

ANNEX H TO
CHAPTER 6

8TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT

A BRIEF HISTORY

At 0800 hrs on 8 Aug 1966, the GOC N Comd, MAJGEN T.F. Cape, CBE, DSO, reviewed the Inauguration Parade of 8 RAR. One hundred and fifty ex-members of 1 RAR, which had just returned from Vietnam, were among the founding members. The first Commanding Officer was LTCOL J.O. Langtry, DCM.

On 2 Dec 66, BRIG R.L. Hughes, DSO reviewed a parade of 8 RAR, to mark the occasion of the Battalion coming under command 6 TF.

Early in 1967, 8 RAR was warned for service with FARELF. The Battalion training for this role was completed by 8 RAR's first birthday. The birthday celebrations were limited to a post-exercise party in the Rockhampton training area.

Comd 6 TF, BRIG R.L. Hughes, DSO reviewed a farewell parade at Enoggera on 1 Sep 67. The Battalion moved from Brisbane to Malaysia between 24 Aug and 6 Nov 67, by sea and air.

On 16 Oct 67, the Battalion came under command 28 Indep Inf Bde Gp. The Commander, BRIG P.L. Tancred, OBE, reviewed 8 RAR at Canberra Lines, Terendak Garrison on 24 Nov 67.

The Colonel Commandant of the Regiment, LTGEN Sir Reginald Pollard, KBE, CB, DSO, presented 8 RAR with its Queen's and Regimental Colours at Terendak on 25 Sep 68. In honour of their alliance with 8 RAR, 2 PARA held the ground. At this time the Prime Minister, John Gorton visited the Battalion.

During its tour in Malaysia 8 RAR formed a close association with 8 RMR its opposite number in The Regiment's Allied Regiment.

8 RAR returned to Australia Apr/May 69. From June to October the Battalion conducted intensive training for service in Vietnam. A farewell church parade was held on 31 Oct 69 and in November moved to Vietnam for a years tour of duty with 1 ATF.

While serving in Vietnam the Unit was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Unit Citation for operations in Phuoc Tuy province between Nov 69 and Oct 70. Twenty-seven members of the Battalion were awarded Vietnamese Medals of Gallantry.

During 8 RAR's tour of duty the Battalion killed 167 enemy and suffered the loss of 18 soldiers killed in action. The Battalion returned to Enoggera in Nov 70.

8 RAR remained at Enoggera from Nov 70 to Oct 73 when it was linked with 9 RAR to form the new Battalion, 8/9 RAR.

- Appendixes:
1. 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment - Theatres of Service
 2. 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment - Commanding Officers
 3. 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment - Regimental Sergeant Majors
 4. 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, Allied Regimental - The Parachute Regiment
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THEATRES OF SERVICE

From	To	Country	Base	Bde/Div/TF
Aug 66	Sep 67	Australia	Enoggera	6 TF / 1 Div
Sep 67	Apr 69	Malaysia	Terendak	28 COMWEL Inf Bde Gp
Apr 69	Nov 69	Australia	Enoggera	6 TF / 1 Div
Nov 69	Nov 70	Vietnam	Nui Dat	1 ATF
Nov 70	Oct 73	Australia	Enoggera	6 TF /1 Div

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REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJORS

8 Aug 66 - 18 Feb 71

WO1 G.J.C. Lee

19 Feb 71 - 30 Oct 73

WO1 H.E. Smith

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8TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT

VIETNAMESE CROSS OF GALLANTRY UNIT CITATION

The text of this award is as follows:

"Commendation before the Armed Forces, is awarded to:
The 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

The Battalion has distinguished itself and consistently displayed a spirit of co-operation with, and assistance to, the People of the Republic of Vietnam, in their struggle for peace and freedom. During the period of operations in Military Region 3, Republic of Vietnam, from 28th November 1969 to the present, the 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment has participated in most search and destroy operations conducted in Phuoc Tuy Province. Especially the operations in the Long Hai Mountains area, also known as the 'Minh Dam Secret Zone,' a sanctuary for Viet Cong Main Force Units in Phuoc Tuy Province. This Zone had been strongly defended by the enemy from which they inflicted heavy casualties on friendly forces. However with modern tactics and a high fighting spirit, the Battalion continued operations to destroy the Secret Zone, causing heavy casualties on the enemy and repelling them from the sanctuary, so that the population could live in security.

In addition to the purely military efforts, the troops of this Battalion have effectively participated in the Civic Action Programme, to help the population rebuild their dwellings, roads, bridges, markets and schools, with favourable results.

With the above exploits, the 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment has contributed realistic efforts to the anti-communist struggle of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, and has displayed the heroic traditions of the Royal Australia Armed Forces."

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ALLIED REGIMENT - THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT

Regimental Motto - "Utrinque Paratus" - "Ready for Anything".

Regimental March Past - "The Ride of the Valkyries".

Her Majesty the Queen approved the alliance between 8 RAR and the Parachute Regiment on 8 Dec 77.

Short History of the Parachute Regiment

22 Jun 40, less than three weeks after Dunkirk, Mr Winston Churchill directed the War Office to investigate urgently the possibility of forming a corps of Parachute Troops of approximately 5,000 strong. By the 6th of August 1940 500 men had been selected from 3,500 volunteers to undergo special parachute training at the Central Landing School which had opened at Ringway near Manchester on 21 June.

The Parachute Regiment was formed on 1 Aug 42 and included as part of the Army Air Corps. Previously the Parachute Battalions had no parent regiment or corps.

The first large scale dropping of parachute forces took place in the North Africa Campaign. From Nov 42 to Apr 43 the 1st Parachute Brigade completed three airborne operations at BONE, TEBESSA, ETIENNE and five months as infantry. They fought in every sector of the British Forces in TUNISIA and gained the admiration of the enemy who called them "The Red Devils".

By May 43 the 1st Airborne Division had been mobilised and departed for North Africa. On Jul 9th the 1st Airlanding Brigade captured the Ponte Grande Bridge near Syracuse and four days later the 1st Parachute Brigade captured the Primsole Bridge which shortened the war in Sicily by seven days.

On the 6th June 44 the 6th Airborne Division dropped behind the enemy lines in Normandy and seized the area to the north east of Caen including the vital bridges over the Orne and Canal de Caen. 83 days later after bitter fighting the Division returned to England.

17-21 Sep 44 the 1st Airborne Division dropped in Holland and attempted to hold the vital bridge over the Lower Rhine near

Arnhem. After ten days of fierce fighting and suffering heavy casualties the survivors withdrew having gained the admiration of both allies and enemy for their heroic efforts. These men on their return were reformed into the 1st Parachute Brigade and on 3rd Jun 45 were dispatched to Norway to assist the evacuation of German Troops after the capitulation. Meanwhile on the 27 Mar 45 the 6th Airborne Division dropped across the Rhine and secured vital ground and communications for the advancing Second Army.

Since the end of World War Two, the elements of the Parachute Regiment have served in Cyprus, BAOR, Suez, Borneo, Aden, Jordan, Northern Ireland and the Falklands.

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MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Battalion Firsts. 8 RAR was the first battalion to be presented with its colours whilst serving overseas. At the presentation by the Colonel Commandant at Terendak, the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, held ground in honour of the alliance.

Battalion Association. The following information is significant in the development of the Association:

On Remembrance Day, 11 Nov, each year, a parade is held to mark the association of 8 RAR with the amalgamated 2/8th Battalion (AIF) Association and the 8th Battalion (1914-1918) Association.

On the first of these parades in 1966 a silver plated bugle was presented to 8 RAR by Colonel J.E.M. Hall (RL) representing the Association.

On 19 Jun 69, a bronze plaque, in the design of the Regimental Badge, was presented by the Association to the CO and now stands in front of Bn HQ.