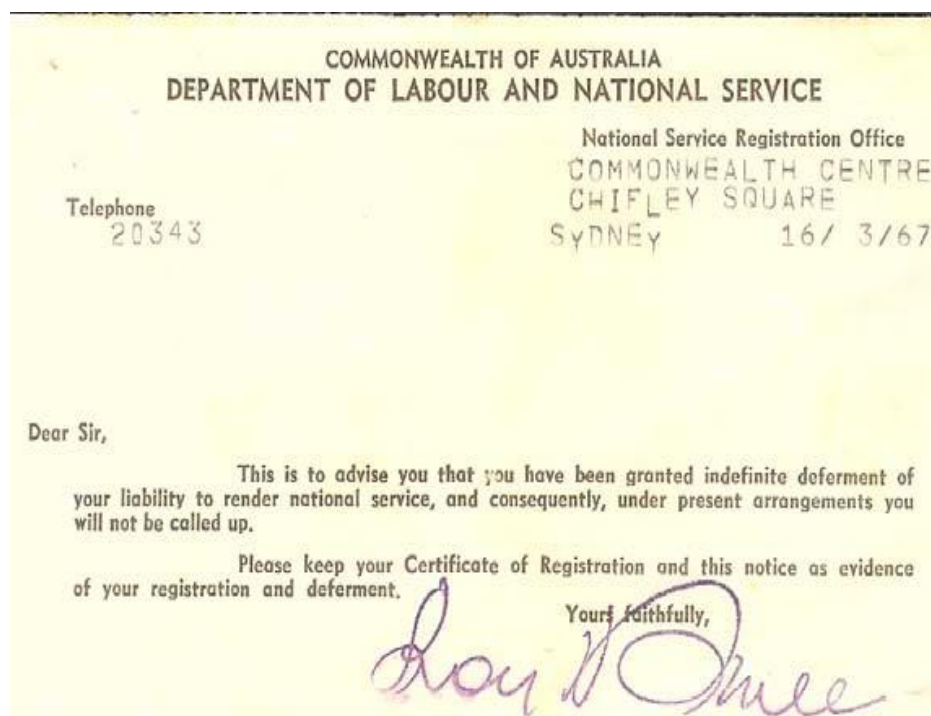


Vietnam War

On reflection, the 1960's was an uncertain time. The assassination of President J.F. Kennedy in 1963 and the rumblings of war in what was known as Indo-China – Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia added to the turbulent years.

Students who were lucky enough to be in the Ibrox Park B.H.S. Cadet Unit experienced aspects of Army life and perhaps, prepared them for the unexpected challenges of that time - particularly the Vietnam War.

National service was introduced. Past students enlisted or were conscripted, many received National Service Notices. Conscription was a lottery; it was based on whether a birth date was drawn out the "*lottery barrel*" for a particular month. Dates were published in newspapers and those who had birthdays on those dates received a National Service Notice from the Department of Labour and National Service.



1. National Service Notice, 1967.
Department of Labour and National Service.

There are scant records about students who were involved with the Vietnam War. Over the last few Annual Reunions have attracted past students who have generously shared experiences and memorabilia of that time. However, there is little documentation and mainly "*word-of-mouth*" that has enabled the piecing together a picture of the Ibrox Park B.H.S. students who served their country.

Students who served in Vietnam included Richard Friend, John Proctor, Len Pitt and Russell Fozzard – there may be others.

Russell Fozzard¹ served in the Royal Australian Army Ordinance Corps from 3rd May 1965 to 3rd May 1971 – a total of 6 years. He was despatched to the 2nd Advanced Ordinance depot – Vune Tau, South Vietnam. Russell was attached to the American Army at Vung Tau air base and the 14th Ordinance Ammunition Platoon. His overseas service lasted from 26th September 1967 to 26th September 1968.

¹ Corporal Russell Fozzard (2412285), Royal Australian Army, Ordinance Corps.

On reflection, the Vietnam War brings back painful memories.

One stand-out memory is a sense of shame created by the Australian community failing to recognise the contribution of the men and women who answered a national call for service in Vietnam - denying recognition of their contribution at that time was disgraceful.

Many Vietnam Veterans would have felt betrayed by a thankless country. It has become a burden of conscience for many Australians who regard this betrayal as shameful despite attempts to make-up for something that should not have happened. Australia will carry this burden alongside of other national disgraces that have failed to acknowledge the sacrifices made by selfless people who gave more than their best.

The lack of public welcome and recognition in 1969 created a sense of national disloyalty that is carried by many veterans. Recalling a time when soldiers were pelted with tomatoes and smothered in red paint in George Street Sydney was nothing short of shameful. The prior media build-up and political populism created the ugly Australian - a blight that will last the life-time for the heroic soldiers who held their ground not only in Vietnam, but also on a Sydney street.

The memory of the *"Welcome Home Parade"* in 1987 brought back the shame. The parade was too late to fix the damage caused by the national disgrace and the lifelong psychological effects of war. The question will always remain that if the soldiers were welcomed on their return from Vietnam and support was given to the Veterans at an earlier time, maybe the scars of war could have been healed.



128. Private Russell Fozzard (18 years old)
Royal Australian Army Ordinance Corps
Ordinance Training January- March 1966
Bonegilla, Victoria,

Source: Russell Fozzard



129. Private Russell Fozzard, Recruit
Royal Australian Army, Recruit Training Battalion
C Company, 13th Platoon, 3rd May – 3rd August 1965
Silver City, Kapooka, N.S.W.

Source: Russell Fozzard



130. Corporal Russell Fozzard (Middle, seated)
Royal Australian Army Ordinance Corps
"Having a drink with American Service Men during the Tet Offensive" January – April 1968
Long Binh, South Vietnam.

Source: Russell Fozzard



131. "Huey Helicopter taking off"
Mounted M60 machine guns.
During the Tet Offensive, 1968
Long Binh, South Vietnam

Source: Russell Fozzard



132. Chinook Helicopter
"Used to transport everything and everyone"
Transported Agent Orange, Ammunition, Artillery
South Vietnam.

Source: Russell Fozzard



133. "A town called Baria not far from Vung Tau".
Damage after a fire fight during the Tet Offensive, 1968
South Vietnam.

Source: Russell Fozzard