



6 RAR Mascot takes his D.

Sgt Ridgleigh Blue 3rd, 6RAR's faithful mascot for the past 9 years, has decided enough is enough and has finally taken his D at a ceremony held at Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane on Wednesday 27th November, 2019.



About 600 troops from 6RAR manned the roadway and formed a guard of honour in front of the 6RAR Memorial Grove awaiting the arrival of Sgt Ridgleigh Blue 3rd who was possibly finalising his clearances.

6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR) is a mechanised infantry battalion. It was originally raised in Brisbane on the 6th June 1965 and has since then served in a number of overseas deployments and conflicts including South Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. During the Vietnam War the battalion earned a US Presidential Unit Citation when members from 'D' Company participated in the Battle of Long Tan on 18–19 August 1966. The battalion is currently based at Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane and forms part of the 7th Brigade.





6 RAR operates the M113 armoured personnel carrier of which Army has about 430. Designed and built back in 1962, and after under-going several mods, the vehicle is now starting to show its age and will be gradually replaced with the new Infantry Fighting Vehicle – starting from 2024.



After keeping the troops standing in the hot sun for some time, Sgt Ridgleigh Blue 3rd (SRB3) finally made his appearance and inspected the Parade which had been called to attention in his honour.



Also on parade this day was Private Ridgleigh Blue 4th (PRB4). Some weeks prior to SRB3's retirement, Army had called for applicants to take on the responsible role of Regimental Mascot and after interviewing numerous applicants, PBR4 was selected and enlisted into today's Army.



Still only a raw recruit, PRB4 will undergo several weeks of intense training before officially undertaking his duties.

In the meantime, SRB3 had finally reached the end of the Guard of Honour and was starting to show signs of the strain of having to climb the slight incline in the roadway. It seems SRB3 has spent the past few years parked at the back door to the Mess and these days finds it difficult in completing the mandatory fortnightly run around the oval. The fact that he'd put on a few pounds and due to his advanced age, convinced SRB3 that it was time to hang up the uniform and look for an easier life.



While inspecting the Guard, SRB3 reflected back on his wonderful career. As a young irresponsible pup, he was accepted into the Army as a raw recruit back in June 2010, then after completing his recruit training, he was enlisted into the permanent Army as a Private in 2011. Following years of hard work, rigorous parade duties and completing junior leader courses, he quickly climbed the ranks and was eventually promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

SRB3 had big paws to fill. 6RAR has had a roving 4 pawed Mascot since 1975 and SRB3 was the 7th such individual to hold that revered position. Many of the soldiers currently serving with 6RAR have known him since he was first enlisted and he will most certainly be missed. He was always on hand to help the occasional soldier finish the unwanted portion of his lunch and was a welcome distraction during many cold nights when he would accompany the guard on his patrols.

But it was time.



Major Bob Varcoe (that's SqnLdr in the real money), who is the 2IC of 6RAR, was on hand to officially accept SRB3's discharge with Major Anna-Lise Brink, Army Public Affairs, recording the event for posterity.



After he was ceremoniously discharged from his exalted position, the now Mr Blue, with his supervisor Pte Lee Larbalestier, boarded one of the Regiment's people movers and was given a victorious lap of the base. Once on board the machine, Mr Blue had his final look around and knew he wouldn't miss all this, no more would he have the world's most uncomfortable seats on which to sit with the smell of diesel, uncomfortable engine noise and insufferable heat attacking all his senses, from now he knew he was destined to spend the rest of his days retiring at a friend's farm with lots of cow dung in which to roll and having to lap up open air transport in the back of a ute.





After his victory lap, Mr Blue was escorted to his donga to pack his belongings and to panic the area in readiness for the new occupant.



After he had cleaned up the donga, in readiness for inspection, Mr Blue met up with his replacement, Pte Ridgleigh Blue 4th where secrets were passed on where to get the juiciest left overs, where and when to get a pat and how to avoid a bath for as long as possible. Mr Blue was then escorted from the Base.

It eventually dawned on Pte Ridgleigh Blue 4th, who was posing with his partner, Pte Jarred Little, that he was now the top dog, and was he glad to see the back of Mr Blue.



Pic: Pte William Plowman



Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

Thank you.

Over the past few years a lot of Vietnam Vets in SE Queensland have become good pals with Thai and Diamond Dang, two lovely people who got out of Vietnam the hard way just before it all went pear shape back in the 70's. Apart from being very well educated and holding down very responsible positions, both are very talented musicians and can each play a number of instruments as well as also being good singers. For some years now Thai and Diamond, along with several of their lovely lady friends, have been very generous and entertained the RAAF Vietnam Vet troops at an-after march event on ANZAC Day.



About 12 months ago, Thai was diagnosed with cancer and was gravely ill for some time. He spent some months in hospital and in convalescence where it was thought he was close to shaking hands with St Peter, he got to the door but luckily they wouldn't let him in. After painful bone marrow transplants and many weeks of chemotherapy which played havoc with his system, he was finally given the all clear. Thankfully, he's now fit and well and kicking goals once again.



Having recently received the all clear, this generous couple decided to invite staff from the Princess Alexandra and Royal Hospitals, who were instrumental in Thai's "repair and maintenance", to a "Thank You" dinner which was held on Friday night the 29th Nov at the Landmark Restaurant in the Sunnybank Plaza, south of Brisbane. They also invited several Vietnam Vets along too – we were lucky enough to be included.



Thai – showing off his new head of hair.



Trev Benneworth, Thai Dang and John McDougall.



Some of the Vietnam Vets who were invited to Thai's thank you evening with some of the lovely ladies. I always say, the only reason God gave you two hands was to hold onto two girls.



John McDougall, the RTFV-35 Sqn Association President, presented Thai and Diamond with a small Squadron plaque in appreciation of the wonderful generosity they and their lovely friends have shown the Association over the years in providing the entertainment at the Association's get togethers after the ANZAC Day march.



Kim Dung and Ngan Dai, two of the lovely Vietnamese ladies who helped brighten up the evening.



It was a fun evening, the girls performed traditional dances, the music was great, the food was excellent, the service could not be bettered and Thai and Diamond made sure everyone had a good time.

One such event was the bamboo dance. We'd never seen it before and watched as the girls made it look so easy (see [HERE](#)) – then John McDougall had a go (see [HERE](#)) – all we can say is:- “bring back the girls”.



3 Sqn Plaque Dedication.



On Saturday the 30th November, 3 Sqn Association members got together on the Sunshine Coast to dedicate a Sqn Plaque on the Memorial Wall in the magnificent gardens at the Caloundra RSL.



Arthur Fry, the Chaplain for the Vietnam Vets Association on the Sunshine Coast conducted the ceremony and FILt Isaac Lawless, EngO (below) from 3 Sqn at Williamtown performed the unveiling of the plaque.







After the ceremony, everyone retired to the Club for lunch and a few quiet drinks to celebrate the event.



Arthur and Annette Fry



Graham Sutcliffe, Leslie and Scott King.



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