

## **Lieutenant Colonel B. J. Vickery OAM (Retired)**

Brian James Vickery was Senior Postal Clerk at Murwillumbah in NSW when he was called up for National Service in 1966. He commenced his recruit training at 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion, Singleton. He applied for and was accepted to attend the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville which commenced immediately.

Brian served his first posting after graduation at Holsworthy, as a platoon commander with 1 RAR, who had recently returned from their first tour of Vietnam. He was then posted to the Infantry Centre at Ingleburn before securing a posting to 9 RAR in July 1968 again as a Platoon Commander. He toured Vietnam with 9 RAR, being the only National Service Officer to do so, this was considered extraordinary in a battalion that comprised sixty percent national servicemen. Brian returned to Enoggera Barracks in Brisbane, Qld and with the battalion and was promoted to Lieutenant and posted as a company second in command.

In 1970 Brian was posted to Canungra, Queensland where he spent two years as an instructor on Battle Wing. He was posted to New Guinea from Canungra but was diverted to a staff Officers posting in Darwin where he spent two years on Headquarter 7<sup>th</sup> Military District. In 1975 he was posted as a Captain on an exchange posting with the Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong. In February he, and his family, joined 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles in the New Territories of Hong Kong. After one year Brian and family accompanied the Gurkha battalion to Brunei for a year of tropical training.

On return to Australia Brian was again posted to Holsworthy to join 5/7RAR in the Mechanised Infantry Trial. Alby Morrison was the Brigade Commander at Holsworthy at this time. Brian was the Senior Instructor of Field Wing at Officer Cadet School in Portsea, Victoria in 1979-80 and attended Staff College at Queenscliff also in Victoria in 1981.

He served staff postings with Headquarters Field Force Command and Headquarters Training Command before being posted as the Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Logistic Support Group in Sydney. The most distinguishing aspect of Brian's career was that he held command postings at each of his rank levels.

Brian was instrumental in raising the 9RAR Association (NSW) and presided over it for ten years. In 1992 he was elected as the President of 9RAR (National) and still holds that position.

In 2005 Brian agreed to assist in the revitalisation of the Kingscliff RSL Sub Branch at the seaside village where he lived. He assumed the role of Vice President and assisted in the transformation of the Sub Branch into an active, useful vehicle for meeting the needs of veterans. Brian increased attendances at Anzac Days from 400 to 1500 veterans and interested members of the community. He did this by calling on his service friends (many from 9 RAR) to provide quality speakers and variety. Brian counts, as his most valuable contribution, the time he has spent with local schools ensuring that the history of Anzac is not being misinterpreted nor lost.

In 2006, after some years of pressure, Brian (with a select group of 9 RAR members) produced a book relating to the time spent in 9 RAR whilst preparing for the second tour. This book provided members an opportunity to express some of their feelings about the training, camaraderie and leadership during that difficult period and state their feelings of disappointment when the tour was cancelled. Extremely good insights are provided in the book from the two Commanding Officers.

As a reward for his dedication to 9 RAR (NSW) Brian was invited to become the Patron of the NSW Branch in August 2008. He accepted this invitation.

In 2009 Brian was awarded an OAM for 'services to the veteran community, particularly The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment and services to surf life saving.