

CHALKIE

NEWSLETTER

3/2015

Hello All,

In this issue, we would like to bring to your attention the research into the Chalkie scheme being conducted by former Chalkie, Dr Darryl Dymock. New findings have emerged from the preliminary statistical work and early ventures into the archives in Melbourne and Canberra.

As well, the various reunions are approaching and information on these will be included in this Newsletter.

We will also include some information on the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the PIB on the Gold Coast in which Chalkies played a very significant role.

Finally, we would like to include a review of the book, 'Well Done, Those Men' that was done by Greg some time ago.

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DARRYL DYMCK'S CHALKIE RESEARCH PROJECT

Information on Darryl's important research, which is being undertaken through an Army History Research Grant, has been distributed to many of you by Terry Edwsmith. I thought I would take a small amount of space here to add some further information that is emerging from his work.

Firstly, the response to the questionnaire has been excellent with 73 ex-Chalkies responding to this. This is impressive and a much higher response rate than is typical for this type of exercise. The result of this is that a very good picture of the whole Chalkie scheme will be able to be written.

Secondly, the following is clear from the statistical analysis;

- All years of the scheme are well-represented
- All states (except Tasmania) are in the sample
- All postings in PNG are very well covered.



Darryl Dymock with the reference group for his research: Terry Edwsmith, Greg Farr, Greg Ivey and Ian Ogston (absent: Norm Hunter).

Darryl's work in the archives in Melbourne and Canberra has produced some documents that partly indicate the Army's thinking at the time of the introduction of the Chalkie scheme.

The first document is a record of a briefing given to Army HQ in Canberra by the Commander, PNG Command (Brigadier Hunter) on the Army's task in TPNG in 11/7/67. The quote below is a small part of a much more detailed document but it throws light on to the thinking that led to the Chalkies scheme.

'The education programme is designed to develop the soldier's understanding, his reasoning powers and his mental self-reliance and to give him a firm, logical and reasoned basis for his behaviour in the potentially disturbed times ahead. It seeks to show him his duties and responsibilities as a member of the national Army in a developing nation..... '

If anyone was in any doubt as to the crucial political role of Army educators in TPNG, this should eliminate any further uncertainty.

A second quote identifies the initial mechanism whereby this thinking was implemented.

'The AHQ Education Committee, comprised of Brig M. Austin, Col. F.W. Cook, Mr J. F. Baker and Mr K.W. Major, spent an interesting and informative fortnight towards the end of May and early June 66 gaining a detailed and first-hand knowledge of the educational set-up in TP&NG, both civil and military. Important changes are expected. The first result will be the attachment of 25 National Service teachers to this Command to give a much needed boost to the use of English.

These two quotes are of fundamental importance in understanding the origins of the Chalkies scheme. This research is getting us closer to knowing who actually initiated the idea for the scheme. Darryl is to be congratulated on his considerable achievements so far.

REUNIONS

The first of these is in **Adelaide on 8 -11 October**. A full and rather spectacular program is planned beginning with a roll call at the Moseley Bar and Kitchen in Glenelg on the Thursday night. A great line up of events is planned for all who can attend. See the Chalkie website for further details.

The second is on Saturday 17 **October in Brisbane**.

The focus of the Brisbane Reunion is Goldie River and it would be great to have as many ex-Goldie Chalkies there as possible to present the full picture of life in this posting. Goldie-ites are rather thin on the ground in this part of the world so if you can come, it would be great.

I am happy to lead the program but, riveting and all that this would be, it would be much better to get a broader view from a wider range of people.

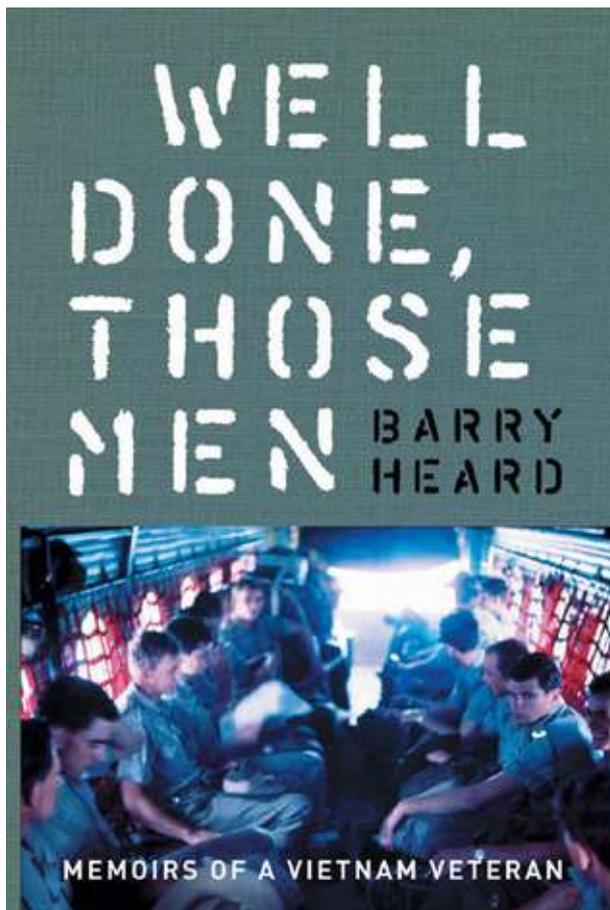


Goldie Chalkies Jim MacDonald (centre) and Ian Ogston with Pte. Peni, the Education Centre librarian, on Tank Hill overlooking the PNG Training Depot at Goldie River (1971)

BOOK REVIEW *'WELL DONE, THOSE MEN'*

I was in a strange little book shop recently (in an equally strange shopping centre near Brisbane Airport) when I spied two books on National Service. One was on National Service in New Zealand (called rather imaginatively, *'National Service in New Zealand'*) and the other called *'Blanco, Brasso and Bull'* (subtitled, *'An Hilarious Account of National Service' – in England!!*). Missing from the bookshop was anything on National Service in Australia – as I said, a weird little book shop especially since such excellent books are about like Mark Dapin's *'Nashos' War'* and this one, *'Well Done, Those Men'* by Barry Heard.

This following review was written by Greg before the publication of Mark Dapin's book.



We know that several Nasho Chalkies served with the RAAEC in Vietnam. While we are very informed about the experiences of Nashos in TPNG, we are less well-informed about the experiences of Nashos in Vietnam. This book about a Vietnam Nasho who later became a teacher helps fill the gap.

Barry has written his own story as a Nasho infantryman and radio operator. Most of us could relate to his account of recruit training at Puckapunyal and his infantry training at Singleton. These chapters are raw, evocative and funny. His diary of Vietnam is detailed and perceptive. The description on one engagement with the Viet Cong and the death of several mates is the graphic climax of the book.

Later, in Australia, Barry's adjustment problems, teaching experience and PTSD are well-drawn. Compared with our catalytic experience in TPNG, Vietnam was a psychiatric experience which changed the life course for many Nashos. This is the personal story of one Nasho – his training, Vietnam, deployment, survival and recovery.

One extract near the end of the book will give you an insight:

“(After the question and answer session in a primary school) the students wanted me to give a little service at the honour board located in the community hall across the road. In the hall, the students formed a horseshoe. The two staff said nothing ... and looked at me for some response. I took a deep breath and said:

These names are the names of men who have died at war. It would have been very sad for their families, friends and their mates. The flowers you put here say so many things. These soldiers on this board would be proud of your thoughtfulness and content to know that you live in peace. Thank you for what you have done today. I hope you never have to go to war.”

Several kids came over and said thanks. Others touched my hand. One young boy gave me some flowers. I wonder if those kids realised how much they helped me.”

‘Well Done, Those Men’ by Barry Heard (Carlton North: Scribe 2005)

75th ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING OF PIB

Chalkies played a major role in the celebration of the formation of the precursor to the PIR, the Papuan Infantry Battalion in World War 2. We have included some pictures from the event at the Kokoda Memorial at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast.



Ex-TPNG servicemen with former Governor General, Hon. Michael Jeffery



Ex-Chalkies Graham Carnes and Kev Horton with Keith Payne VC AM



Greg Ivey presents a gift to Lt Col M.B. Pears MC



Ex-Chalkies Greg Farr, Frank Cordingley, Ian Ogston and Graham Carnes at the PIB 75th Anniversary Lunch at Surfers Paradise RSL Club