

# PRESENTATION OF NEW COLOURS TO THE 5<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT

The Colours embody the history, spirit and loyalty of the Regiment and the battalion to which they belong. They are highly valued, carefully guarded and treated with great respect.

The custom of carrying Colours has its origin in ancient times. It is thought the idea originated in Ancient Egypt about 3000 BC. In Roman times each legion carried a standard, a metal pole atop of which was, generally, an eagle with expanded wings. In medieval times during battle, warring factions carried flags or banners of bright distinguishing colours or they had the coat of arms of the commander emblazoned on them to show his position on the battlefield as well as to serve as rallying points.

In 1743 a decree of King George III stated that "No Colonel shall put his arms, crest device or livery in any part of the appointments of his Regiment". He also went on to decree that the "number of the rank of the Regiment" was to be painted in the centre of the regimental or second colour thereby inaugurating the regiment aspect.

Since 1751, regiments have been allowed two colours only for each battalion, the Queen's (or King's) Colour and the Regimental Colour. The Queen's Colour was basically the Union Jack with the Royal Crown and Regimental Title superimposed at the centre until 1970, when the Australian flag took the place of the Union Jack. The Regimental Colour is royal blue (as for all 'Royal' regiments) with a Regimental Device at the centre (this is not a duplication of the Regimental Badge but is similar) on each side of the device are embroidered the major battle honours of the Regiment.

With introduction of more modern weapons the casualty rate amongst Colour and Standard Bearers was very high. So high was the mortality rate amongst colour bearers during the Crimean War that in subsequent European wars British Colours were not carried. The Colours were last carried in battle at Laings Nek on 26 January, 1881, during the first Boer War.

In the days when Colours were still carried into battle they were trooped through the ranks of the regiment prior to an engagement so that they could be recognised by all ranks as a rallying point during the course the battle. Today the Trooping of the Colours through the ranks of the Regiment is continued as a ceremonial movement only. It enables all members of the Regiment may pay due homage to the Sovereign and to the traditions of the Regiment.

During the presentation parade, the Colours are always consecrated in a short religious ceremony when God's blessing on them is asked for by the assembled padres. This dates back to the battle of the Standard in 1138 when the Yeoman of Yorkshire, fighting the Scots, took with them consecrated banners from York Cathedral. They fought so fiercely to save the banners that against heavy odds, they defeated the Scots.

Linked battalions carry both sets of Queen's and Regimental Colours on ceremonial occasions. Whenever the Queen's and Regimental Colours of linked battalions are paraded together, The Queen's Colours of both battalions are placed to the right of the Senior Escort and the Regimental Colours of both battalions are to be placed to the left of the Senior Escort.

The Queen's Colour serves as a constant reminder to all members of the battalions of their duty to their Sovereign and their Country; the Regimental Colour, their loyalty to the Regiment and their comrades

The Queen's and Regimental Colours of the Fifth Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR) were originally presented to the Battalion on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1967 at Holsworthy by His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler VC KCMG KCVO CBE. They were laid up in 2004 at the Soldiers' Chapel at Kapooka after the presentation of the single set of Colours to 5/7 RAR. With the de-linking of 5/7 RAR on 3 Dec 2006 the original 5 RAR Colours were re-dedicated to the Battalion in March 2007.

Because of the age of these original Colours and their consequent condition the need to replace them was recognised and the Battalion was presented with its new Colours by His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Mr Thomas Pauling QC on the 5 June 2008.

The parade was hosted by the Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, Brigadier M. G. Krause, ADC and the principal guests were the Land Commander Australia, Major General M. A. Kelly, AO, the Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Division, Major General R. G. Wilson, AM and the Colonel Commandant of the Royal Australian Regiment, Brigadier M. D. Bornholt, AM.

5 RAR Association members were invited to participate in the parade and march behind the old Colours as they were trooped one last time through the ranks. Members of the Association were involved also in the uncasing of the new Colours along with the Senior and Junior Majors. After the Colours had been blessed in turn by the assembled clergy, His Honour the Administrator received them in succession from the Senior and Junior Majors and presented each Colour to the respective Colour Ensigns.



Members of 5RAR Association and 5RAR march on behind the old Queens and Regimental Colours

After His Honour the Administrator had addressed the Parade the Colour party marched into line and as the Battalion paid compliments with the band playing 'Point of War' followed by the National Anthem the Colour Party marched into position between the No 2 and No 3 Guards. The Battalion then marched past in quick time followed by an Advance in Review Order.

His Honour the Administrator and the official guests then departed, the Colours were marched off the parade and then the Battalion marched off to the applause from the audience of family and friends of the members of the Battalion.



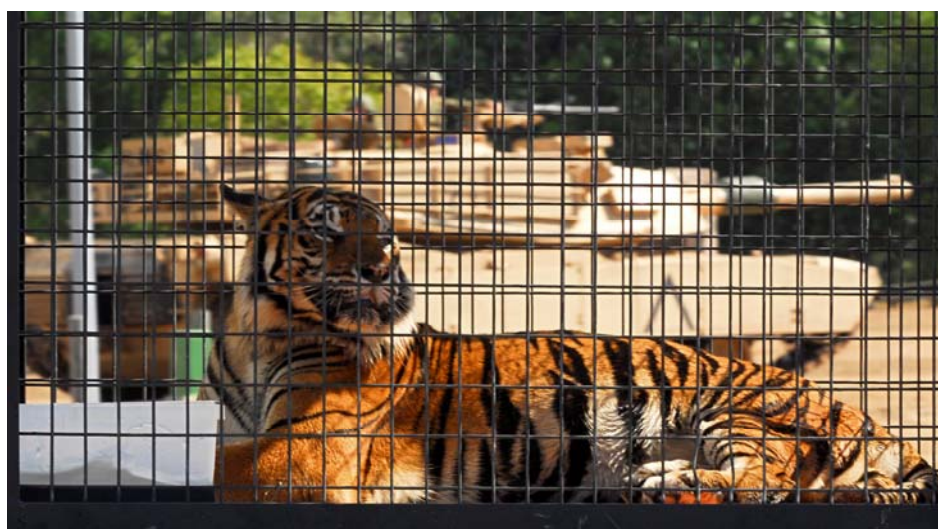
The Chaplains prepare to consecrate the Colours.

The senior Catholic Chaplain sprinkles Holy Water on the Colours. The helmet used to hold the Holy Water was worn at the battle of Binh Ba.



The Colour Ensign receives the Queens's Colour from His Honour the Administrator.

Quintus Septimus Sabre overseeing the Colours Parade.



Australian Infantry Magazine October 2008