



The People I meet.



Just the other day I was quietly relaxing under the overhead fan in my own backyard, with my dog at my side, enjoying the peace and quiet and keeping out of the direct sun in the boi haus. I had a nice cold drink and the radio on listening to the cricket and was really enjoying the anonymity one can only get while on one's own property.

Unbeknown to me, the lovely Cath Davis, who lives a few miles from me, had been sitting on her roof top keenly watching her charisma-search radar scope just waiting for the radar to detect a small wisp of Radtechitis she hoped would pop up sometime soon. Cath had been sitting in her bean bag up on the roof for some days and was nearly out of chicko rolls and hot cocoa when all of a sudden, the radar pipped, the screen went gold and the blue lights began to flash.

A contact!

This was the moment she had been waiting for, her trusty radar had indeed informed her there was Radtechitis somewhere in the open just north of Brisbane City and she was determined to

have some. She fed the co-ordinates obtained from her radar into the smart watch, pulled the covers from the trusty little red Cyclops three-wheeler which she kept parked in the lounge room and peddling like a woman possessed, headed down the road.

Next thing I knew, the dog was barking a warning, there was a loud crash as the Cyclops was abandoned at the front gate then Cath appeared, practically out of breath, racing towards me with arms spread wide.



Knowing resistance would be futile, I conceded to her wishes and allowed her to drape herself upon my person so she could obtain the much desired Radtechitis. I quietly and patiently endured this enthusiastic draping for several hours, then, as it was getting late, was forced to unwrap oneself from her clutches and escort her to the Cyclops and point her in the direction of her home.

In appreciation, Cath left a card on my table and it seems she is a Credentialed Diabetes Educator/Practising Dietitian. That sounded interesting so we thought we should give her a ring.

She was in an euphoric mood when we called, all warm and completely at ease after her dose of Radtechitis and she was glad we rang.

Cath told us she was originally from Bendigo in Victoria, and graduated in 2011 from the Charles Sturt University in Wagga with a Bachelor degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. Since then she has worked in a range of settings including private practice, hospitals and community health services. She moved to regional Queensland (Bundaberg) in 2012, where she became passionate in diabetes management and completed a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Education at Curtin University in 2013.



Not long ago she joined "Fuel Your Life". Fuel Your Life is an innovative new company providing dietetic services to clients across Australia with a current focus on veterans. They offer individualised nutrition programs tailored to meet the individual's health and performance goals.

We can heartily recommend Fuel Your Life's services as since we have been a client our weight has been continuously going south and our energy level is heading north. There is so much to learn about nutrition, about which food is good for you, why it is good for you and more importantly, which food you should try to avoid.

If you live on the south east coast of Qld, from the Sunshine Coast, through Brisbane, out to Ipswich and down to the Tweed, including Goodna, Kangaroo Point, Helensvale and Robina, or if you're in Canberra, Batemans Bay, Moruya, Albury/Wodonga and you are a Gold Card holder you should obtain a referral from your GP ([HERE](#)) then make an appointment and join the Fuel

Your Life program. Also, if you hold a white card for a specific illness that would be beneficial from correct nutritional advice, (diabetes or PTSD for instance) you should also investigate the option. As well, DVA has recently introduced their “Non-Liability Health Care” program (see [HERE](#)). If you are included in this program, ask your GP if nutritional advice would benefit you.

You can get further information from Fuel Your Life’s website ([HERE](#)) or you can ring them on 0401 880 344

Remember the old saying – You are what you eat! It’s true.



21 Radio Appy

Geoff Mayhew.

50 years ago on the 9th of January 1967, 21 Radio Apprentice course formed at Laverton. See [HERE](#).



These Appies were all 15 or 16 at the time and had no idea that anyone apart from Grandparents and Flight Sergeants lived beyond 25 years of age.

Well, time caught up all too quickly and so to celebrate that unforgettable day when they had all left school a few weeks earlier, and had their parents sign them up for 9 years, a few of the blokes now living in QLD got together for a drink to times past.

They met at the Transcontinental Hotel opposite Roma St Station, chosen because they now all have senior Go Cards for the trains, so getting back to the station and then home with a few under the belt would be fairly easy.

The parallels with taking the train between Laverton and Melbourne for similar reasons all those years ago was readily noted. Another similarity was the assembled troops representing all the mainland States from where the Sprogs originated.

A much more formal reunion is planned for later in the year in Victoria for what was the RAAF's largest ever Radio Apprentice intake.



L-R: Gary Millar, Neil Clark, Andre Bonderson, Geoff Mayhew, Graham Duck, Andrew Young, Don Cureton, Steve Cleary.

Harry Smith.

When the topic of Long Tan comes up, one name that is always mentioned is Harry Smith. Harry Smith was a Major in the Australian Army and was the OC of D Company 6RAR whose 108 soldiers encountered and fought a sizeable North Vietnam force in a rubber plantation on the 18 August 1966 – see [HERE](#).



Details of this encounter are now well known. The battle was fought in dreadful conditions, there was a huge storm overhead with thunder and lightning, it was raining cats and dogs, the men were lying and fighting in mud, they were soaked to the skin and were fighting off a force of about 2500 North Vietnamese in low visibility under a blanket of mist. The noise, the confusion and the consequential fear must have been horrendous.

Sadly, when the battle subsided, 17 Australian soldiers lay dead and 24 had been wounded of which one died 9 days later. The number of North Vietnamese who were killed and/or injured is not clear, but some say it could be as high as 500 killed and 800 wounded. If you can describe the result of a battle in which people lost their lives as a success, then the Australians can surely describe the result of this battle as a huge success and full credit must go to the men involved and to their insitu leaders.

Without months of training and expert leadership, that group of men could never have overcome the absolute terror they would have felt when confronted with such a huge opposing force. Without being there, we will never know the devils each man must have experienced and it is a testament to their skill and bravery that they were able to hold their ground for such a long period of time until reinforcements arrived. We must also remember that a lot of them were just young blokes, in their early 20's, truly amazing.

They all deserved official recognition – but that is not the way of the ADF.

Harry Smith, the OC of D Company, who led the men that fateful day and who kept them together and focused, recommended many of his team for recognition, but the powers that be had other ideas. Harry had submitted a recommendation that WO Jack Kirby be awarded the Victoria Cross but Brigadier Jackson and Lt Col Townsend refused to accept it. And to add insult to injury, civilian Defence Dept officials downgraded some of Harry's recommendations and some others simply went missing. For extraordinary bravery, Harry himself had been recommended for the Australian Star of Gallantry, which is second only to the VC but his superiors downgraded it to a Military Cross.

In the end medals and awards were issued only to the following.

THE RAM

THE MAGAZINE BY & FOR SERVING
& EX-RAAF PEOPLE & OTHERS



Vol 57

Page 8

Distinguished Service Order (DSO)	Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM)
Brigadier David Jackson	Warrant Officer 2 Jack Kirby
Lieutenant Colonel Colin Townsend	Corporal John Carter
Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)	Mentioned in Dispatches (MID)
Captain Maurice 'Morrie' Stanley (NZ)	Lieutenant Adrian Roberts
Military Cross (MC)	Second Lieutenant Geoff Kendall
Major Harry Smith	Second Lieutenant Dave Sabben
Military Medal (MM)	Warrant Officer 2 Jack Roughley
Sergeant Bob Buick	Corporal Phil Dobson
Private Ron Eglington	Corporal W.R. Moore
	Private Bill Akell

Harry Smith was not satisfied with this and for many many years he fought for proper recognition of his men who fought and suffered on that day and also for recognition for the men who provided the much needed support from back at the Nui Dat base. On the 17 August, 2006, 1 day short of 40 years since the battle, Prime Minister John Howard agreed to review the awards. A review board was set up.

We weren't there at the time so we can only go on hearsay, but we've since spoken to several people who were at Nui Dat that day and although not involved in the battle, all say to a man that the awards given to David Jackson and to Colin Townsend were not earned. These men were given awards because of their rank. If so, this is a disgrace.



The people to whom I have spoken and who were at Nui Dat, all also say they probably owe their lives to Harry Smith and his men as without them stopping the North Vietnamese at Long Tan, there is a possibility the Nui Dat base could have been overrun.

In August 2016, the Australian Minister for Veterans Affairs Dan Tehan announced that he had accepted the recommendations of the Board and many of the soldiers who fought that day either had their original awards upgraded or were granted awards they should have received years ago. That recommendation also awarded [Fl/Lt Cliff Dohle](#) (9 Sqn) the Distinguished Service Medal.

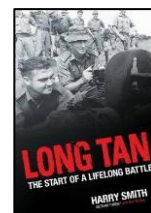


Harry said, after that long overdue decision had been handed down, "A 30-year secrecy period and bureaucratic red tape stood in the way of the awards. I can go home now and pick up cases and cases of paperwork and throw it all in the bin and get on with life. I'm very pleased for the soldiers and their families and loved ones, that they've finally got the recognition they should have got in the first place back in 1966.

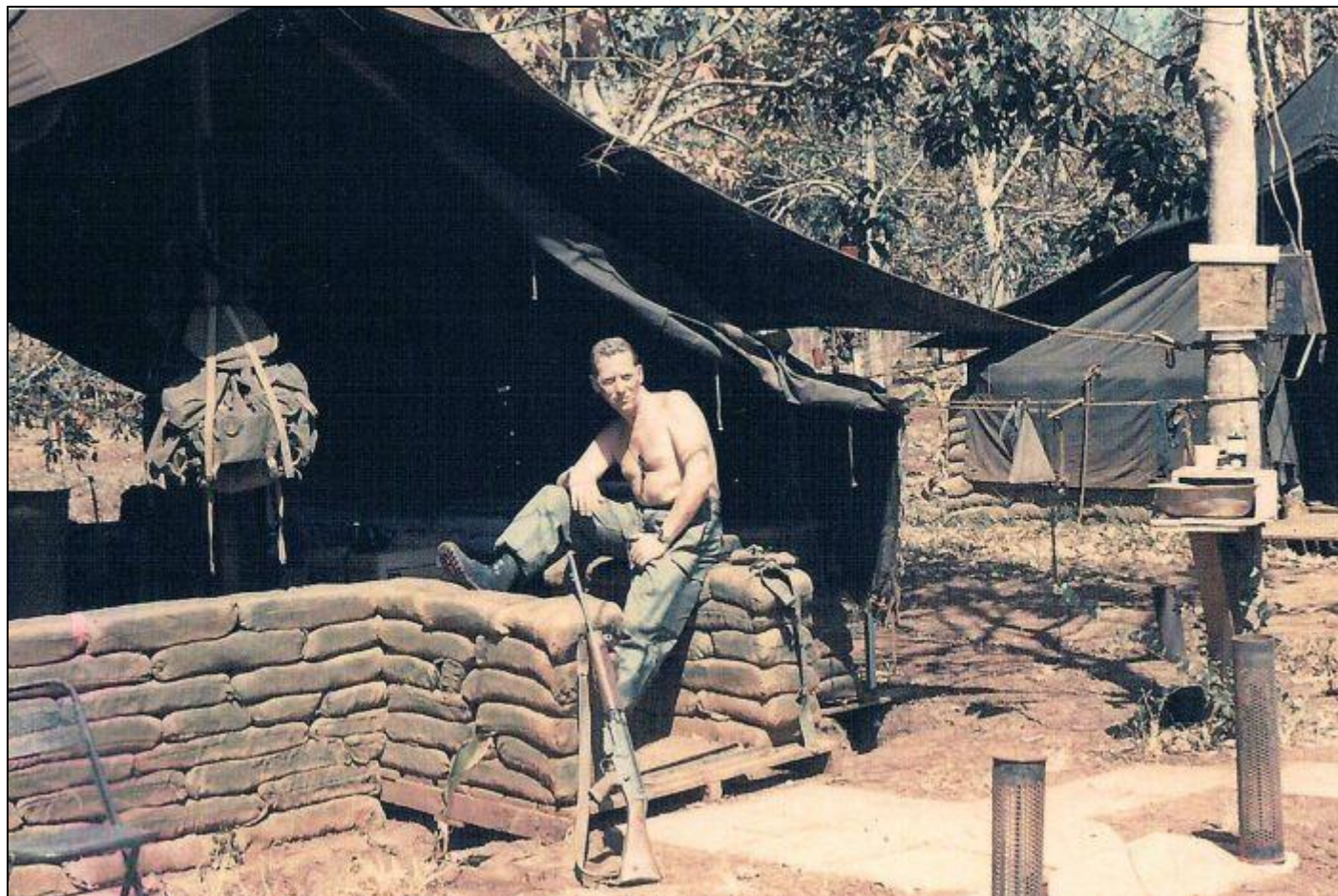
I think it's the end of 50 years of frustration."



We've met Harry on a few occasions and after he'd released his book "[Long Tan – the start of a lifelong battle](#)", we [interviewed](#) him in his home. We found him a very dedicated man who constantly thinks of his men and his only wish was to see his men appropriately recognised for the courage and wonderful service they provided all those years ago.



This man should be admired and treated with respect but sadly there are those out there who are consumed by envy, jealousy and even hatred and who have tried to discredit this man's outstanding reputation.



Major Harry Smith at Nui Dat, 1966

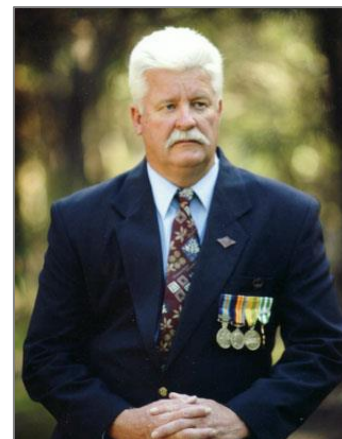
There are some who bombard the social media and forums with spiteful material, quoting senior, but of course un-named, sources refuting the story of Long Tan suggesting instead that it was a momentous stuff-up. Harry freely admits mistakes were made by both he and Bob Buick and no doubt by others, when the shit hits the fan unexpectedly, decisions have to be

made quickly and of course, not all were good ones. But what is indisputable is, under Harry Smith's leadership, 108 Australian's held off a force of 2500 North Vietnamese.

One of these nasty detractors is Don Tate (right).

I've never met Don Tate (and I have no intention of meeting him either) but it is interesting to note that his tour of Vietnam (as a Private) was from 23 Dec 1968 to 22 Jul 1969, some years after the Long Tan battle, so I would suggest he knows as much about the battle conditions that day as I do – which is not a lot.

Tate is not content in trying to cruel Harry Smith but he also takes aim at Bob Buick. He says: *"the decorated veteran and hero of Long Tan is a coward and a liar, and ran off from the severest fighting at Long Tan, leaving his injured mates behind."*



A quick Google search on Don Tate will find things like this:

"Donald Tate is one of the most obnoxious and blatantly mercenary veterans to pop up in the veteran community in recent times. He is about to launch another book selling campaign and true to form has launched another timely hate session to raise his profile and sell his book."

I know who I believe!

For 50 years Harry Smith has fought Canberra bureaucrats and has had to live with the loss of so many of his men, he does not need this garbage. Only those who served in 6 RAR during the time of the Battle of Long Tan have any right to make any comment. There is nothing but praise for Harry Smith from those 6 RAR members.

THE RAM

THE MAGAZINE BY & FOR SERVING
& EX-RAAF PEOPLE & OTHERS



Vol 57

Page 8

This page left blank.