



## CHAPTER 5 – SPECIALIST SIGNALS

### PART 4 – AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM VIETNAM



#### List of Abbreviations

<b>1ATF</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force
<b>AATTV</b>	Australian Army Training Team Vietnam
<b>ARVN</b>	Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnamese Regular Army)
<b>AWM</b>	Australian War Memorial (Canberra)
<b>DMZ</b>	Demilitarised Zone (between North and South Vietnam)
<b>DSA</b>	District Senior Adviser
<b>FANK</b>	Forces Armées Nationales Khmer (Cambodia Army)
<b>JWTC</b>	Jungle Warfare Training Centre (Phuoc Tuy Province)
<b>LRRP</b>	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (also known as LRP)
<b>MACV</b>	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
<b>MATT</b>	Mobile Advisory Training Team (Australian forces)
<b>MAT</b>	Mobile Advisory Team (American forces)
<b>MBE</b>	Member of the British Empire (Honour)
<b>MSF</b>	Mobile Strike Force (Mike Force)
<b>MiD</b>	Mentioned in Despatches (Honour)
<b>NOTT</b>	Night Operations Training Team
<b>NVA</b>	North Vietnamese Army
<b>PF</b>	Popular Force (formerly Self Defence Corps)
<b>USCIA</b>	United States Central Intelligence Agency
<b>USSF</b>	United States Special Forces
<b>RD</b>	Revolutionary Development (Cadre Force)
<b>RF</b>	Regional Force
<b>RVN</b>	Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
<b>SFG</b>	Special Forces Group
<b>SFGA</b>	Special Forces Group Airborne
<b>TOC</b>	Tactical Operation Centre (Command Post)
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WO1</b>	Warrant Officer Class One (Australian Army)
<b>WO2</b>	Warrant Officer Class Two (Australian Army)





## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Commander of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), Colonel Serong, arrived in Saigon, South Vietnam, on 31 July 1962. The 29 officers and senior NCOs (warrant officers/sergeants) that made up "The Team" arrived in Saigon a few days later on 3 August 1962. This team included Capt Barry Tinkler from the Royal Australian Corps of Signals (RASigs). The men did not have weapons but held visas for the Philippines if evacuated wounded. The American dollars in their pockets had been obtained from an Indian moneylender in Singapore's old Change Alley, a consequence of the Australian Army's ignorance that the greenback was South Vietnam's unofficial currency.



Photo 5-4.1 - First members of AATTV arriving in South Vietnam. L-R Maj Fitzpatrick, Capt George, WO2 Perkins, WO2 Quee, Lt Gollings, Capt Barry Tinkler and Lt Col Mann. Source: AWM P01011.004.

The AATTV was sent to South Vietnam in a training and advisory capacity, as part of the US Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). Members served 12 to 18-month tours of duty. All were volunteers who had to attend and pass the Advisors Course at the Army's Jungle Training Centre at Canungra in Southeast Queensland. They were sent to South Vietnam singly or in drafts, as the unit did not exist outside South Vietnam. Due to the isolation and location of many of the US Special Forces camps, the US Military provided the Australians with the same administration and logistics as their own advisors. This included weapons, clothing, etc. They would also use American doctrines and techniques, so as not to confuse the Vietnamese Forces they worked with.

AATTV members operated with the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN), Montagnards, Territorial Forces (Regional Force and Popular Force), Mobile Strike





(Mike) Forces, and other local units. Attached to units or battalions as trainers, advisers, and occasionally leaders. Team members usually worked in the field, accompanying units on operations. They worked with various groups from the United States, such as the US Special Forces (USSF) and the US Central Intelligence Agency (USCIA), and under the auspices of the already well-established US Army Advisory system, throughout South Vietnam.



Map 5-4 - South Vietnam with Military Corps 1962 to 1972. Source: Internet





The AATTV was increased to 73 personnel in September 1964, and then to 112 in June 1965. The Team reached peak strength of 217 members in November 1970. As part of an overall reduction of the Australian commitment, the size of the Team was decreased gradually from April 1971, before its complete withdrawal in December 1972.

Members of the AATTV were rarely together as a single unit, apart from on ceremonial occasions, such as ANZAC Day and the presentation of the US Army Meritorious Unit Commendation by General Abrams (Commander MACV) at Vung Tau on 30 September 1970.



Photo 5-4.2 - AATTV members marching at the parade for the awarding of US Army Meritorious Unit Commendation at Vung Tau 30 Sept 1970. Source: AWM P02636.022.

Team members operated as individuals, in pairs, or occasionally in groups of no more than ten. Their role in Vietnam was to train and advise South Vietnamese units in their fight against the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and the Viet Cong (VC). As a result of their unique deployment, team members worked in many provinces of South Vietnam. Although primarily deployed in the field, on 9 February 1971 the AATTV conducted the first course held at the new Jungle Warfare Training Centre (JWTC) in Nui Dat. AATTV soldiers also served in Mobile Advisory and Training Teams (MATTs) operating within Phuoc Tuy Province, in III Corps.

Team members acted as advisers during combat operations and assisted with artillery and aerial fire support. They occasionally led South Vietnamese or Montagnard sub-units on operations.





The AATTV remained in Vietnam after the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) was withdrawn late 1971. It was stationed in Phuoc Tuy Province in 1972 and focused on training. It also assisted with training Cambodian soldiers of the Forces Armées Nationales Khmer (FANK). The team was withdrawn from active service on 18 December 1972 and was disbanded in Australia on 16 February 1973. It has the distinction of being the longest-serving and most highly decorated Australian unit of the Vietnam War: it was operational for over ten years and four of its members were awarded the Victoria Cross (VC).

A total of 1,009 men served with AATTV over a period of ten years, consisting of 998 Australians and 11 New Zealanders. 34 members of the team died during their service in South Vietnam including one member of the RASigs. 122 team members were WIA.

### **Royal Australian Corps of Signals**

RASigs contribution to AATTV was small with 20 members serving with the Team. The posting was not signals related (although it came in handy at times) but purely focused on training abilities, infantry skills, and small unit tactics. Some were sergeants and promoted temporary WO2 for service with the team. RASigs team members are as follows:

<b>Major Kenneth Redman</b>	<b>WO2 John Gibson</b> (tour also 103 Sig Sqn)
<b>Major Barry Tinkler, MBE</b>	<b>WO2 Michael Gill, MiD</b> (KIA)
<b>Major Roland Webb</b>	<b>WO2 James Husband, BEM</b> (tour also 7RAR)
<b>Capt Robert Baird</b>	<b>WO2 Colin Judd</b>
<b>Capt Ronald Crewe</b>	<b>WO2 Douglas Lawson</b> (tour also 709 Sig Tp)
<b>2Lt Antony Morris, MiD</b>	<b>WO2 Kevin MacPherson</b>
<b>WO1 Lindsay Allen</b>	<b>WO2 Thomas McNee</b> (two tours AATTV)
<b>WO2 Maurice Anstee</b> (tour also 104 Sig Sqn)	<b>WO2 Geoffrey Munro</b> (three tours AATTV)
<b>WO2 Mervyn Cranston</b> (WIA)	<b>WO2 Donald Watts</b>
<b>WO2 Athol Folbigg</b>	<b>WO2 Alan Williams</b> (tour also 3 SAS Sqn)

The first 'Pronto' to serve was Captain Barry Tinkler who arrived with the first group of AATTV in August 1962 and was promoted Major during his tour and awarded an MBE for his service with the team in January 1965.

The last 'Pronto' was WO2 Geoffrey 'Darby' Munro who left South Vietnam when the last of the team withdrawn, December 1972. Darby is most likely the longest serving member of the team doing three tours with a total service of three and a half years.

Communications was not the team mission but the core skills of RASigs members were sometimes used. For example, WO2 Athol Folbigg was the 5th SFGA, C Team Communications Officer at Danang in 1965. Also Major Barry Tinkler was sent to the 22<sup>nd</sup> ARVN Division at Kontum, to bring unused WS510 Radio Sets into effective operation, which Barry successfully did in 1963.





Photo 5-4.3 (left) - L-R WO2 Colin Judd, ARVN Soldier and USMC Gunnery Sgt at the Dong-Da, Training Centre (I Corps) Xmas 1964. Source: AATTV Website.



Photo 5-4.4 (right) - WO2 John Gibson with two Cambodian soldiers at the Long Hai Training Centre (III Corps) in Phuoc Tuy Province. Source: AWM CUN/72/0018/VN



Photo 5-4.5 (left) - WO2 Geoffrey Munro watching old Vietnamese man talking to two young People's Self Defence Force soldiers in 1969 (IV Corps). Source: AWM LES/69/0620/VN.

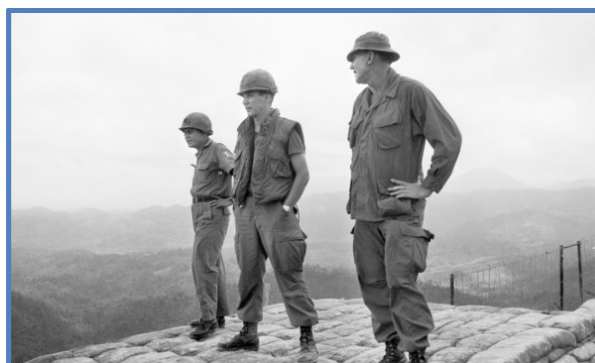


Photo 5-4.6 (right) - L-R ARVN Lt Col Hanh, US Army Ed Callaghan and WO2 Donald Watts checking defences at FSB Barbara in the mountains bordering the DMZ, Quang Tri Province (I Corps), South Vietnam, May 1970. Source: AWM WAR/70/0301/VN.

One RASigs team member, WO2 Michael 'Mick' Gill, was killed in action (KIA) and was awarded a MiD posthumously. In a battalion-scale operation on 6 May 1969 the 232<sup>nd</sup> Company of the Mobile Strike Force, under command of WO2 Ray Simpson was moving through the jungle of large trees and dense bamboo undergrowth in rain and poor visibility in II Corps area near the junction of the borders of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. When one of his platoons became heavily engaged with the enemy Simpson led the remainder of his company to its assistance. As the company moved forward, one of the platoon commanders, WO2 Mick Gill, was seriously wounded and the assault began to falter. Simpson, in the face of heavy enemy fire, moved across open ground and carried Gill to safety. He returned to his company then crawled forward to within ten metres of the enemy. From here he lobbed grenades into their positions. Simpson then





ordered his company to withdraw and he and five indigenous soldiers covered the withdrawal. Ray Simpson was awarded the VC in part for his actions to save WO2 Mick Gill. Posthumous Mick was awarded a MiD and the US Military awarded their Bronze Star with V for Valour. *Note: The MiD and the VC are the only awards under the British Imperial system, used by Australia during the Vietnam War, that can be awarded posthumous.*



Photo 5-4.7 - WO2 Michael 'Mick' Gill checking on a Vietnamese sentry.  
Source: Internet.

WO2 Mervyn 'Merve' Cranston was wounded in action (WIA) in May 1968 by shrapnel at Quang Tri, near the DMZ (I Corps). Also WO2 Thomas 'Tom' McNee, on his second tour was medical evacuated from South Vietnam because of illness in September 1970.

Capt's Baird and Crewe plus WO2's Cranston and Williams were involved with special forces before and after their tours with the team.

2Lt Antony Morris was a national serviceman, who did Officer training at Scheyville and remained in the Army, served with the team and had a long military career in RASigs.

### **RASigs Assignments AATTV**<sup>2, 12, 13 and 14</sup>

Major Kenneth 'Ken' James Redman (15 Oct 70 – 14 Oct 71).

**Oct–Nov 70:** Assistant Provincial Adviser, Quang Tri.

**Dec 70–Jun 71:** Assistant Security Adviser/Territorial Security Adviser, Quang Tri.

**Jul–Sep 71:** Assistant Chief of Staff, Territorial Security, Quang Tri.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Army Commendation Medal for Service (USA), Gallantry Cross with Silver Star (RVN), Armed Forces Honour Medal 1<sup>st</sup> Class (RVN) and Armed Forces Honour Medal 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (RVN).





**Career Overview:** Graduated from the Officer Cadet School Portsea in 1954. Retired Major.

Major Barry Ross Tinkler, MBE (3 Aug 62 – 16 Sep 63).<sup>4</sup>

**Aug 62–Sep 63:** Hiep Khanh Training Centre near Hue, Tactics Committee then S-3 Operations and Training. Visited USSF camp Khe Sanh.

**Apr 63:** Visited 22 ARVN Division, Kontum, to repair 510 radio sets.<sup>3</sup> Mission to bring unused WS510 Radio Sets into effective operation. Successful mission.<sup>5</sup>

**Aug 63:** Studied signals equipment and techniques J-6, MACV.<sup>3</sup>

**Imperial Awards:** Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

**Foreign Awards:** Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA), Gallantry Cross with Silver Star (RVN), Armed Forces Honour Medal 1<sup>st</sup> Class (RVN) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1954. Served in Malaya as the platoon commander of C Company, 2RAR (RASigs Officer). First 'Pronto' in South Vietnam that was promoted Major during his AATTV tour plus awarded the Member of the **Order of the British Empire (MBE)**. Promoted Lieutenant Colonel and returned to Vietnam on official duty from Army HQ, Canberra. (26 May – 23 Jun 71). Later CO, 6 Sig Regt.

Major Roland 'Roly' Paul Webb (13 Jan 71 – 16 Dec 71).

**Jan–Feb 71:** HQ, AATTV, Saigon.

**Mar 71:** DSA, Duc Thanh, Phuoc Tuy.

**Apr–May 71:** DSA, Xuyen Loc. Jun–Jul 71, Xuyen Moc. Aug–Sep 71, Long Le.

**Oct–Dec 71:** Duc Thanh, Phuoc Tuy.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Staff Service Medal 1<sup>st</sup> Class (RVN) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Graduated from the Officer Cadet School Portsea in 1952. Later Lieutenant Colonel.

Captain Robert 'Bob' Alexander Baird (24 Feb 71 – 12 Aug 71).

**Mar–May 71:** TOC–Fwd, 1st ARVN Div HQ, near Quang Tri.

**Jun–Aug 71:** TOC, HQ 1st Div, Hue.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Army Commendation Medal for Service (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Bob served in the Royal Marines before joining the Australian Army and was posted to 1 SAS Company from 1959-63 with the trade Operator Wireless and Line (OWL). He served with 126 Sig Sqn (Commando Unit) and was commissioned (Administrative Technical Officers' Course) in the late 1960s before serving with AATTV. Later Major, OC 126 Sig Sqn in 1975-76.







Captain Ronald 'Ron' James Crewe (16 Apr 72 – 9 Dec 72).

**Apr–Nov 72:** JWTC, Van Kiep, Phuoc Tuy.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Nil located.

**Career Overview:** Graduated from the Officer Cadet School Portsea in 1967. Served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Pacific Island Regt in PNG and then 6 Sig Regt. AATTV in 1972. 2IC 126 Sig Sqn (Commando Unit) in 1975-76 and then United Nations Military Observer in Tel Aviv, Israel. later Major, OC 152 Sig Sqn (SAS) Jan 78 to Jan 80 and retire as a Lieutenant Colonel. Ronald also was awarded the **Member of the Order of Australia (AM)** on 26 Jan 1985 in recognition of service with the Australian Defense Staff, PNG.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Antony James Morris, MiD (16 Jun 71 – 16 Dec 71).

**Jun–Sep 71:** MATT, Phuoc Tuy.

**Oct–Nov 71:** JWTC, Van Kiep.<sup>3</sup>

**Imperial Awards:** Mentioned in Despatches (MiD).

**Foreign Awards:** Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Graduated from the Officer Training Unit Scheyville in 1969 (National Serviceman). Awarded MiD for service with the team. Later Lieutenant at 7 Sig Regt in 1975 and OC 72 EW Sqn 1981-82. Staff College in 1983 Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) 91/92. Retired Lieutenant Colonel.

WO1 Lindsay Thomas Allen (5 Aug 71 – 8 Aug 72).

**Aug–Nov 71:** Admin WO, AATTV Danang.

**Dec 71–Aug 72:** JWTC, Van Kiep.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star (RVN), Armed Forces Honour Medal 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (RVN) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Enlisted in 1944 (late WW2) and serve for 35 years. Army Office on retirement.

WO2 Maurice 'Morrie' George Anstee (6 Oct 65 – 8 Jan 66) – First tour with AATTV

**Oct 65–Jan 66:** 5th SFGA team A-107 Tra Bong, Quang Ngai.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Army rugby player. Maurice did a second tour in South Vietnam with 104 Sig Sqn 16 Apr 67 to 5 Feb 68. A number of AATTV were temporary promoted to WO2 for their tour with the team. This was the case with Maurice as he was a Sgt while serving with 104 Sig Sqn in South Vietnam. Retired WO2.





WO2 Mervyn 'Merve' Bede Cranston (5 Feb 68 – 28 Jan 69). WIA

**Feb–May 68:** 3/2 ARVN, Gio Linh area, 1st Division, Quang Tri.  
**May–Aug 68:** Van Kiep, LRRP Wing, Phuoc Tuy.  
**Sep–Oct 68:** RD, Can Tho.  
**Nov 68–Jan 69:** RF, Vin Binh.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** *Presidential Unit Citation (USA), Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star (RVN) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).*

**Career Overview:** *Mervyn was WIA on the 6 May 1968 by shrapnel at Quang Tri. Originally RAInf, transferred to RASigs and then served in SAS.<sup>6</sup> Later SSM at 2 Sig Regt. Retired WO2.*

WO2 Athol Raymond Folbigg (25 Sep 64 – 9 Aug 65).

**Oct 6:** 5th SFGA B Team, Danang.  
**Nov 64–Jan 65:** 1st SFG team A-324, Ta Ko, Quang Nam.  
**Jan-Feb 65:** 5th SFGA C Team Danang, Communications Officer.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** *Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).*

**Career Overview:** *Enlisted in Navy in 1947. Transferred to Army in 1954 so he could play representative rugby union in NSW and is a Drummoyne Rugby old boy. AATTV. Last posting WO1 at School of Signals in 1967.*

WO2 John Andrew James Gibson (15 Jul 71 – 12 Jul 72) Second Tour AATTV.

**Jul–Aug 71:** MATT I, Phuoc Tuy.  
**Sep–Oct 71:** NOTT 2, Phu Cat, Binh Dinh.  
**Nov 71:** JWTC, Van Kiep.  
**Dec 71:** AATTV Training Group, Vung Tau.  
**Jan–Jun 72:** Long Hai Training Battalion.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** *Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA), Training Service Medal 1<sup>st</sup> Class (RVN), Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN) and National Defence Medal with Bronze Star (Cambodian)*

**Career Overview:** *John served with 103 Sig Sqn from the 26 Apr 66 to 30 Apr 67 on his first tour. SSM 130 Sig Sqn before AATTV tour. Later WO1. He was also the President of the AATTV Queensland Branch for many years and a strong supporter for the AATTV memorial at Canungra.*

WO2 Michael 'Mick' William Thomas Gill, MiD (25 Feb 69 – 6 May 69). KIA

**Mar 69:** 5th SFGA Combat Orientation Course, Nha Trang.  
**Mar–May 69:** A-203 and 232 Coy, Platoon Commander, 2 MSF B-20, 5th SFGA, Pleiku.  
KIA, 6 May 69, west of Ben Het.<sup>3</sup>

**Imperial Awards:** *Mentioned in Despatches (MiD) – Posthumous.*





**Foreign Awards:** *Bronze Star with V for Valour (USA), Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).*

**Career Overview:** *Line Sgt before posting to AATTV. KIA on the 6 May 1969 and is interred at the Toowoomba Garden Cemetery, Queensland.*

WO2 James 'Jim' Husband BEM (14 Apr 64 – 11 Apr 65), First tour with AATTV.<sup>7</sup>

**Apr–Aug 64:** Dong Da National Training Centre, Weapons Committee.

**Sep 64–Mar 65:** 1/5 ARVN, 2nd Division, Quang Nam.<sup>3</sup>

**Imperial Awards:** *British Empire Medal (BEM) awarded before AATTV tour.*

**Foreign Awards:** *Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA), Gallantry Cross with Silver Star (RVN) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN)*

**Career Overview:** *Korean War veteran with 2RAR and transferred to RASigs in 1953. Awarded the **BEM** in 1963 for services to the Army Apprentices School. Transferred back to RAInf in 1963 and posted to AATTV as above. Second tour was with 7RAR as A Company CSM (WO2) 16 Feb 70 – 4 Mar 71. Post South Vietnam promoted WO1 and posted as the first post WW2 Army Parachute School RSM. Last posting was RSM 6RAR. Awarded the **Order of Australia Medal** in 1999 and **Queens Jubilee Medal** in 2012.*

WO2 Colin 'Doc' Baxter Judd (11 Sep 64 – 7 Sep 65).

**Sep–Dec 64:** Dong Da Training Centre, Weapons Committee.

**Jan–Mar 65:** 1st SFG Team A-414 A Ro, western Quang Nam.

**Apr 65:** Joined A5/331 later A-104 Ha Than, Son Ha district, Quang Hgai.

**May–Sep 65:** Admin WO2 2<sup>nd</sup> ARVN Div and HQ AATTV Danang.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** *Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN)*

**Career Overview:** *Two tours in Malaysia and then posted to AATTV in South Vietnam and back to 208 (Commonwealth) Sig Sqn in Malaysia. Next posted to the Jungle Warfare Centre, Canungra as an instructor. Posted SSM, 139 Sig Sqn and following to OCS Portsea as an instructor on defence and attack. Promoted WO1 at the Senior NCO academy in Singleton. Took discharge in 1976.<sup>8</sup>*

WO2 Robert Douglas Lawson (2 Feb 71 – 26 Oct 71) Second tour with AATTV.

**Feb–Apr 71:** MAT 21, Quang Ngai.

**May–Oct 71:** 1st ARVN Division, Hue.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** *Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).*

**Career Overview:** *Robert first tour was with 527 Sig Tp (709 Sig Tp) as a Sgt Operator Keyboard Cipher (OKC) from 14 Sep 1965 to 19 Sep 1966. Retired WO2.*





WO2 Kevin John MacPherson (19 May 65 – 6 May 66).

**Jun 65:** 5th SFGA A-104 Ha Thanh, Son Ha District, Quang Ngai.

**Jul 65:** C Team Danang, 5th SFGA.

**Aug 65:** 5th SFGA A-107 Tra Bong.

**Oct–Dec 65:** Dien Ban sub-sector, Quang Nam.

**Jan–Apr 66:** 5th SFGA, Danang, Air Movements.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** Korean War veteran with 3RAR and transferred to RASigs before AATTV tour. Retired WO2.

WO2 Thomas 'Mad Dog' McNee Two tours with AATTV, as follows;

**1<sup>st</sup> Tour** (19 Sept 66 – 5 Sept 67)

**Sep 66–Mar 67:** Phuoc Tuy, RF/PF team.

**Mar–Aug 67:** Nam Hoa sub-sector, Thua Thien.<sup>3</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tour** (29 Oct 69 – 11 Mar 70)

**Nov 69–Feb 70:** Nam Hoa sub-sector, Thua Thien.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Army Commendation Medal for Service (USA), Presidential Unit Citation (USA), Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN)

**Career Overview:** RAInf enlisted in 1944 and transferred to RAA before joining RASigs. He was a jack of all trades, which included Lineman, Clerk and Drill Instructor. Thomas was Medevac with illness on his second tour with AATTV and medically discharged in Sept 1972.

WO2 Geoffrey 'Darby' Ernest Munro Three tours with AATTV, as follows;

**1<sup>st</sup> Tour** (11 Sep 64 – 10 Sep 65).

**Sep 64–Jun 65:** 1st SFG team A-113 then 5th SFGA team A5/334 A Shau later A-102, Thua Thien.

**Jul–Sep 65:** C Team, Danang.<sup>3</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tour** (23 Jul 68 – 10 Sep 70 with leave periods in 1969 and 1979).

**Jul 68 –Sept 70:** RD Cadre Training, Chuong Tien.

**Aug 68:** RD Cadre, Vin Binh.

**Sep 68–Feb 70:** RD Cadre, Can Tho.

**Mar–Jul 70:** RD Cadre, Can Tho. Apr 70, VDAT, Vinh Long.

**Aug–Sep 70:** VDAT, Vinh Binh Sector.<sup>3</sup>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tour** (7 Jul 72 – 2 Dec 72).

**Jul 72 – Dec 72:** Long Hai Training Battalion. Oct–Nov 72, JWTC, Van Kiep.<sup>3</sup>





**Foreign Awards:** Army Commendation Medal for Service (USA), Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN)

**Career Overview:** Korean War veteran serving with the Australian Ancillary Unit in 1952 (RASigs). During Geoffrey's second Tour which was over a three year period he had leave twice out of country 24 Jul to 25 Aug 1969 and 12 Feb to 10 Mar 1970. Over three and half years serving with AATTV in South Vietnam. Geoffrey on the 1 Jan 2001 was awarded the **Centenary Medal** for service to the community.

WO2 Donald 'Don' Ernest Watts (30 Jul 69 – 9 Jul 70).

**Aug 69–Jun 70:** 1/3 ARVN, Hue, 1st Division.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Meritorious Unit Commendation (USA) and Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN)

**Career Overview:** Army rugby player. Korean War veteran with 1RAR (RASigs). Served in Malaya with the 28 Commonwealth Brigade Sig Sqn. Line Sgt at 127 Sig Sqn before AATTV tour. Retired WO2.

WO2 Alan Stewart Williams (29 Oct 69 – 29 Oct 70) Second Tour with AATTV.<sup>9</sup>

**Nov 69–Mar 70:** Platoon Commander, 5th SFGA, 2 MSF B-20, Pleiku.

**Apr 70:** MATT, Baria.

**May–Oct 70:** MATT 2, Dat Do, Phuoc Tuy.<sup>3</sup>

**Foreign Awards:** Cross of Gallantry with Palm Citation (RVN).

**Career Overview:** First tour with 3 SAS Sqn 15 Jun 66 to 15 Mar 67 then 16 Mar 67 to 24 Aug 1967 with Det 152 Sig Sqn (SAS). Posted South Vietnam with AATTV in Oct 1969 to Oct 1970. Later commissioned (Administrative Technical Officers' Course). Last posting 7 Sig Regt retiring as a Major.

## Summary

The team was the longest serving and most highly decorated Australian Military unit to serve in the Vietnam War. RASigs contribution to the team was small (about 2%) but our corps members more than held their own and were involved in many combat operations and unit formations plus worked on some shadow missions with USSF and USCIA. They more than occasionally led South Vietnamese or Montagnard sub-units on operations. In addition, they trained and advised South Vietnamese and Cambodian Soldiers, Montagnard Hill Tribesmen, Khmer Kampuchea Krom (KKK) and Nung Mercenaries.

Team members received many decorations and awards for their service. RASigs member's decorations and awards are listed under the 'RASigs Assignments AATTV' heading above and on the 'Pronto in South Vietnam' website, 'Rolls' page (<http://pronto.au104.org>).<sup>10, 11</sup>





## AATTV Memorial

The AATTV Memorial is located at Kokoda Barracks, Canungra, Queensland. The memorial honours all members that served with the team, with a tree and plaque for each team member – over 1000 trees. An Australian flag has been placed with each tree where the member was KIA or has since passed away.



Photo 5-4.8 - The AATTV living memorial 'The Grove' at Canungra. Source: AATTV Website.

### Notes

1. Introduction based on AWM description of AATTV Overview U53530
2. WO2 Trevor McLean. Detail as RAASC in 'The Men Who Persevered' (note 3) and RASigs in the DVA Vietnam Veteran Roll. Also detail as RAASC in AATTV Monthly Report for January 1968 (AWM98 R723/1/135 Part 2, Jan-Aug 1968).
3. The Men Who Persevered: The AATTV - the most highly decorated Australian unit of the Vietnam war by Bruce Davies and Gary McKay
4. Major Barry Tinkler. Vietnam still haunts war veterans, 50 years on by Damien Murphy. The Sydney Morning Herald.
5. Major Barry Tinkler. AWM-1-2-11 Page 9 | WS510 Radios
6. WO2 Mervyn Cranston. 152 Signal Squadron: The History of the Corps of Signals 1957-1982. Pages 6 and 10.
7. WO1 James Husband. Career details on 7RAR website which included early period with RASigs. [https://7rar.asn.au/wp/?page\\_id=3864](https://7rar.asn.au/wp/?page_id=3864)
8. WO2 Colin Judd. Ray Watts and 208 (Commonwealth) Sig Sqn website. [https://www.marsden.me.uk/army/army\\_index.html](https://www.marsden.me.uk/army/army_index.html)
9. WO2 Alan William. UNSW Canberra interview with Alan Williams 18 March 2004. <https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1616>
10. Pronto in South Vietnam website. Honour Roll, Key Appointments plus Honours and Awards. <http://pronto.au104.org/rolls.html>
11. Major Tinkler and WO2 Husband were awarded the 'General Service Medal 1962 with Clasp – South Vietnam' as they were in South Vietnam before 28 May 1964. Rare as only 70 awarded and all the AATTV except 2.
12. RASigs AATTV manning not detailed in Pronto in South Vietnam Attachment B as it was not a RASigs unit and data located by unit name.





13. It is important to take note in the early years of the Vietnam War some AATTV members were offered Foreign Awards and Decorations but due to Australian Government's policy at the time, were not allowed to accept awards. Indeed, many members who were awarded foreign decorations on the battlefield may have received the award but no documentation, some got documentation but no award and some who would have been decorated, received neither the award nor documentation. No doubt the complete history of foreign awards for the Team will never be fully revealed or known.
14. Career overviews and awards with the assistance of Barry Tinkler MBE, David Lawson, Ken Mackenzie OAM, Lorrie Johnstone, Robert Hartley AM, Gavin Lee and others via facebook comments.

