



# THE MISSION

Everyman's Ministry to the 8th/9th Battalion  
the Royal Australian Regiment

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Dear supporters and prayer partners, I hope that you are all well by God's grace. Here we are already in September and Claudia and I have been busy as always and we have a few very exciting announcements to reveal to you all!

## EXERCISE TALISMAN SABRE 2019



Every two years the Australian Defence Force hosts several international armed forces for a big war game exercise called 'Talisman Sabre' or 'T.S.' for short. TS takes place in Shoalwater Bay an hour north of Rockhampton. It was the eighth iteration of the exercise and consisted of a Field Training Exercise incorporating force preparation (logistic) activities, amphibious landings, land force manoeuvre, urban operations, air operations, maritime operations and Special Forces activities. There also several smaller exercises that led up to and followed the main exercise. This year T.S. has some 34,000 people involved and we had involvement from the U.S, Japan,

New Zealand. We also saw contingents from the Philippines and Fiji come for training with our Australian Forces. This gave the opportunity to minister to not only the regular Australian Forces but a variety of overseas Forces. One of the highlights was sharing the gospel with Japanese soldiers (above pic) using 'Google Translator' which is an application that automatically translates your words when you speak into another language. This bridges a gap that would never be able to be crossed before that technology. Assistant Commissioner Richard Gibson (Gibbo) and I worked together much of the time and on this occasion, we were able to give them all the 'Million Dollar Bill' tract to which we translated for them. It was a powerful situation and they thanked us for sharing.

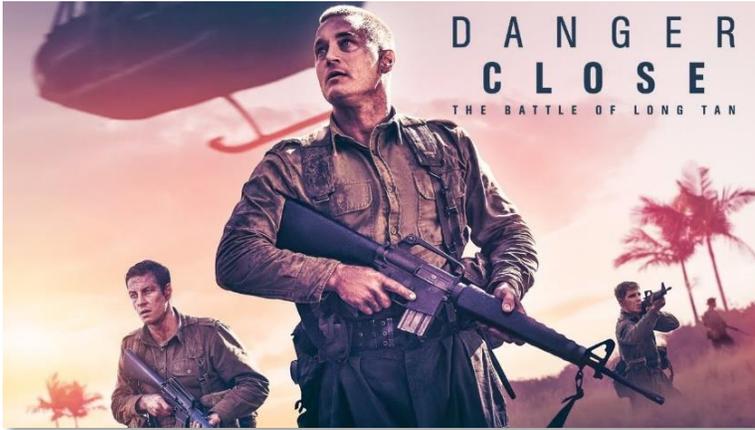


Another great highlight was getting to know the U.S. Marines. I became close to a few of them and the Lord gave me opportunities to share the gospel and to encourage some of the Christians amongst them. I found it much easier to talk to the Americans about God as many of them have a Christian faith, as opposed to the Australians, who, are very hardened toward religious conversations. I formed a friendship with the company commander of 'Chosen' Company of the Marines his name is Chris (pictured left standing next to me with his arm on my shoulder) and I was able to share my testimony and give him a Bible. Chris is a catholic but isn't born again so if you remember, please pray that what was shared would grow in his heart and that he would truly come to know God. Another truly blessed time was with the Fijian soldiers (pictured below). I met some of them and I ended up spending sometime with them. They were Christians and very much open about it. We ended up having fellowship out in the bush and were praying together as well as sharing stories about life in the Fijian Army. They told me that they are always singing Christian songs and they all pray together before any meetings; this is something that our Army would laugh at! Something that really touched my heart was when the Filipino soldiers (pictured below) came over and I gave away all my Bible and tracts in my truck. I was able to share the truth about God's word with many Catholics. I told them that I would give them a Bible on one condition - that they read and obey what it said! I came to realise that those Filipinos were going back home and soon would be facing a war with the 'Islamic state' in the Philippines and some of them may not survive that combat. I praise the Lord that I had the opportunity to give them the truth and I ask that you pray for those guys if you remember. On these bigger exercises we are flat out day and night and many trips into the local towns of Rockhampton and Yeppoon are made, sometimes on a daily basis. These trips into town are a 'shop 'til you drop' scenario where we are restocking the Brew Truck ready to go back into the battle. Occasionally, we take a bit of time to ourselves and get a meal or visit the local beach at Yeppoon. I would go and have a swim as it is good to refresh but also the busy schedule out bush means that opportunities to wash are few and far between and having a dip is a good way to get some sun and wash away the dirt and sweat. At the beginning and end of the exercise is when things are the busiest because everyone is concentrated in one location and having a few thousand people coming to your truck is a little bit crazy to say the least. During the war-fighting parts of the exercise everyone is spread out in the bush and then the challenge becomes getting around the training area and finding the various units so we can serve them. Many a night was spent doing 'Brew Runs' and on occasions I would stay the night with whatever unit I happened to end up with when it started getting dark. We have to remember that during these exercises they are going up against an enemy force so things like moving around with my truck and having lights and noise may give away their position. Luckily, I know the game and it is easy for me to know what to do and what not to do when operating in a tactical scenario. Needless to say, that everyone was extremely happy to see me whenever I was able to get to their positions. These opportunities are the best to share the gospel. I strategically placed my gospel tracts in places that are in the soldiers faces when they come to visit the truck and the gospel tract that I find the most controversial with most soldiers is called 'The Atheist Test'. It points out the obvious that there is intelligence behind the world we live



in. Sometimes it begins a discussion with the person who takes it and reads it and other times the tracts just simply disappear as many of the soldiers are ashamed to even be talking about religion, but they are still interested to know more. I pray that it will speak mightily to them when they get alone and read the tracts. I can say that this exercise was by far the best time that I have had with Everyman's and certainly my relationship with my unit 8/9 RAR has never been better as they saw that I was willing to go anywhere at any time for them. Please pray for these soldiers to come to know Christ.

# ON THE BIG SCREEN



I mentioned in previous 'The Mission' newsletters that last year in 2018 I was involved with shooting a big budget movie that was to portray one of Australia's biggest battles the took place in Vietnam – The Battle of Long Tan. The battle was fought in 1966 not long after Australia's involvement began in Vietnam. The battle was fought by 108 Australian soldiers of 'Delta' Company 6 RAR and a few New Zealand soldiers attached to them. The movie is called 'Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan and has been in the works for 15 years and the producer had previously made a documentary about the

battle. I was told by a friend who I used to work in the Army with that the film makers were looking for young Veterans to have roles in the film. I sent off an email and got a call that they wanted me for 5 days of shooting. The film was completely shot in Queensland and I only had to drive about 45 mins to get to the set in the Gold Coast and the other set was only 20 mins away in Pimpama. There were many guys that I knew on set from my days in the Army and it was almost like being back in the Army except wearing a different uniform and holding a different weapon, but the banter and larrikinism was the same! I ended up getting selected to wear a sandy brown beret which belongs exclusively to the Special Air Service Regiment who are the elite soldiers of Australia and I was put into the concert scene sitting right next to the Commanding Officer of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion (see pic below). At the time of shooting I wasn't sure if I would get into the film but low and behold when we went to the premier, I got quite a bit of 'face time' in the movie. I also appear in a couple of other scenes including an action scene (but you cannot see my face in it). The movie premier was during Talisman Sabre, so I went home for a couple of days to go and attend with Claudia and our house mates. We all enjoyed it and even



though it is hard to watch due to the graphic nature of it, the movie was fantastic! Many people including the Vietnam Veterans have been raving about it. They truly captured what it is like for a soldier in those terrible situations. The movie is not a glorification of the battle and just shows that our boys really only survived by the 'skin of their teeth'. I also was invited to go to see the movie with the current day Delta Company 6 RAR and we also watched the movie as a part of our EveryVet's meeting last month. I would highly recommend the movie; it was a real 'tearjerker' but seeing what they went through really gives you a lot of respect for them and others who fought in the Vietnam war.



# EVERYMAN'S LIFE

I thought that I would show some of the activities that I have been involved with since the last update. Pictures speak a thousand words. **1.** This was our first 'EveryVet's meeting to be held at Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera in the 'All Saint's chapel. We watch a documentary called 'Capture by Grace' an amazing testimony of Louis Zamperini who was a P.O.W. during WW2 and became a believer in Jesus. **2.** I attended a Veterans lunch put on by the R.S.L. with Ron and his son Don. Ron is in his 90's and was a pilot during WW2 and now lives at Bethany Christian Care where Claudia works. I have shared a bit about the Lord with Ron but so far, he has not come to faith, please pray for him. **3.** My friend, Shannon Higgins whom I went to Afghanistan in 2012 on MTF- 4 recently had an encounter with the Lord and decided to follow Jesus. He was baptised at Enoggera Baptist where he now fellowships. **4.** The logo for the new Brisbane Veterans Rugby League Football club. I am supporting the club by building their website, this is a way that Everyman's and EveryVet's can support the club and get exposure in the Veteran community. They are going to put our logos on their jerseys, and we will bring our Brew Trucks to their games. **5.** Bunnings BBQ fund raiser for the Veterans Rugby League Club. My friend Aaron Wallis who I worked with in 8/9 RAR is the President and founder of the club and we were joined that day by Matt Maher who I used to work with in 8/9 as well. Matt is also involved with the club. **6.** EveryVet's event where we went to see Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan. Everyone seemed to really enjoy the film. **7.** We went out to Hog's Breath cafe for lunch after the Danger Close movie.



# K ON THE HOME FRONT

As I mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter, Claudia and I have some big news - Lord willing we will go to Uganda at the end of the year for a short-term mission trip. We have heard the calling of the Lord to go and help our friends Petri and Katja who have been supporting an orphanage and church there for some years now. We will go and share the gospel with villages, assist in building projects, farming and caring for the children. After Uganda we will go to Finland with our friends, who are Finnish, and they will take us around speaking at churches that have been supporting the project. It will be Claudia's first white Christmas and my second. We will also have some much-needed rest there! Other things happening are - our church here in Brisbane will have an evangelistic outreach into a nearby community hall in Eagleby in October. We will have some performances, Gospel presentation and provide a free meal. I recently have been taking some of the young and older men on some activities such as abseiling and laser tag. We want to try to connect with the younger boys who are going astray and teach them biblical principles at the same time (nothing like dangling from a rope to learn about faith in something!)



## Claudia's Corner

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord is good to us, praise be to Him. In my recent position at work I am responsible for organising and supervising the activities at The Plains and one of the activities is singing. We have singing at the devotions, choirs, chorus and hymns singing, sing along and so on. So, in my going forth, while I am walking through my work, while I am mobilising or taking the residents somewhere, I too sing, and I rejoice in singing praises to the Lord. Because most of them have some hearing impairment I must sing loud! And because of that they won't hear how bad it is sometimes (I hope ☺). The message is: as long as we have breath let's praise Him and let's spread His aroma wherever we go, for He is great and greatly to be praise. *"The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise" (Isaiah 43:21).*



Claudia dressed as a clown for 'Ekka Show Day'

# EveryVet's

## EVERYMAN'S VETERANS LEAGUE

We have many things going on at the moment so please pray for us that we will manage our time well! Here are a few points that you can specifically pray for:

1. Our Trip to Uganda and Finland – May the Lord help us as we prepare to go there. Once there to protect us from harm or sickness and to help us do everything according to His will and not our own.
2. Our Church outreach to the nearby community – May the Lord help us as we go out to evangelise in the lead up to the event. That the Lord would draw all men unto Himself as we lift up Jesus. That there will be a harvest for God.
3. Everyman's ministry – That the relationship with 8/9 RAR will continue to blossom into next year. That God will protect all the Rep's as we head to Bandiana for the Everyman's conference at the end of September.
4. EveryVet's – That God would continue to grow this ministry and draw workers for the harvest who desire to help their fellow veterans who are suffering and looking for help.

Thank you once again for your continued support. We simply could not do what we do without your valuable help. May the Lord bless you for it. We will continue to lay down our lives for the sake of the Gospel.

*Ephesians 6:19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,*

Much love to you and your family,

Ben and Claudia



**EVERYMAN'S WELFARE SERVICE**  
Serving the Australian Defence Force