

**ADDRESS BY GEORGE MANSFORD TO RAR ASSOCIATION DINNER
BRISBANE. NOVEMBER 09**

YOU CAME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. YOU SERVED AT DIFFERENT TIMES IN DIFFERENT PLACES. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHO YOU WERE, WHAT YOU WERE, WHERE YOU SERVED OR DID NOT SERVE. EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM THE YOUNGEST TO THE OLDEST HAS MUCH IN COMMON-- YOU SERVED IN THE BELOVED REGIMENT.

SO JOIN ME IN A WALK DOWN THE OBSERVATION LANE TO CAPTURE SOME MEMORIES FROM OUR GENESIS TO AFGHANISTAN, FROM 37 PATTERN GAITERS, 303S, OWEN GUNS AND BRENS TO KEVLA ARMOUR, NIGHT VISION, STYERS AND MINI GUNS.

I RECALL SOME OF THE ORIGINALS FROM KOREA WEARING A TRIANGULAR SHOULDER PATCH WITH A 9 AT EACH APEX, REPRESENTING THE 27 BRIGADE. IN THE BARRACKS THEY CONSUMED MUCH ALCOHOL, CONSTANT GAMBLING AND IN BETWEEN BRAWLING WITH STRANGERS THEY TAUGHT ME SOME VERY BASIC RULES OF SOLDIERING. NEVER DOB, LOOK AFTER YOUR MATES, AND NEVER VOLUNTEER.

EACH GENERATION HAD ITS CHALLENGES BUT THERE WERE AT LEAST FOUR DEFINING MOMENTS.

KOREA WHERE THE REGIMENT, POORLY EQUIPPED, UNDERSTRENGTH AND WITH LIMITED WARNING WAS COMMITTED TO WAR FOR THE FIRST TIME AND PERFORMED MAGNIFICENTLY IN THE TRUE STYLE OF THE ANZACS. THE REPUTATION FOR THE REGIMENT WAS ESTABLISHED AND BECAME A BENCH MARK FOR ALL THAT FOLLOWED TO EMULATE; NOR SHOULD WE FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF THE YOUNG OFFICERS WHO WERE BAPTISED IN BATTLE AND LATER WOULD COMMAND BATTALIONS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR NOR THE NUMEROUS SOLDIERS AND NCOS WHO WOULD BE THE SENIOR MENTORS IN FUTURE CONFLICTS. THE CRUICKSHANKS, CHINNS, BANDYS, O'SULLIVANS, OSTARAS, HUSBANDS, ROUGHLEYS, CURRIES, GORDONS, MORRISONS, MOFFITTS, CAMERONS AND SO MANY OTHERS

SECOND WAS THE COMMITMENT TO OPERATIONS IN BORNEO AND VIETNAM COMBINED WITH THE ENORMOUS TASK OF ABSORBING NATIONAL SERVICEMEN, EXPANSION OF THE OFFICER AND NCO CORP, COMMITMENT TO TRAINING UNITS AS WELL AS EXPANDING TO NINE BATTALIONS AND PROVIDING OFFICERS, WOS AND NCOS FOR OTHER UNITS NEW ON THE ORDER OF BATTLE. EVEN MORE DIFFICULT WAS THE NEED TO ESTABLISH A TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL CYCLE TO MAINTAIN THREE BATTALIONS IN VIETNAM AND ONE IN MALAYSIA AS WELL AS PREPARING THE RELIEF BATTALIONS, PROVIDING REINFORCEMENTS TO REPLACE CASUALTIES, AND REPLACING OUTGOING CONSCRIPTS WITH YET ANOTHER NEW GENERATION TO BE TRAINED AND PREPARED FOR WAR.

THE THIRD WAS THE GREAT PEACE WHERE THE ARMY SURVIVED CUTBACKS, CHANGE OF DIRECTIONS, REGULARLY DEPLOYED AGAINST THE SAME ENEMY AND NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES THE MUSSORIANS WERE BEATEN THEY KEPT COMING BACK EACH YEAR.

IT WAS A DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING PHASE OF SOLDIERING. WE OWE MUCH TO THE GENERATIONS WHO DESPITE FRUSTRATION AND DISAPPOINTMENTS MAINTAINED THE STANDARDS AND KEPT THE REGIMENT READY FOR WAR. THE PROFESSIONAL DEPLOYMENTS TO SOMALIA CAMBODIA AND RWANDA AND SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS AT SHORT NOTICE SIMPLY DID NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE OF

THE ANZAC GENES OR SOME MAGIC PILL. IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE PROFESSIONALISM AND DEDICATION OF THOSE WHO HAD SOLDIERED IN A PEACE TIME ENVIRONMENT WITH LITTLE AND OFTEN NO RECOGNITION.

THE FOURTH IS HAPPENING NOW WITH CONSTANT COMMITMENT AND MOVEMENT TO AND FROM OPERATIONAL AREAS WITHIN HOSTILE AND TROUBLED ENVIRONMENTS RESULTING IN AN IMMENSE PRESSURE ON EXISTING MANPOWER AND RESOURCES... THE CURRENT WARRIORS ARE DOING IT WELL

NO MATTER WHEN YOU SERVED, THERE WERE REBELS WHO CHALLENGED AUTHORITY; THE LARRIKANS, THE RUMOUR MONGERS, THE BATTALION BOOKIES, THE COMEDIANS, AND OF COURSE, THE BUSH LAWYERS IN THE RANKS WHO OFFERED ADVICE PRIOR TO MILITARY JUSTICE BEING HANDED OUT TO THE GUILTY ONES BEFORE THEY FRONTED THE BRASS. CLEARLY THE MILITARY HAS A BRILLIANT AND EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF JUSTICE. YOU ALWAYS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLEAD YOUR CASE AFTER GUILT AND PUNISHMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN DECIDED.

IN BETWEEN THAT VERY FIRST TENT IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC AND TODAY'S REMOTE OUTPOST IN AFGHANISTAN, HOME WAS OFTEN A LEAKY TENT, A SHELL SCRAPE OR A BUNKER ON COUNTLESS HILLS, MOUNTAINS, JUNGLES AND DESERTS, OR IN OZ AT THE BACK OF BOURKE OR BEYOND THE BLACK STUMP.

YOU WERE, AND STILL ARE A SPECIAL BREED. WHEN MANY IGNORED YOU, YOU SHRUGGED YOUR SHOULDERS, DREW STRENGTH FROM YOUR OWN MILITARY FAMILY, AND BECAME ALL THE MORE PROFESSIONAL.

WHEN SOME BURNT THE FLAG, YOUR LOVE FOR THE EMBLEM BECAME STRONGER.

WHEN SOME VILLIFIED YOU, IT DREW ALL OF YOU CLOSER TOGETHER AND STRENGTHENED YOUR CAMARADERIE.

WHEN YOU FELT UNCERTAIN AND SCARED, YOU DREW COMFORT AND COURAGE FROM YOUR MATES WHO WERE WITH YOU.

WHEN GIVEN A TASK AND NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT OR DANGEROUS, YOU NEVER HESITATED AND OFTEN DID MORE THAN WAS EXPECTED OF YOU.

IN OUR REGIMENT YOU WERE PART OF THE FAMILY NOT BECAUSE OF THE COLOUR OF YOUR SKIN OR ACCENT, BUT HOW YOU PERFORMED. THE ZIGGY IMAKS OF LITHUANIA, THE TONY PARRELLOS FROM ITALY, THE VON KURTZS FROM GERMANY, THE CHARLIE MEANEYS FROM THE TORRES STRAIT. IT WAS THE FAMILY. IT STILL IS AND WE NEED NO DO-GOODERS, ACADEMICS, OR SOCIAL ENGINEERS TO INTERFERE WITH THE REGIMENT'S STANDARDS OR ATTEMPT BRAINWASHING WITH POLITICAL CORRECTNESS.

IT IS ALSO A REGIMENT THAT HAS NEVER BEEN FOUND WANTING. IT HAS PROVEN ITSELF ON NUMEROUS OPERATIONS IN VARYING SITUATIONS, REGARDLESS OF THE ODDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES. THE BATTLE HONOURS AND CAMPAIGNS ARE WELL ETCHED ON THE WALLS OF THE INFANTRY CENTRE. INCLUDING KAPYONG- MARYANGSAN- THE HOOK, LONG TAN- CORAL- BALMORAL -BINH BA- AND I WOULD HOPE RECENT CAMPAIGNS SUCH AS SOMALIA, RWANDA, TIMOR, IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN HAVE OR WILL SOON JOINE THE WALL WITH MALAYA AND BORNEO.

WHAT IS VERY CLEAR, MOST COMMITMENTS WERE AT SHORT NOTICE AND YOU

WENT WITH WHAT YOU HAD AND THERE WAS NO GILT EDGED INVITATION OR AN RSVP.. NOW A NEW GENERATION HAS TAKEN UP THE TORCH AND DOES LIKEWISE, TODAY AND BEYOND.

YOU WERE PART OF THAT BROTHERHOOD. YOU STILL ARE AND THE HUMOUR AND MATESHIP ABOUNDS.

AFGHANISTAN—A RECENT EXAMPLE WAS IN AFGHANISTAN WHEN A WOUNDED SOLDIER PROTESTED “I WANNA STAY WITH MY MATES”

YOU HAVE SHARED YOUR WATER, THE LAST OF YOUR RATIONS, THE LAST CIGARETTE, THE IMMENSE LOADS, THE PATROLS, THE DANGERS, THE HUMOUR. THE BOREDOM, AND THE EXCITEMENT.

AS YOUNG SOLDIERS AND NEW OFFICERS YOU RECEIVED MANY A KICK ON THE BACKSIDE, BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT KNEW IT WAS COMING, AND ON OCCASIONS A PAT ON THE BACK WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECTED IT, BUT NEEDED IT MOST.

HISTORY CLEARLY RECORDS YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS, SOME OF WHICH ARE NOW ETCHED ON THE COLOURS, AND, AS IS THE WAY OF SOLDIERING, SOME THAT ARE NOT.

YOU WERE BCOF VOLUNTEERS, K FORCE, REGULAR, SPECIAL RESERVE, NATIONAL SERVICE, AND CMF FULL TIME DUTY. NO MATTER WHO YOU WERE OR WHAT YOU WERE, YOU WERE THE REGIMENT

NO BASTARD ORDERED YOU TO BE HERE TONIGHT. YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO BE BACK, ALBEIT FOR A SHORT TIME, TO BE PART OF THAT WONDERFUL AND MAGNIFICENT PAST. YOUR PRESENCE TONIGHT AFFIRMS YOUR LOVE OF THE REGIMENT, RECOGNITION OF YOUR MATESHIP, AND RESPECT FOR WHAT WAS ONCE YOURS. YOU ARE HERE TO SALUTE A LIFE THAT CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED IT.

BUT TIME MARCHES ON. IN SOLDIERING TERMS THE NEW GUARD ARRIVES AND THE OLD GUARD HAS MARCHED OFF. THE FAMILIAR ORDER OF “TAKE COMMAND” IS GIVEN AND A NEW GENERATION STANDS GUARD. SUCH AN ORDER HAS HAPPENED TIME AND TIME AGAIN SINCE THAT VERY FIRST TIME SO LONG AGO. MOST OF US HERE ARE THE PAST NOW A NEW GENERATION IS ON PARADE.

NEVERTHELESS, THE COMMONALITIES ARE THERE. THE CURRENT WARRIORS HAVE THE SAME PRIDE THAT SWELLED YOUR CHEST. THE SIMILAR DETERMINATION THAT GAVE YOU VICTORIES. THE SAME HUMOUR THAT STOOD YOUR SECTION, PLATOON, COMPANY AND BATTALION IN GOOD STEAD WHEN IT SEEMED EVERYTHING WAS UP THE CREEK. THEY HAVE THE SAME MISCHIEF. THE SAME YOUTH THAT WAS ONCE YOURS. THE SAME ASPIRATIONS YOU PURSUED. THEY WEAR THE SAME BADGE WHICH SAYS IT ALL...”DUTY FIRST.” THAT IS HOW THE REGIMENT WAS, THAT IS HOW THE REGIMENT IS AND THAT IS HOW THE REGIMENT WILL ALWAYS BE.

THE INFANTRY ARE A SPECIAL LOT.
THERE WAS ALWAYS A NEW MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

AFTER A LONG NIGHT OF UNCERTAINTY WHO APPRECIATES THE SUNRISE MORE THAN A SOLDIER OR PRECIOUS SLEEP, REMOVING A HEAVY PACK AT THE END OF A DAY, THE SOUND OF A RUNNING STREAM THAT MEANS A WATER RESUP, THE WARMTH OF A SMALL FIRE OR DRY CLOTHES AND A SOFT BED OF LEAVES AS A

MATTRESS

THERE ARE THE PHRASES FROM YESTERDAY THAT SAY IT ALL

**WATCH OUT, HERE COMES THE RSM
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HANG IN THERE, MATE...
AHH, SHE'LL BE RIGHT, COBBER
THEY'VE GOTTA BE JOKING
THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN PLANS
I THINK THIS IS WHERE WE ARE
YOU'LL BE TOLD IN GOOD TIME
THERE HAS BEEN ANOTHER CHANGE IN PLANS
DID YA HEAR THE LATEST FROM BULLSHIT CASTLE?
THEY CAN'T DO THAT TO US
NO TIME TO EAT WE GOTTA GO NOW
I NEED VOLUNTEERS.----YOU, YOU, AND YOU**

IT WOULD BE REMISS NOT TO RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE WOMEN WHO SUPPORT THE REGIMENT IN PEACE AND WAR.. IN ALL WARS THEY WATCH LOVED ONES DEPART AND THEY WAIT. THEY PLAY THE WAITING GAME. THEY LISTEN TO THE NEWS THAT THERE ARE CASUALTIES, AND THEY WAIT FOR THAT KNOCK ON THE DOOR. AND WHEN THE WAITING GAME IS OVER THERE IS TEMPORARY RELIEF UNTIL THE RADIO/TV SET ANNOUNCE THE GAME HAD BEGUN AGAIN.

**WITH EACH GAME, SOMEONE LOSES, FOR THERE ARE ALWAYS LOSERS IN THE WAITING GAME..
OUR NATION OWES A GREAT DEAL TO SUCH WOMEN WHO AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER HAVE BEEN BOTH MOTHER AND FATHER FOR THOSE AGONISING PERIODS OF SEPARATION.**

**IN KOREA IE WAS 'SAYONARA'.
MALAYA -MALAYSIA IT WAS "SALAMAT JALAN."
IN VIETNAM IT BECAME "TAKE CARE"
GOODBYE IMPLIED FINALITY. "TAKE CARE." IMPLIED YOU WOULD MEET AGAIN, NEXT WEEK, NEXT YEAR OR WHENEVER.
THAT THERE WOULD ALWAYS BE THE CHANCE TO MEET UP WITH OLD MATES, FOR ANOTHER YARN, ANOTHER BEER, CRACK A JOKE, TO RELIVE THE GOOD TIMES, AND RECALL THOSE WHO HAVE GONE WHO ONCE SHARED IT WITH YOU. TONIGHT, NO MATTER IF I DO NOT KNOW YOU, DID NOT SERVE WITH YOU, IWILL, LIKE YOU WILL DO, USE THAT SPECIAL FAREWELL WITH IMMENSE RESPECT TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU. UNTIL WHEN EVER AND WHERE EVER, "TAKE CARE"**