

Snapshot of memories of Brian, collected at the Portsea (mid 69) reunion, Canberra.

History is, and unfortunately will always, be marked by old soldiers lamenting the early loss of a comrade. The loss is usually theirs and, at best, shared.

The reunion in Canberra of the OCS class of mid-69 was always going to be one of those, as we remembered those classmates, especially Brian, who were not there.

But, we were destined to experience the loss differently than those who are still more intimately connected to Brian's life than we were.

The presence of Brian's wife, Patricia, son Jason and grandchildren starkly illustrated how broad and deep a loss was, and continues today.

Patricia's address began with a poignant reminder of youth - his, theirs and ours. How young and naive we all were and how harsh and seemingly impossible was the young love between Patricia and Brian. The determination of those two youngsters back then seems to be the most inspirational event of a young couple's life.

Some of Brian's classmates had pondered about Brian's son Jason and how he might be curious about that unknown father, and how he might have a glimpse of how that man might have appeared 45 years later. Somewhere in that group of ageing men might be some glimpses, or some sort of compilation of, a father lost so many years ago. What a surprise to those older men when what we saw were echoes of Brian in a son of whom Brian would be so proud.

Then the grandchildren, who seemed a little lost. There they were, not fully understanding the significance of the moment yet trying to comprehend their direct connection to it. In these situations, a child normally relies on a parent to guide and explain. In this case Jason was unable and probably dealing with his own feelings as fundamentally as the grandchildren.

All this left Patricia as the conduit to the broader and deeper parts of Brian's life. This access was richer and more colourful than anyone of us had imagined and was as revealing to all – family, comrades and their partners alike.

So, a small collection of memories was required, and is attached for you to read, contemplate and add-to as you wish. For certain, the success and fulfilment of Brian's family will add chapters to these stories as I hope that we, who shared small sliver of Brian's life, will do so also.

So far: Chris Anderson, Russ Wade, Dave Lester, Peter James, Rod Murray, and Jack Hayes

From Chris Anderson

I think we were all sitting around at the end of the last field exercise (maybe at Yarram – some things are harder to remember) in late May 1969 when we were told where we had been assigned for our first postings. I think that both Brian and I were surprised to hear that we had been posted to the Special Air Service Regiment. To us, at that time, it was unheard of that someone as inexperienced as us would have been posted to such an elite unit directly from officer training. It was a shock and, although he never said anything, I suspect Brian was looking forward to it with nervous anticipation just as I was.

Arrival and Cadre Course

I think our arrival date was 23 June 1969 although it may have been a week or so later. We were both assigned to 2 Squadron which had returned from South Vietnam in February 1969 having been replaced by 3 Squadron. The first week or so were busy getting settled into regimental life but with the knowledge that it could all come to nothing if we did not do well in the Cadre course due to commence shortly.

The Cadre course was conducted by the regiment to make a final selection of those with the physical mental and emotional potential to be SAS officers and troopers.

The course took up most of July. The first week was in barracks at Swanbourne making sure that we all had the required equipment that our medical and physical condition was good, that we could swim and run and were generally physically fit. We were taken to the rifle range and also introduced to the concepts of rappelling insertion, using the static helicopter cabin mounted on poles.

We then left for Rottneest Island where we took up residence in the old Fort. This was to be the stage where those who were unable to demonstrate mastery of the basic skills of map reading, weapon handling etc. were weeded out.

When we arrived, we were divided into pairs and provided with a red gum railway sleeper to be our workmate and companion. I think they expected it would skew the results if we were in pairs of mixed rank so Brian and I were put together. The red gum sleeper was our weight set for morning PT and it accompanied us on our daily runs around the island. You soon learn to co-operate in your exercises and on runs when you are joined at the hip by a heavy piece of red gum sleeper.

The final week was held down south in the forests near Collie. It was winter and Collie tends to be a bit colder and wetter than the Swanbourne area. It was here that we did more complex navigation exercises and had the final set of evaluations. No activity of this nature would be complete without the obligatory 9 mile run in full kit. Brian and I had a bit of an advantage in that we were just out of Portsea and pretty fit anyway, were both competitive personalities but we also had an attitude that whatever happened we were not going to be beaten by a trooper. The result was that we completed the run together, well under time and a long way ahead of whoever was next.

Being partnered with Brian was good for both of us I think. He was level headed and his competitive spirit helped to get us through the tough patches.

Trains and Parachutes

After the Cadre course it was straight off to the Basic Parachute Course at RAAF Williamtown (not to be confused with the port in Melbourne). The course was scheduled for 6-29 August so by the end of it we would have been on courses pretty much full time for the first two months.

The first adventure was getting to Williamtown with a draft of about 20 troopers. This involved a train trip from Perth to Adelaide, then overnight to Melbourne, overnight again to Sydney and a day train to Newcastle. Brian, Chris Lawson Baker (RASigs) and I were nominated as draft conducting officers. What could go wrong with 20 troopers on a train supervised by three young officers? However, we arrived fairly much intact.

The course was a great experience for us and we managed to qualify notwithstanding a couple of dodgy landings which we ascribed to us both being over 6 feet in height and having long legs that had to be collapsed on landing in a controlled manner. This shared experience further bonded Brian and myself.

1 Squadron Prepares

We got back from the parachute course – reverse of the trip up – only to start packing for an 8-week exercise in PNG. We accompanied 1 Squadron, commanded by Ian Teague with Robin McBride, Lloyd Behm and Zoltan (Zot) Simon, the three troop commanders. We flew directly to Lae and were hosted by 2PIR commanded by the inimitable Horrie Howard who many of you will know from his later role as Director of Infantry.

This period saw us deployed as patrol commanders in training – experienced senior NCO patrol commanders by our side providing advice and guidance about small group leadership in jungle terrain. For some of us this was the first time exposed to this level of heat and humidity and I have to say that I didn't like it that much, but Brian seemed to revel in it. The work was hard. Long distance navigation, jungle patrolling and learning to move slowly and quietly with detection avoidance the primary objective. On some of these activities we had 2PIR soldiers deployed to find us using any means possible so care had to be taken to ensure that none of the locals knew where we were either.

The clearest memory is of the constant damp and Brian's equally constant cheerfulness – a man in his element. Water intake increased significantly over what it was in Perth and both Brian and I found that out in patrol we were going to bed wet, waking up dryish and being sopping again within 20 minutes.

Back for More Courses

We got back from Lae in time to join the Shallow Water Diver's course which filled the time until Christmas Leave followed immediately afterwards by Small Craft Handler's course in February and March. 1 Squadron departed for South Vietnam in February so that made 2 Squadron next in line and the focus of training would change to preparing for deployment in a year's time.

In retrospect I cannot remember how much time Brian would have had to enjoy the company of his new wife and son, but I know it would not have been very much. It must have been very hard for both of them.

I will always remember him as a cheerful, supportive, and loyal comrade and friend.

From Peter James

Brain and I were in the rugby team as were many from our class. He was a big man and I can well recall being impressed by his stylish running rugby with suitable enthusiastic aggression! He was a man of undeniable talent in many fields beyond his undeniable professional persona. There was a presence about the man, whose premature death was simply gut-wrenching.

I also recall his demeanour as a Lordly type from an English upbringing, typified by his tight-lipped morning greeting "Morning JAMES" to which my reply was always a rather ocker "Morning JONES".

We lived in the same block in Senior Class and the banter was friendly, if not brotherly affection!

We both also gave the same treatment to Tony Huai who was a little more expressive with language e.g. "James you white bastard or Jones you white bastard"! Again the retort from both was as you could imagine.

There was absolutely no racial intent from any of us. And yet today we would be castigated for such verbiage!

How I would have longed to see Brian beyond his service days; ditto for Tony Huai and many others!

God rest them both.

Sincerely

Peter James

From Dave Lester

In our senior term at Portsea Brian occupied a room on the first floor of 4 block. His room was the one nearest the parade ground. My room was on the same floor, but was the furthest away from the parade ground at the other end of the building. When Brian was wanted in the Orderly Room for a telephone call a message was broadcast on the PA system. "Brian Jones. Telephone call from WA." Brian would let out a whoop on hearing the call, and would fly out of his room and run the length of the building. I would step out of my room, and hold open the door onto the small balcony at the end of the building. Brian would race past, grab the iron railing and swing himself over and down to the ground where he would continue his race to the Orderly room.

I should probably have said that I started the story telling to Trish, Jason and family while outside on the lawn at the RMC Mess. After all, it was our big chance to let them know he was well respected, remembered still and missed on a very personal level

For your info the one about the telephone calls and balcony. Well, Trish worked on the WA exchange. As you would realise, calls from WA would have been (sic) expensive in those days, hence the reason for telling that story. She was quite moved to think that I remembered her calls of 1969, to know of Brian's reaction and athletic response.

Hope this makes better sense of the telephone story

Late in senior term Brian and I were Orderly Officer and Orderly Sgt on a number of occasions. It was not punishment, and I maintain the thought that we did not need the practice. It just happened, and I was always the Officer and Brian the Sgt. I never did get to raise or lower the flag, that was Brian's job as Orderly Sgt, but I got to practice my salutes while he did it. Maybe for the same reasons, we were often used as escorts for cadets that needed to see the Commandant.

In 1971 I was posted to 3 Cav Regt in SVN. As a New Zealander I was to serve in an Australian unit. On arrival I was given a day to meet the Nui Dat people, obtain maps and make sure I had the gear needed to go outside the wire. I was allocated a vehicle (A M113, callsign 30B) and driver. Having satisfied myself that all was ok, I wished to go for a short trip to ensure the vehicle ran all right. I chose to visit the SAS Sqn to see Brian. It was only about 400 metres away. On arrival, as I was dismounting, I saw my Portsea father, Peter Gurney who was the SAS Signals Officer. He took one look at me and said, "What are you doing here Dave?" Of course, I said I was there to see Brian. What I did not know was that Brian had been killed while I was in transit.

In 2002 Lesley and I intended to travel around Australia in our caravan. Before departing I tried to find where Brian was buried. The SAS would not tell me. I even tried through Peter Schuman and even he was unable to provide information. He was one of our Portsea instructors, we served together in SVN as part of the "Lastout" etc. He lived in Fremantle, however, no luck. We left Melbourne, travelled to Perth, up to Darwin. We visited Adelaide River, the WW2 burial

site for the Darwin bombings. As we went in through the gateway, I picked up a leaflet about the burials. It stated that all were buried here except for 14 who were in Alice Springs. It went on to say that adjacent to the site was that of an SAS Officer killed in the Vietnam War. I knew I had found Brian. We continued down to Alice, went looking and of course found Brian's grave. I left a poppy and a NZ flag. In 2012 we again returned to the area for ANZAC Day. We of course visited Brian's grave again and left a poppy and flag.

See attached pics

From Russ Wade

For many of us who entered the Office Cadet School at Portsea in July 1969, Brian Jones was a fellow cadet from Civvy Street who was thrust into a gruelling program, designed to make you “crack under pressure”. Naturally, classmates formed close bonds of friendship, which helped in dealing with the rigours of the program.

In my case, Brian and I did not have cars and we had to get around on foot. So, we became close friends.

During the reunion in Canberra, it became apparent that Brian’s wife, Patricia, had no knowledge of his Portsea experience. Yet this was what made the character of the man that Patricia married. Sadly, Brian was only in her life for such a short period. It is fitting that his classmates build the story of Brian, as we knew him, and so add to Patricia’s memories of her beloved husband.

Here are my few recollections of Brian at Portsea.

The trip to Melbourne

One weekend in senior class, Brian and I got a lift into Melbourne. We stayed at the Army Club down St Kilda Road.

On Saturday, we caught a tram into the city and alighted near Flinders Street station. There is a hatter’s shop to the right of the entrance to the station. When I last checked in 2014, it is still there.

Brian and I each bought a fine corduroy white trilby, as featured in a photo with Pat MacDonald. We looked like a couple of spivs, but we thought we were so cool.



The black snake

In the first four weeks of soldier skill development, we were doing field craft training. Harrison's Bowl was a bowl-shaped depression in the generally tea-tree covered landscape of the peninsula.

One of the New Zealand students let out a yelp and leapt into the air, having sighted a black snake.

Brian came over and picked up the black snake by the tail and held it up for the Kiwis to see. Most of us did not know at the time that Kiwis were terrified of snakes, as they don't have them in New Zealand. Brian yelled out to the Kiwis, "it's just a black snake".

The snake promptly recoiled on itself and tried to bite Brian on the hand. With a reflex action before the snake could inject any venom, Brian flicked the snake away with an expletive and sucked on the bite. The Kiwis were stunned and looked at Brian in awe. We all thought Brian was fearless.

Field training at Yarram

During our final field training in Yarram State Forest, we were in a night defensive position. Brian had laid a trip flare across a dirt track that ran past our position.

About 3.00 in the morning, we could hear a car driving towards our position. Suddenly, the car tripped the flare and night turned into day. The car came to a rapid stop.

With his face blackened with camouflage, Brian raced to the driver's window and tried to assure the driver that he had accidentally driven through an Army training exercise. Brian was carrying a sub machine gun at the time and must have terrified the driver. The poor soul was taking a shortcut back from his favourite fishing spot.

Having a drink at the "Nip"

When you don't have a car and you are bored with having a drink in the cadets' mess, the next adventure is to go to the township of Portsea for a drink.

Brian and I would walk out the gates at Portsea and walk to the Nepean Hotel (called the "Nip"), which was opposite the more prestigious Portsea Hotel. The Nepean Hotel was very plain, but it was a relatively quiet place for a drink. On one of these outings, Brian and I met Sergeant "Buttons" Reeves and Warrant Officer "Buck" Rodgers, who were both drill instructors at OCS.

It was rare to meet the instructors socially. They were full of great stories and sound advice, to which we listened intently.

When it was time to return to camp, we both walked along the white line down the centre of the road from Portsea township to the OCS gates entrance, reflecting on the advice that we had been given.

The Nepean Hotel was subsequently demolished, but the memories endure of our visits to the “Nip”.

The photograph

Not long before graduation, Brian proudly showed me a photograph of what I thought he said was his wife, but perhaps he meant his future wife. The woman was stunningly beautiful and I called Brian a sneak for not having disclosed his love interest before. It was Patricia.

Epilogue

These are my best recollections of Brian. He was a gentleman, with all the attributes to be a leader.

On Sunday 11th April 1971, I was lying in a Cairns hotel room bed on a belated honeymoon, when the news came over the radio about Brian’s death in Vietnam. I still remember saying “no” several times. I could not believe I had lost a good friend. Now, having heard Patricia’s story, I can only imagine how she would have dealt with the tragedy at the time.



Back rows: Spinkston, Delgado, Anker, Brooks? (obscured), Jones, Hansen, Weatherstone
Front rows: Azumi, Lester, James, Araffin, Murray, two obscured faces, Carswell, Wade, Kerr, Rowland

Recollections of Patricia's address

Russ Wade

My recollections about Patricia's address after the dinner on the 18th were:

- The hardship that Brian went through in seeking the clearances to marry Patricia.
- The deep loss and the unmistakable way in which the next-of-kin are informed (padre and duty officer).
- Getting on with her life and raising Jason (and in those days, there weren't the support services available today).
- Dealing with the cultural issues of the treatment of indigenous people, in particular, their health issues.
- Her gratitude to be invited to join the reunion and find out about Brian's earlier life and his OCS mates.
- The distance of years – over 45 years since she lost Brian, but the realisation that we lost Brian too.

Over a few conversations before and after the dinner, I realised that Patricia was in awe of the efforts made to get her to Canberra and to be part of the last post ceremony and the reunion. From my observation of many conversations, she was at ease with all of us. At times, the memories would have been sad for her, but she showed remarkable strength.

I was with her when she held the picture frame of Brian in the Duntroon cadets' mess and when she tried to stick a sprig of wattle to Brian's plaque at the memorial wall. They were very moving moments. I've sent those and other photos to Tricia.



Bruce Cameron

One of the things that Jasmine recalls was:

"The sincere way in which she told the story of her journey since meeting Brian on a bus to Broome at age 15 and the subsequent impact of his death, and her emotions during the Last Post ceremony. While Trish said she hadn't prepared a speech she was very articulate and able to put into words the confusion and emptiness she felt after the knock on her door in Alice Springs where she was living at the time of Brian's death".

I had the honour to sit next to Trish during the dinner and discussed a number of topics with her, including the Intervention Task Force led by Dave Chalmers and the refusal of the AWM to commemorate the Frontier Wars. I was in awe of the fact that she seemed to bear no bitterness about our society's 'ills', rather she was pragmatic and displayed a quiet determination to do as much as she could to make it a better place. Her ability to find solutions was demonstrated when I mentioned that we had recently come across a series of photos taken by Jasmine's father during a trip to Alice and Darwin in WWII. As well as showing housing in Darwin etc., they recorded conditions in the 'native compounds' at the time. When I asked Trish if these would be of any historical interest, she suggested the NT Archives. We subsequently contacted them and they were delighted to accept the photos into their collection.

Bruce

From Rod Murray

I remember Brian at Portsea only as clearly as I remember most of my other classmates. But he is the one that I have often thought about. Obviously because he was the only one of our class killed in Vietnam. But thinking of his early death left me pondering about an absent and missed husband, father and grandfather, and the stunted life trajectory compared to what the rest of us had.

What I have learned about Brian, mostly from Trish's brilliantly descriptive and personal address, has now been put into what can be called "incorporated memory", where newly acquired knowledge can be incorporated into, and flesh out, the original memory, making it immediate and substantial.

Trish brought our classmate Brian into context, pre-Portsea. How outstanding was it that we gained insights into the person I glimpsed so fleetingly, so long ago.

I could see Brian that week, in the eyes of his Son, in the story of his widow, and in the response of his grandchildren. All of which was a snapshot of what is, or could have been, our own lives.

The Brian I now know is an impeccable man. A warrior who took his job seriously, and a man who both gave and received love. The heroism I now see was his commitment and loyalty to his wife, his marriage and child. The tenacity and bravery required to make all this happen is an indicator of what sort of soldier he was.

So now it is impossible to recall Brian without the context of his full life. Thank you Brian for what you have given us. Your great family, your remarkable, short, life. Thank you for being part of the glue that helps bind the rest of us together.

Jack Hayes

At OCS Portsea, Brian Jones was not in my Company but he and I competed very hard against each other in running and the gym, and we made it very clear to Capt. Peter Schuman, MC that he wanted to go to SASR and I wanted to go to NZSAS. So Pete took us under his wing and kept pushing us. We would go for a road or beach run and get back and Pete would say to us "Is that the best you can do? Do it again." We were mad, and ran most days outside of the day to day PE with the Class, and I often used to slip out of my room after lights out and run to the gun emplacements at the end of the Point Nepean and back, then go to sleep. My brother, Brian Newton, was convinced I was unhinged and kept saying to me that I would not graduate if I ran myself into the ground. I was only caught once when I literally ran into Capt. Brian Marshall (The NZ Officer Instructor) as the Duty Officer as I ran past the Instructors Offices on my way back up the hill to A Coy's block at about 0130 one morning. "What the hell are you doing out of bed at this hour?" he asked. I told him I could not sleep so went for a run. "Go to bed," was all he said.

Brian offered to host Pat McDonald and I in Perth for the mid-term break and we were both excited as he told us all about the 'hot girls' and 'wonderful beaches' and all the fun we would have. We both paid deposits on a flight to Perth but I was sent home to Rotorua at the last minute on compassionate grounds as my Mum had "serious surgery and was very ill". It turned out after a long RAAF C-130 flight and bus trip that she was fine, she just wanted me home for Christmas! I could have killed her as all I could think about was the hot girls in Perth that Brian had promised us! Pat had a great time in Perth and that was where he met Brian's family and Trish for the first time.

As it happened, I met Sandy in Rotorua that Xmas and we fell into lust initially, and then into love and we are still married 47 years later. If I had gone to Perth with Brian that Xmas, I almost certainly would never have met her.

After graduation, Brian went to SASR and I was posted to Burnham Camp in the Infantry Battalion Depot field training wing, and immediately applied for SAS selection. I worked hard at getting very fit and passed the course in November and was posted the next day as they had no reinforcement Troop Commander for Vietnam. I sent a letter to Brian at SASR telling him I had made it and he sent me back a card with a "Sad to hear your news" on the front cover and a big 'Yahoo!!!!' handwritten on the inside.

I went to Vietnam in early October 1970 and Brian sent me a Xmas card confirming that he was coming up in Feb 71 with Geoff Chipman's Sqn. He was excited about it but concerned that he was leaving Trish and his baby son behind. I knew how he felt, as Sandy was alone (and pregnant) in Papakura as well.

When Brian arrived in Vietnam I was already established there as the Troop Commander with the NZ Troop - 4 Troop NZSAS. We had a friendly fire incident not long before his Sqn arrived where a Kiwi patrol command shot his patrol sig (the sig survived) as he was unaware that the signaller had gone out of the patrol perimeter – there was a lot of confusion in the helicopter recovery as

well and so Major Geoff Chipman had me and my Tp Sgt (Percy Brown) brief ALL of the incoming SASR troops on the dangers of leaving the patrol perimeter and how essential it was to know where all members of the patrol were at all times. This briefing included Brian's Troop, the presentation on the Taare/Moffitt incident was part of their in-country orientation.

I can remember vividly the discussion that Brian, Chris Lawson-Baker, Geoff Chipman and I had that night in the mess on the 4 Troop incident. Brian was well aware of the risk.

For him to be killed in similar circumstances so shortly after that was tragic. He was shot dead by a member of his patrol as he came back in, the patrol knew he was out there, but he came back in on a different approach than expected. My heart goes out to that Trooper as he knew almost immediately that he had shot Brian – it would be a tough memory to live with.

By the time of this incident, I was back at home in Papakura. We were withdrawn early by the NZ Govt and left Vietnam on 26 February 1971 and I had always felt guilty about Brian's death, thinking things like 'Perhaps I could have said more', until years later I met Major Geoff Chipman in Brisbane and he set my mind at ease. Thanks Geoff, it was a real relief at the time to hear your words.

Finally, to meet Trish at Canberra was special. She told me afterwards that she was very nervous about coming, let alone talking to us, but when I walked into the garden bar and realised who she was I just gave her a big hug and she burst into tears. She and Sandy got on really well immediately and are still emailing each other – they have much in common and that bond will now last a long time. Trish said she was worried that our Class would not talk to her as she is a 'black girl' – I told her we would ignore that if she ignored the fact that we were almost all white, balding and/or overweight "old buggers".

She laughed and relaxed, it was a paradigm shift for her that weekend – her world changed forever and she had quite a few tears at times, but she felt very comfortable with us. For that we need to recognise the great work that Terry Nolan did to organise her and the kids to be with us. She really came because Terry had been there for her for nearly 40 years when no-one else was talking to her, and she trusted him. He assured her that she would be made welcome – and that is what did happen. We must have the family with us again in 2019 at OCS Portsea – this time for the full weekend. They still have a lot to learn about their father and grandfather.

I still think often of Brian – he would have been a great grandfather and a grand old class mate with a good Army career behind him and whose company we would have all enjoyed. He had a ready smile and enjoyed life, he would have kept us laughing, sparking off the many comedians in our Class. He and John Muir would have been close mates and laughed a lot at each other's jokes.

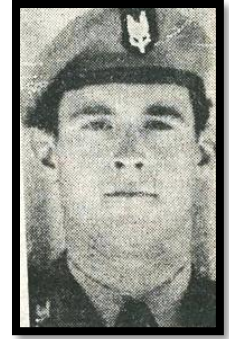
I like to think that he watches his family every day and I am sure he is proud of them all.

Jack Hayes

**55780 Second Lieutenant Brian Richard Alan Jones, 2
Special Air Service Squadron**

Accidental: 10 April 1971

Photograph: Don Barnby to supply (last one taken of Jones
- mentioned in text)



Today we remember and pay tribute to Second Lieutenant
Brian Jones.

Brian Richard Alan Jones was born on the 18th of April 1948 in Birmingham, England. His family immigrated to Australia when he was a young boy and settled in Whyalla, South Australia.

By the early 1960s he had moved to Perth, Western Australia, where he completed his intermediate schooling in 1965. After leaving school, he went to work with the Commonwealth Bank.

He left the bank in March 1968 and on the 5th of July enlisted into the Australian Regular Army for a six-year term. Accepted as an officer candidate, Jones was sent to the Officer Candidate School at Portsea in Victoria for training. A keen student, he excelled in both the classroom and the field.

He was a good sportsman and represented his class in rugby, for which he was awarded a bronze medallion, and cricket. He graduated from Portsea on the 13th of June 1969 with the rank of second lieutenant and returned to Western Australia where, on the 18th of June, he married his sweetheart, Patricia.

Second Lieutenant Jones was posted to Swanbourne Barracks, Western Australia. He successfully completed the Special Air Service Regiment cadre course at the end of July and was posted to 2 Squadron. Over the next year

he completed the basic parachute, small watercraft, rope climbing instructor, recondo, demolitions, and unarmed combat instructor courses.

Build-up training for Vietnam saw Jones do two training exercises in New Guinea, where jungle conditions were used to simulate those in Vietnam.

The men of 2 Squadron arrived in Vietnam in February 1971. Following some in-country training, the squadron began operations, the majority of which took place in the east of Phuoc Tuy [pron. *Fook - Twee*] Province. Patrols operated from the South China Sea to the Long Khanh Province border.

On the morning of the 10th of April 1971, Jones was part of a 10-man patrol that was helicoptered out to join a patrol led by Sergeant Danny Wright who was searching for an unoccupied VC bunker system which had been found by Jones on his first patrol.

As Jones led his men out to a recently arrived helicopter, he encountered another patrol, which had just returned from the jungle on the same aircraft. One member of the returning patrol, Trooper Don Barnby, had turned 21 while in the field. Using Trooper Barnby's camera, Jones took a picture of the patrol. To reciprocate, Barnby took a photo of Jones's patrol. It was the last image taken of him. That photograph is displayed today beside the Pool of Reflection.

After being landed in the jungle, Jones's patrol met up with that of Sergeant Wright. As the combined patrols neared the location of the VC bunkers, smoke was sighted. An attack was launched against what was thought to be an enemy camp, but the source of the smoke was found to be a smouldering log. There was no sign of the enemy.

After a stop for lunch, the combined patrols moved on but soon encountered an ox-cart track which showed signs of recent enemy activity. Wright's patrol was placed as western flank protection and Jones's men were placed

to protect the eastern flank. Jones led a three-man reconnaissance patrol forward to locate the bunkers. A little after 4 pm, Jones who had moved in a circular direction, approached the front of his patrol's positions.

A member of Jones's patrol, seeing only a weapon and a figure in the jungle approaching his position, initiated contact. He fired five rounds before his weapon jammed and in the seconds afterwards heard the order to cease fire. Sergeant Wright called out "You've shot Jonesie!" to the distressed patrol member.

Jones received serious wounds to his face. A dustoff helicopter was called in and arrived shortly after. Sadly, Jones's wounds proved mortal and he died as he was being placed on board the helicopter. He was days short of his 23rd birthday.

His remains were returned to Australia and laid to rest with full military honours in the Alice Springs Memorial Cemetery on the 21st of April.

Brian Jones's name is listed on the Roll of Honour on your right, along with more than 500 others who died while serving in the Vietnam War, and his photograph is displayed today beside the Pool of Reflection.

We now remember Second Lieutenant Brian Richard Alan Jones, who gave his life for us, for our freedoms, and in the hope of a better world.

Sources

- AWM Roll of Honour
- NAA Service Record
- Horner, David, *SAS Phantoms of War: A history of the Australian Special Air Service*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2002, pp. 373-77