

**Eulogy and Statement of Service
for MAJ Sidney Harold Cheeseman
7th March 1935 – 25th March 2015
by Kerry Tunbridge 31st March 2015**



ARMY REFLECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

I feel the eyes of ladies looking at my tie and saying, 'where did he get his dress sense from'. Well, I could have worn many ties for Sid today from the Ancient Mariners League, to the RAEME Corps tie, to the Apprentice Association tie, but decided I could best honour Sid by wearing the tie where it all began for him 65 years ago at the Army Apprentices School in February, 1950 at the age of 14. It is a link between us and for some a badge of honour.

RELATIONSHIP

I have only known Sid for 35 years, but recognise faces who have known him for over 50 years. Our association continued after we both retired from the military through committees where we both served as secretaries and numerous other appointments.

Despite a downturn in his health around 10 years ago, Sid continued with his committee work in the capacity of President of the Chapter 11 173rd Airborne Brigade and Secretary/Treasurer for League of Ancient Mariners.

CAREER

Sid has had an interesting and challenging career with a number of choice postings, which are not awarded without recognition of effort and ability.

We could always chew the fat over the frustrations or achievements. We spoke over his time in BCOF in Japan following the Korean War, his time in Antarctica, the first commitment of regular troops, 1 Battalion to Vietnam in which Sid served. They were part of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade based at Bien Hoa. His time in Thailand establishing the Trade Training Centre for Vehicle Mechanics was a major challenge, but great achievement.

His own command of 1 Watercraft Workshop was his crowning glory before leaving the military.

Despite the glamour we all attach to overseas postings and command of units, the job he spoke most fondly of was a posting to the RAEME Training Centre Bandiana training adult tradesmen. This is the sort of role reflecting his passion for changing recruits into responsible, mature, competent assets for the Army and indeed civilian

life when they chose to leave. He could see the end product and enjoy the satisfaction of passing on his knowledge for the benefit of all.

His motto could well have been, 'Give me the boy and I will show you the man'. His first lecture would no doubt have included those words we have all heard – 'I have heard every story there is for being late' and 'Been there, done that, got caught, so will you, so don't try'.

His commitment, dedication and professionalism during his military career were recognised with the award of Member of the Order of Australia whilst at 1 Watercraft Workshop prior to his retirement.

CHARACTER

Sid did not accept fools gladly. He was a man of strong conviction and high sense of moral duty and commitment to a cause that is right. Upon giving Sid an assignment, the worst thing you could do was to tell him how to do it. If he had any questions, he would get back to you.

Sid formed a quick assessment of those who were not on the same page as him – he referred to them as the two Bs. The first was for those more senior who made life more difficult than it needed to be and I don't need to mention that one. The second was for those on a different frequency or those we say have skipped a few pages – they were Billygoats and the expression bounced off my ears on numerous occasions.

I recall the mixed Dining In nights at 1 Watercraft Wksp with the workboat picking up guests at the Man O War steps at the Opera House, a scrumptious meal and splendid evening including the lighting on the wharf. Nobody could put on a better Dining In night than Sid Cheeseman and I have put on a few myself.

They were wonderful years where authority and responsibility were not questioned to the nth degree. Those years have now gone and our dear mate Sid has passed with them.

This same professionalism continued after his military career with the annual 4th of July dinner for the Chapter 11 173rd Airborne Brigade and the annual lunch for the League of Ancient Mariners at South Head or on Sydney Harbour.

So many wonderful memories and part of the legacy he leaves upon this earth.

LEGACY

When we do lose a close friend, it is a gentle reminder of our own mortality and time to reflect upon the legacy we will leave behind. Sid's legacy includes his two sons of whom he always spoke so proudly and his grandchildren. They are the footprint he leaves upon this earth.

His legacy is rich with memories of achievements and contributions. When most of us retire from the workforce, we look forward to relaxation and a little travel. Sid never retired – he was there to help others. There were committees – he was a

President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and functions to organise down to the finest detail, including speakers.

Sid always put his hand up to assist others. He was even on the Residents' Committee in his Retirement Village.

He was a leader who would never ask of anybody something he was not prepared to do himself. He was firm but fair with compassion for his fellow man.

He was an author and wrote our Army Apprentice history – 'From Boy to Soldier'. He wrote numerous articles for Associations. His last is 'An Overview and History of 1 Watercraft Workshop', extracts of which will appear in the RAEME Corps History to be released this year. He loved military history and was a prolific writer.

He always expressed concern about the welfare of others regardless of his own health and directed colleagues to areas of professional assistance.

He was a Justice of the Peace.

He was self taught computer literate – not having the benefit of being exposed to them in the workforce like most of us.

There are those in life who want it to happen. There are those who watch it happen. But there are few who make it happen and Sid Cheeseman was one of those.

One of the greatest legacies we can leave behind is 'Did we make a Difference' and Sid Cheeseman made a huge difference.

CONCLUSION

I was so pleased for him when he was able to make a trip back to Vietnam with his son, David, last year – 49 years after he left.

Sid would not want us to mourn him, but to celebrate a life full of interest, challenges and achievements. His esteemed character traits of loyalty, mateship and camaraderie, so dear to the hearts of those who have served in the military, were admired and respected.

Saying farewell to a dear friend sounds too final. Let me just say that the song is ended, but the melody will linger on.

Australian Government



Department of Defence

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

Full Name: *Sydney Harold CHEESEMAN*

Service Number: *242574*

Date of Birth: *7 March 1935*

Category of Service: *Australian Regular Army*

Date of Enlistment: *3 February 1950*

Date of Discharge: *28 February 1985*

Rank on Discharge: *Major*

Postings/Attachments:

<i>Army Apprentice School</i>	<i>3 February 1950</i>
<i>Eastern Command Workshop</i>	<i>21 September 1953</i>
<i>Australian Ancillary Unit Korea</i>	<i>11 March 1955</i>
<i>1 Commonwealth Division Infantry Workshop</i>	<i>21 October 1955</i>
<i>British Commonwealth Base Workshop</i>	<i>22 March 1956</i>
<i>2 Base Workshop</i>	<i>20 August 1956</i>
<i>1 Field Regiment Light Aid Detachment</i>	<i>28 June 1959</i>
<i>Headquarters Eastern Command</i>	<i>24 September 1961</i>
<i>Australian Logistic Support Company (Vietnam)</i>	<i>13 October 1965</i>
<i>101 Field Workshop (Vietnam)</i>	<i>9 May 1966</i>
<i>1 Watercraft Workshop</i>	<i>19 October 1966</i>
<i>Army Headquarters Melbourne</i>	<i>15 January 1967</i>
<i>Motor Mechanics Training Centre Thailand</i>	<i>1 April 1968</i>
<i>RAEME Training Centre</i>	<i>5 July 1971</i>
<i>35 Water Transport Squadron</i>	<i>6 August 1973</i>
<i>Headquarters 2 EME Group</i>	<i>21 October 1974</i>
<i>1 Watercraft Workshop</i>	<i>2 April 1979</i>

Overseas Service:

<i>Japan and Korea:</i>	<i>24 February 1955 to 17 July 1956</i>
<i>Vietnam:</i>	<i>13 October 1965 to 21 October 1966</i>
<i>Thailand:</i>	<i>12 September 1968 to 26 June 1971</i>

Honours and Awards:

Member of the Order of Australia
Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasp Vietnam
Australian General Service Medal for Korea
Vietnam Medal
Australian Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasp Korea
Defence Force Service Medal with First, Second, Third & Fourth Clasps
National Medal with First Clasp
Australian Defence Medal
Vietnamese Campaign Medal
Returned from Active Service Badge

You may wish to advise Major Cheeseman's next of kin that he may have been eligible for a further award. The Directorate of Honours and Awards can be contacted on 1800 111 321.

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Director Defence Archives
Defence Support and Reform Group
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30 March 2015