



OCS Cadet Corporal Bob De Haas
~ 23 Jul 1947 to 17 Aug 2018 ~

**EULOGY ~ LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT ADRIAAN DE HAAS [RETD] ~
28 AUGUST 2018
BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL ASBURY [RETD], A FELLOW OCS CLASSMATE**

Like many others here today, I first met Bob in January 1967 at the Officer Cadet School, Portsea.

Unlike most of us, Bob had an unusual start to life, being born in 1947 to Dutch parents in Ambon, Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). The family immigrated to Australia in the early 1950s and Bob called Sydney home. He was a keen “surfie” of course – how could he not be with all that blonde hair and strong physique?

Like most of us who survived and graduated as second lieutenants from OCS Portsea, his year there became one of his best years. It was physically hard, challenging and demanding, but Bob excelled during it. The motto “*Loyalty and Service*” stayed upfront with Bob for the rest of his life.

Within a few months of graduating as a second lieutenant, Bob ended up in the Royal Australian Infantry Corps, as he had always wanted. He joined the Brisbane element of 2 RAR as the Battalion was returning from a year in South Vietnam. Bob then moved to Townsville when the Battalion was relocated to Lavarack Barracks in late 1968. The Battalion then received many new troops into it and began training for a return to Vietnam. Shortly before deploying to Vietnam in April 1970, Bob married Cherie.

The Battalion had a tough year in Vietnam in 1970 - 71. Bob never spoke much about his 13 months there – that in itself said much about that time.

You will hear the list of Bob’s various Army postings during the RSL Poppy Service later, however you will be able to guess about the amount of time Bob was away from home in postings such as Army Career lecturing, field exercises and courses. I will however mention a couple of his postings.

As a lieutenant, he was posted on to the Directing Staff at the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville. It was a captain’s position, but there was no mention of his promotion on the posting order. Bob was not much older than the officer cadets he was about to help train. One story that Bob often told was about reporting in to the new Adjutant, Win Fowles. Win immediately told him to put up his captain’s badges of rank before any of the cadets saw him. Win then went on to confirm that initiative with the Military Secretary in Canberra. Bob was always grateful to Win for that.

Bob later went to the RAAF School of Languages at Point Cook for 12 months to study Bahasa Indonesian, at which he excelled. Bob humbly suggested his early years in Indonesia explained it, but there was more to it than that.

More postings and more prolonged absences followed. In 1978 as the OC of Support Company in 2/4

RAR, Bob was given a major task following the Hilton terrorist bombing in Sydney. Bob raised a Counter Terrorist group with his enlarged company. After 11 months of intense training and being at 3 hours' notice to move for the entire time, the role was then handed over to the SAS Regiment in Perth. There had not been much time for family during this time either.

Selected to attend the Army Staff College in 1981, Bob had to ask for a deferment in an attempt to rescue a strained marriage. The deferment was not granted, so Bob resigned from the Army in a vain final attempt at reconciliation. Unfortunately, the damage had been done. Not an uncommon result for many trying to serve the Army faithfully.

Bob went into Traditional Chinese Medicine training and work in Melbourne, Nanjing China and back again in Melbourne. Bob was then recruited back into the Army on contract, with Mike Downey who is also here today. The posting as SO2 Armaments with the Engineering Design Establishment was most rewarding for Bob, but all good postings come to an end, and he was then posted to HQ Logistic Command. Those who once wore the uniform will know what I mean. By now he had married Linda and was happy once again.

He again resigned and returned to his Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture. As a member of the Army Reserve, he had postings at the Army Command & Staff College in Queenscliff and an exchange posting at the Indonesian Staff College in Bandung in 1998. Bob felt like he had come full circle after 50 years.

Again, Bob was enticed to come back into the Regular Army in 2000 on another contract for 15 months working on these new-fangled computer systems. Bob now had accumulated sufficient years to qualify for his meagre military superannuation.

Apart from the Army, over the years Bob managed a computer graphics company, established a web development company in the very early days of the World Wide Web. He was also a funeral director in Melbourne – which played havoc with his war neurosis PTSD.

In early 2002, Bob co-opted me to help him start up a web site for our OCS Class of December 1967. This quickly morphed into a much larger web site encompassing all sixty- seven classes from 1952 - 1985. This required contact with many previously unknown graduates many years senior or junior to us. This had its own rewards for us all.

Bob was also heavily involved in our old "Alma Mater" on the Mornington Peninsula. Firstly, he liaised with and cajoled the Point Nepean Trust to incorporate the overlooked history of the Officer Cadet School into the story of the site and the Quarantine Station in which the OCS was housed. Up to the end, Bob was still actively liaising with the new owner, Parks Victoria on behalf of all 3,544 officer graduates and the staff.

Bob also took up the fights for veterans with Dept Veterans' Affairs and ComSuper which managed our military superannuation schemes. Names like Barry Corse, George Mansford, and the late Bernie McGurgan & John Graham and many others appeared in almost daily emails to politicians and bureaucrats for many years.

When Linda died prematurely from cancer, Bob was lost for a while before cutting his ties with Melbourne and moving to his new Bribie Island home. Bob was very happy here with his house, pool, boat and new friends as well as old ones too.

I spoke to Bob almost every week from 2002 onwards and always found him to be positive, innovative, a lateral thinker, determined and ethical. He often spoke of the progress of his children and of the love and pride he had for them. He led his life faithfully by the old Portsea motto of "Loyalty and Service".

A group of his Portsea Class here today had lunch with Bob at Noosa just 12 hours before his untimely death. He looked and sounded well and happy. None of us could ask for more than that.

Bob will leave a big gap for many of us. We will miss you mate.



*Farewell & Thanks Bob from the OCS Alumni.
We Salute You!*

Bob's Alumni Signature

~REST IN PEACE~

~oOo~