



## RESERVE FORCES DAY 2017 Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> & Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July

1.

The theme for Wondai in 2017 is the work of the Royal Australian Navy in 1917 in distant waters and that of the RAN Naval Reserve both as members of the various guard detachments in Australia and of the Bridging Train in the Sinai, all of which was unsung and largely, as a consequence, unknown to most Australians.

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It is hoped that on the occasion of RFD 2017 we may hear words of the work of the current Royal Australian Naval Reserve situated throughout the country and manning positions on ships not easily filled through regular arrangements.

# 75

1941 — 2016



In the meantime we progress towards Navy Week in October and this year pay respects to our friends in the Shaky Isles who celebrate the foundation of the Royal New Zealand Navy 75 years ago.

By the end of the Second World War the RNZN had 60 ships in commission and they had participated in the various sea battles in the Solomon Islands and with both the US 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet and the British Pacific Fleet in the later campaigns in the Central Pacific up to and including the Japanese surrender. These days the RNZN forms part of a multi-national effort to curb gun-running and piracy off the Somali coast as part of a task force as well as accommodating its duty policing the nearby Pacific Islands and the Antarctic.

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From the RFD archives there is this photo of the very first official act of the Wondai Committee in **2005** and that was the placing of a wreath of native blossoms on the Cenotaph at Wondai in commemoration of the Charge by the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Brigade at Beersheba. The wreath was laid at the time of the day that the order was given for the charge.



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan 18<sup>th</sup> August 1966 Operation Smithfield

The most written about action of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War and a fair bit of it, to begin with, was wishful thinking.



The D Company 6 RAR action proved the worth of patrolling in depth and in strength. D Company disrupted what was believed to be preparations for an attack in regimental strength on the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force area. The enemy was very well organised and equipped and showed skill in his battle drills while the performance of D Company showed good command and control throughout the battle.

**Lt David Sabben 12 Pl D Co on the battlefield after the fight**

The battle itself developed from a basic lack of knowledge of enemy strength, locations, capabilities and intentions and involved A, B & D Companies plus an APC troop with artillery support; most of 1ATF had little idea of what was really happening. The following days were spent trying to locate the retreating enemy and eventually a Corps-sized sweep named Operation Toledo was mounted to maintain pressure on the VC although it accomplished little.



### KATIA & BIR EL ABD 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> August 1916.

At Katia and Bir el Abd saw the end of the Turks efforts to advance on the Suez Canal and having cleared the oasis area the light horse had almost single-handedly broken the enemy. These actions came at the tail end of the major battle at Romani where the stand of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Brigades against the advancing Turks and the New Zealanders counterstroke completely changed, by the victory there, the fortunes of the combatants from being strictly on the defensive to driving the invading Turk back to his start line on the Palestine border.



### MOUQUET FARM 8<sup>th</sup> Aug-5<sup>th</sup> Sept 1916.

This attack was intended as the second part of an operation to drive a wedge behind Thiepval with a view to breaking down the German trench system north and north-east of the new Australian position at Pozieres. According to a forecast by GHQ the 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Corps would in two leaps make its approach to Mouquet Farm and then on the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> August deliver a general attack. It was highly speculative.

A series of battles ensued on a narrower front but with all the horrors of the Pozieres fighting. With every advance the flank was deliberately expanded eastwards to give more room to the attacking troops who were launched into the Mouquet salient and pounded on three sides by German artillery. By the 12<sup>th</sup> of August the Australians had thrust a third of a mile but under continual bombardment made any further advance marginal at best and all the battalions suffered severely. Faced with a strong and continuous defence 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac didn't win an inch of enemy territory towards Mouquet Farm for the loss of 4,649 in all, mainly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Division in nine days and over 6 successive night attacks. Of the casualties men from Wondai district accounted for three killed in action and six wounded in action, all save two in infantry battalions.

