

# **Albany Address - John Fenton**

## **16th October 2019**

Your Worship, the Mayor of the City of Albany, Mr Dennis Wellington.

Dignitaries, Ladies & Gentlemen.

We, the members of 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Vietnam Association are humbled by the honour of being granted the Key to the City of Albany.

This city is a must destination for every serviceman & woman & ex-serviceman & woman of the Australian Defence Force. Albany more than any other city or town is the keeper of Australian Military History. To our generation, places such as Puckapunyal, Kapooka & Bandiana (all in the Eastern States) are places that have fostered military garrisons.

But Albany is where a generation set forth for the “Great Adventure” & it was considered a great adventure for the young men of the six colonies which had only become a Nation 13 short years before. Sadly for many, as they sailed out of King George Sound it was to be the last sight of their homeland as they never returned from the carnage of Gallipoli, Flanders & The Somme. Albany is where on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1923 the Reverend Arthur White led the observance of the first ever ANZAC Day Dawn Service, establishing a tradition that has endured throughout Australia & on far flung battle sites ever since.

Of the various memorials that abound in this city, the one that is the most significant to me is the Desert Mounted Corps Memorial. During our war, whether we were deployed at Night Defensive Position Garth along Route 2, at Xuyen Moc on Route 23, Land & Mine clearing in the foothills of the Nui Thi Vais along Route 15 or in the foothills of the Long Hai mountains along Route 44; in support of the Task Force Commander’s Operational Objectives, it was always a comfort to be supported by the modern day mounted trooper, be it the tanks of 1 Armoured Regiment in close support of our Land Clearing Teams or the APCs of 3 Cavalry Regiment facing out guarding our flanks whilst we supported the Squadron perform its role.

Gathered today are those who served. Over 46 years ago we all came

home, had careers, raised families & importantly remained comrades in arms, enjoying the camaraderie of reunions such as this & grieving when friendships forged all those years ago have ceased with the passing of a comrade. Our Corps motto is the Latin Arte et Marte “With Skill & Fighting.” My colleagues as Soldier Tradesmen have all lived up to that motto.

Finally I would also acknowledge the wives & partners who have supported us through the good times & the bad. Our debt to you is beyond words.

Again, your worship, thank you, your fellow Councillors & the people of this city for the honour & hospitality extended by the City of Albany. We are truly humbled. Your Worship with your approval I would like to appoint Mr Garry Whykes the Unit Custodian of the City of Albany Scroll.

Thank You