the soldiers of 11 Platoon were found lying in their firing positions, still facing towards the enemy and eerily washed clean by overnight rain. Amid the sombre scene, soldiers were elated to find two of their mates earlier reported missing in action. The two men had been wounded but survived on the battlefield overnight. Soldiers also found three enemy wounded who were treated and evacuated.



On the morning after the battle, troops in a clearing in the rubber plantation of Long Tan examine some of the Viet Cong weapons captured by D Company, 6RAR, including rocket launchers, heavy machine-guns, recoilless rifles and scores of rifles and carbines

The grisly task of counting the enemy bodies was eventually halted at a total of 245. The dead were buried where they lay in shallow graves. There were signs that many more had been removed by the enemy as they withdrew during the night.

The bravery, tenacity and sacrifice of Australian and New Zealand soldiers at Long Tan was duly celebrated. They had won a legendary victory against odds of at least ten to one. D Company 6RAR was awarded a US Presidential Unit Citation and fifteen Commonwealth decorations were awarded to individual soldiers for their actions during the battle.

The Australians had inflicted heavy losses on Viet Cong forces but the cost was high: seventeen Australian soldiers were killed in action and 25 were wounded, one of whom died nine days later. The battle left one third of the Australian company dead or wounded, making Long Tan the army's most costly single engagement in Vietnam. Eleven of the dead were National Servicemen and seven were Regular Army soldiers: their average age was 21 years. Brigadier O.D. Jackson, commander of the 1st Australian Task Force, was impressed by the battle performance of D Company but he judged the outcome "a very close thing indeed". The effectiveness of the artillery support had proved crucial to the survival of the company and the relief force had arrived just in time.

Many questions remained about the enemy involved, their intentions and plans, and the outcome. It appeared that the battle of Long Tan had established the Australian task force's dominance in Phuoc Tuy province, but that dominance did not rest unchallenged. Over the following five years, aggressive Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces periodically threatened the peace and stability within the province and forced the task force to retaliate.

Long Tan remains a defining event in Australia's longest war. But it was not a pivotal battle as some have claimed. It was neither a turning point in the Vietnam War, nor was it a decisive victory. The Viet Cong units involved were damaged but not destroyed. They regrouped and continued their revolutionary struggle for nine more years until the armies of North Vietnam defeated the south in 1975.

Today, the veterans of D Company 6RAR guard the memory of their unit's bravery and sacrifice on 18 August 1966. This is understandable. The survivors among the original Anzacs who landed on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 did the same. Just as Anzac Day has grown in significance to become Australia's de facto national day, so too has Long Tan day become more inclusive. On Vietnam Veterans' Day, the recalling of a single battle on one afternoon in August 1966 now commemorates all Australians who took part in that long and divisive conflict.



Vietnam Veterans' Day - 18th August

On this day in 1966, in a rubber plantation near the village of Long Tan, Australian soldiers fought one of their fiercest battles of the Vietnam War. The battle saw D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, face an enemy force of over 2,000. Heavily outnumbered, D Company held fast for four hours, supported by accurate artillery fire from Nui Dat, before reinforcements arrived. The battle saw 18 killed, and was the largest loss of life on a single day for the Australians.

In 1969, D Company returned to Long Tan to erect a memorial cross and commemorate the battle. Over time, this day became synonymous with all those who served and died in the Vietnam War. In 1987, then Prime Minister Bob Hawke made this official, announcing that Long Tan Day would now be known as Vietnam Veterans' Day.

We continue to honour the service and sacrifice of all Vietnam veterans on this day. Approximately 60,000 Australians served in the Vietnam War. Of these, 3,000 were wounded, and 521 were killed.





**RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE
ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH**

Your RSL