



17 Construction Squadron Workshop Vietnam Association



The Furphy Wagon Newsletter - November 2019

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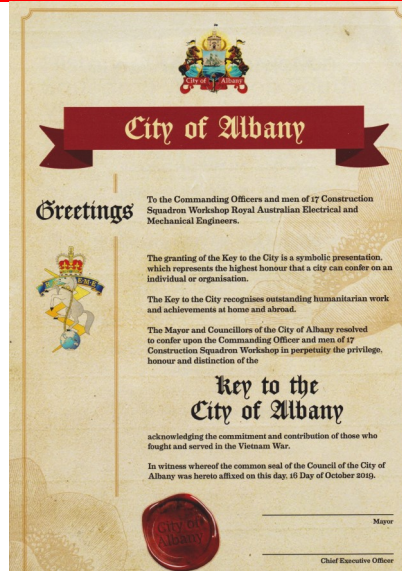
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Key to the City of Albany WA

ALBANY - Key To The City



Group photograph after the Parade and Service



The Riderless Horse with boots reversed

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WHAT THE OUTGOING PREZ SEZ

With everyone either at home, or still heading home, it is a good time to reflect on the Albany Reunion.

The weather kept everyone guessing but in the end it all worked out well, particularly the day of the parade.

I would like to compliment all who attended for the overall high standard of dress and the obvious respect shown to the City of Albany. A strong vote of thanks to Mayor Dennis Wellington. Dennis was re-elected by a very large margin at the elections held the weekend after the reunion, Albany treated us with the same respect we showed them with the overall arrangements put in place at all venues simply amazing.

It was a privilege to work with Garry Whykes on the reunion. It was obvious to all the outstanding effort Garry made to ensure everyone was well looked after.

Congratulations to Peter Ingrey and his helpers on taking on the challenge to arrange the next reunion at Port Macquarie and I wish him and his team all the best.

The level of support to help Peter was very impressive and I am sure another successful reunion lies in wait for us.

Thank you everyone.

Regards,

George Jones

WHAT THE INCOMING PREZ SEZ

First off I would like to say that George Jones and Snowy Whykes organized a colossal reunion in Albany Western Australia. I think that everyone who attended enjoyed the comradery and functions that made the reunion a great success.

Given the key to the city of Albany was an honor that we all appreciated and we thank the Mayor Dennis Wellington and the City of Albany for bestowing this honor to 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Vietnam Association.

I was elected to plan and organize the next reunion in Port Macquarie NSW in 2021.

Garry (Snow) Whykes is stepping down as Secretary/Treasurer of our association after many years at the HELM. I and all members of the association would like to pass on our gratitude and best wishes to Snow. I look forward to his assistance in the future with the exchange of his knowledge in assisting me with the next reunion.

My wife Helen was voted in absentee to be our next Secretary/Treasurer; she has already started to plan for the reunion and is trying to tell me what to do.

For those that did not attend the reunion due to ill health I wish you all the best for a speedy recovery. To all our members I also thank you for your support in making the next reunion a success.

Last but not least I would like to thank our Patron and past president George Jones along with his wife Penny for their support and encouragement to our association over the years. And I am sure that we all thank George in his endeavor to keep our association going.

Peter Ingrey.

And I hope to see you all in 2 years.

ALBANY - Key To The City

Albany, Western Australia, 16th October 2019. 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Vietnam Association is granted the unique privilege and honor of the “Key to the City”.

On a cool, clear, sunny morning, the members and partners of 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Vietnam Association were bussed from Emu Point to the City of Albany where the main street, York street, was blocked off to traffic in readiness for a parade and service that was to grant the unit the “Key to the City”. This was an auspicious and historic occasion as it was the very first time in the history of the City of Albany that this honor had been bestowed upon any person or organization.

The troops formed up at Alison Hartman Gardens. Led by former Officer Commanding, John Fenton and under the direction of CSM Bob (Ruffy) Fleiner, the parade marched to the Town Hall where Mayor Dennis Wellington was waiting to officially present the unit with a scroll signifying the “Key to the City”.

In his address, Mayor Wellington stated “To those who served in the Squadron, to all of those who served overseas, you all enable us to have the lifestyle we have today”. “This is why we thank you for your service. It will never go unnoticed”.

Former Officer Commanding John Fenton thanked the Mayor and the City of Albany for the honor bestowed on the unit. (A copy of this address is on page 5).

With the permission of the Mayor Dennis Wellington, John Fenton then called upon the Secretary/Treasurer of the association Garry (Snow) Whykes to be the official custodian of the scroll.



The parade then proceeded to march down York street to the Albany War Memorial where a very moving service was held. The MC was Deputy Mayor Cr Greg Stocks who conducted the memorial service and wreath laying ceremony.

John Fenton then gave a very moving address to the people in attendance, describing the role of the Workshop in South Vietnam. (A copy of this address is on page 6).

At the completion of the parade and service, the members, partners and guests proceeded to the Due South restaurant for lunch. Thus ending a very significant day in the history of the City of Albany and the 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Vietnam Association.

Left: Snowy Whykes custodian of the scroll



City of Albany

Greetings

To the Commanding Officers and men of 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.



The granting of the Key to the City is a symbolic presentation, which represents the highest honour that a city can confer on an individual or organisation.

The Key to the City recognises outstanding humanitarian work and achievements at home and abroad.

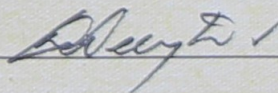
The Mayor and Councillors of the City of Albany resolved to confer upon the Commanding Officer and men of 17 Construction Squadron Workshop in perpetuity the privilege, honour and distinction of the

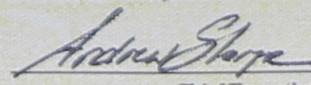
Key to the City of Albany

acknowledging the commitment and contribution of those who fought and served in the Vietnam War.

In witness whereof the common seal of the Council of the City of Albany was hereto affixed on this day, 16 Day of October 2019.




Mayor


Chief Executive Officer

John Fenton - Response to the Key to the City

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 25th 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

John Fenton - Memorial Address

Memorial Address - John Fenton

16th October 2019

Your worship, the mayor of the City of Albany Mr. Dennis Wellington, Ladies & Gentlemen

17 Construction Squadron Workshop deployed to Vietnam in support of Operations as determined by the Commander Australian Force Vietnam. The Workshop provided Field Repair capability to all of the Plant, Vehicles, Electrical Equipment & Weapons of 17 Construction Squadron during the tasking of that Unit throughout Phuoc Tuy Province & the Vung Tau Special Zone. Almost 50% of the Workshop members were National Servicemen whereas the majority of junior NCOs, senior NCOs & Warrant Officers were Regular Army. This unique mix of soldier/tradesmen provided a wealth of knowledge, which ensured the parent squadron was well supported during Operations.

After initial deployment the parent Squadron came under Command of the Commander 1 Australian Task Force located at Nui Dat in central Phuoc Tuy Province. In the lead up to the Battle of Long Tan, three members of the Squadron were wounded by incoming enemy mortar rounds. The Workshop personnel were located variously at 1st Australian Logistic Support Group, Vung Tau, 1 ATF Nui Dat & an element, mainly vehicle mechanics, deployed with the Land Clearing Team maintaining under very trying circumstances the Team's primary equipment the armoured Caterpillar D8 bulldozers.

The Squadron's role was to assist in the construction of 1 ALSG, construct 1 ATF Base, including multiple helicopter landing pads, conduct Land Clearing Operations to deny the enemy safe havens & to maintain the routes throughout the area of Operations to allow quick access by infantry & armoured elements of the Task Force.

The men on parade today helped implement a program of prime importance "winning the hearts & minds of the civilian population." Improving their health & well being by improving water supply, constructing clinics, improving hospital facilities & constructing housing for Regional Force personnel, our generation set the standard of assisting the populations where we served. That tradition extended to the following generations of 17 Construction Squadron Workshop personnel in Namibia in 1989 with UNTAG Operation Safe Passage, in Australia's remote aborigine communities from 1996 to the present comprising the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program, in Timor Leste in 1999 & Afghanistan. All of these programs attest to the endeavor's & standards set by the Vietnam Veterans in not only war fighting but doing their best to improve the population wellbeing in remote areas of Australia & areas of conflict.

Your worship, in honoring our members by presenting the Keys to the City of Albany to the Vietnam Veterans you will have made the contemporary generations proud of the Unit in which we served. We are humbled & we thank you.

Thank you for listening to our story.

Vietnam veterans given key to the city

■ **Saskia Adysti**

The City of Albany has given its highest honour to Vietnam War veterans in the form of the Key to the City to thank them for their service.

It is the first time the City of Albany has granted anyone the Key to the City—a tradition that dates back to medieval times.

The key was handed over to the commanding officer of the 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Association.

The 17 Construction Squadron Workshop was deployed to South Vietnam in April, 1966 to maintain the equipment of the 17 Construction Squadron Australian Engineers.

They serviced bulldozers, tippers, graders and other plant and equipment.

More than 100 veterans and their partners travelled to Albany on Wednesday for the association's reunion.

As part of the ceremony, the squadron marched from Alison Hartman Garden to the Albany Town Hall, where Mayor Dennis Wellington presented the key.

Mr Wellington acknowledged the commitment and contribution of all those who served in the Vietnam War. "The granting of the Key to the

City is a symbolic presentation which represents the highest honour which the City can confer to an individual or an organisation," he said.

"To those who served in the squadron, to all of those who serve overseas, you all enable us to have the lifestyle that we have today.

"This is why we thank you for your service. It will never go unnoticed."

Commanding officer Major John Fenton thanked the mayor and the council for their generosity.

"Albany, more than any other city or town, is the keeper of the Australian military history," he said.

"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 and the Somme."



City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington with former commanding officer John Fenton.



***President George Jones AM, Secretary/Treasurer Snowy Whykes and former OC John Fenton lead the parade down York street Albany.
(Photo courtesy of The Albany Advertiser)***



Bob Callinan



Greg Carson and Philip Vitale preparing for the parade.



*President and Patron George Jones AM
being interviewed by the ABC*



*Local resident Dione Nesbitt singing the National
Anthem at the Memorial Service*



*Deputy Mayor Cr Greg Stocks conducting the
Memorial Service in York street.*



*Members of the workshop marching down
York street Albany.*



*From left: Bill Wadsworth (white shirt) Ruffy
Fleiner, Chatty Chattin and Bob Martin.*



*Phil Kearsley - He was the last OC of the
Workshop and brought the boys home.*

THE FURPHY WAGON

During our Albany reunion, a suggestion was made that we give our newsletter a title. The following extract gives a brief description of the word “Furphy” which was commonly used by the diggers in Vietnam. Does it appeal to you to have our newsletter titled “The Furphy Wagon”??

Most Australian's have heard the expression "Telling a Furphy".

furphy

/ˈfəːfi/

noun AUSTRALIAN informal

a rumour or story, especially one that is untrue or absurd.
"I remembered the schoolyard furchies about sewer gangs"

A **furphy** is Australian slang for an erroneous or improbable story that is claimed to be factual. Furchies are supposedly 'heard' from reputable sources, sometimes secondhand or thirdhand, and widely believed until discounted. The word is said to derive from water carts designed and made by a company established by John Furphy of J. Furphy & Sons of Shepparton, Victoria. The steel and cast iron tanks were first made in the 1880s and were used on farms and by stock agents. Many Furphy water carts were used to take water to Australian Army personnel during World War I in Australia, Europe and the Middle East. The carts, with "J. Furphy & Sons" written on their tanks, became popular as gathering places where soldiers could exchange gossip, rumours and fanciful tales – much like today's water cooler discussion. **known as 'Furchies'.**

This newsletter carries the stories and information to the ex-members of the unit and it would seem appropriate that it carry a name meaningful to those members.

Quotes from the Albany reunion

“I suggest Port Macquarie”. Then immediately being elected President - Peter Ingrey.

“I hope everyone buys a ticket”. Before selling nearly \$2,000.00 in raffle tickets - Marilyn Pratt.

“Shit it’s cold here, we are not going to the next reunion if it is cold there”. On their first day in Albany - Alan and Marilyn Pratt.

“Excuse me mister, can you tell me where unit 17 is??” - a lost Peter Bevilacqua and Phil Vitale, in the dark and not knowing they were talking to Snowy Whykes.

“In the next caravan park down the road” - Snowy Whykes in answer to the previous question.

“I was pushed” - Bob (Stretch) Mumme.

“I’ll talk to Helen about it and see if she is interested” . Just as she was elected Sec/Treas. for the next reunion.

“BEHIND EVERY ANGRY WOMAN STANDS A MAN WHO HAS ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT HE DID WRONG”.

Port Macquarie - Beaches & Waterways

Our bi-annual meeting was held at the Civic Centre of the Albany City Offices on Tuesday 15th October. A full translation of the meeting minutes can be found on our web site.

Peter Ingrey put forward a proposal that the 2021 reunion be held at Port Macquarie NSW. Peter gave a brief rundown on the benefits and facilities of Port Macquarie and stated that if Port Macquarie was the next reunion destination, he would be prepared to stand for the position of President. After some discussion the members decided that Port Macquarie would be the destination for the 2021 reunion.

The incoming committee are:

PRESIDENT: Peter Ingrey

SECRETARY/TREASURER: Helen Ingrey

ASSISTANT: Garry (Snow) Whykes

OTHERS: Bob Callinan and David Lindeman - made themselves available to assist.

All Port Macquarie reunion details will be communicated in coming issues of "The Furphy Wagon".

ARE YOU REALLY INTERESTED IN OUR ASSOCIATION??

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE

During the presentation of the Financial Report, the Sec/Treas highlighted the cost of distributing the newsletter. The printing and distribution of the newsletter is a major cost to the association and has been consistently so since the inception of the association.

It was noted that the majority of "hard copy" newsletters was mailed out to members who show no interest in the association at all. That is, they never attend functions, they never respond to any questionnaires etc. and they show no interest in any articles published in the newsletters.

The Sec/Treas suggested that an expression of interest in our association should be sent out in this newsletter with a specific goal of:

(a). Finding out the names of those members who really are interested in getting a copy of our newsletter.

(b). Having the newsletter distributed by electronic means rather than the cost of printing and mailing out hard copies.

Please bear in mind that we are not expecting people to attend reunions, etc. but rather they be supportive of our association in general.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE - Cont.

Also, please note that if you do not have access to email or electronic transmissions, we will send out hard copies if you want to stay in touch with us.

Therefore we ask that you let us know if you do want to continue getting the newsletter and if so, do you have an email address??

IF YOU DO WANT TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE NEWSLETTER PLEASE DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

SEND AN EMAIL TO: 17wksp@gmail.com - *stating your name and preferred contact email details.*

OR

WRITE TO: *Snowy Whykes at 33 Kanimbla way, Morley, WA, 6062 - stating your name, contact details and your wish to continue receiving the newsletter. Please include an email contact address if you can.*

PLEASE NOTE - If you do not reply to the above request, you will be removed from our distribution/ mailing list.



Elizabeth Rowlands and Jack Reeves after the Memorial Service.

Albany Reunion Financial Report

BALANCE SHEET

Opening Balance: \$5,831.11

Date: 23-Sep-2017

DEBITS:

Postage/Mailers	\$ 2,171.28
Incidental	\$ 1,617.79
Merchandise	\$ 5,254.88
Functions	\$ 18,539.10
Bus Transfers	\$ 6,500.49
Refunds	\$ 753.00

Total Debits **\$ 34,836.54**

CREDITS:

Donations	\$ 9,617.79
Registration	\$ 21,100.00
Merchandise	\$ 1,593.00
Raffle	\$ 2,000.00
Auction	\$ 900.00
Refunds	\$ 154.49

Total Credits **\$ 35,365.28**

CLOSING BALANCE **\$ 6,359.85**

BANK BALANCE: As at 1 Nov 2019 **\$ 6,359.85**

G. Whykes

TREASURER