

## Eulogy of Patrick John Bunting – Soldier.

Patrick John Bunting was a soldier in the Australian army who served his country with honour and distinction. No greater tribute can be given and nothing more need be said about Pat, as I believe this reflects the high esteem in which he should be held by all.

Pat was an original member of the 5th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment joining at its establishment on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1965 from E Company of the 1st Battalion. He was initially posted to 3 platoon A Company as a section commander and commenced service in Vietnam on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1966. He came to 7 platoon C Company in November 1966 as my Platoon sergeant. The Bunting family was also represented in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion by Pat's late brother Bob, which reflects the high level of service commitment to our Nation by this family.

Pat was a "soldiers" soldier, he never appeared to be under pressure when all around him were experiencing extreme stress. Perhaps the most impressive thing for me, in hindsight, was that he, unlike most sergeants and NCO's rarely raised his voice to instil discipline and did not resort to swearing. His demeanour and professionalism demanded and received respect from his troops.

Pat was not a "saint" and I well remember an incident when the platoon was required to undertake a three day ambush on a track junction. After a day of patrolling we entered the ambush position at dusk and set the ambush with the intention of rotating a section to the rear each day for rest. As this was an ambush the order was no lights, no fires and definitely no smoking.

On the afternoon of the third day at an 'O' group with Pat, Ray Orchard, Ted West and Alan McNulty I was sure I detected cigarette smoke but did not say anything. Later, back at a camp, I mentioned this to Pat who confessed that he and Ray Orchard had copped two diggers lighting up under a poncho in the rear area and as they had already had a puff, they decided to confiscate the lighted cigarette and finish it off themselves, under the poncho of course, on the basis that the damage had already been done.

My tour of duty finished 8 days before the battalion ceased active duty so Pat took on the role of running the platoon. It was a nervous time for all with only a few days to go and the VC planting mines which had caused a number of fatalities in B company as they took over from us on the horseshoe.

Pat led a number of patrols at this time and to confirm what I said earlier about his professionalism I will quote from a 2-day fighting patrol report by him held at the Australian War Memorial:

Encounter with the enemy:	Nil
Condition of patrol:	Laying up on the second day of patrol without water or shade knocked the men about.
Conclusion:	No contact - mission accomplished.

I would like to conclude with a poem which I believe reflects Pat's service as a soldier.

**He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the RSL,  
Telling stories of the past.**

**Of a war that he once fought in  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his mates;  
They were heroes, every one.**

**And 'tho sometimes to his neighbours  
His tales became a joke,  
All his mates listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.**

**But we'll hear his tales no longer,  
For Pat has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Soldier died today.**

**He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived an ordinary,  
Very quiet sort of life.**

**He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Soldier died today.**

**When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.**

**Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young  
But the passing of a Soldier**

**Goes unnoticed, and unsung.**

**Is the greatest contribution  
To the welfare of our land,  
Some jerk who breaks his promise  
And cons his fellow man?**

**Or the ordinary fellow  
Who in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his country  
And offers up his life?**

**The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.**

**While the ordinary Soldier,  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.**

**It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.**

**Should you find yourself in danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some cop-out,  
With his ever waffling stand?**

**Or would you want a Soldier--  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common Soldier,  
Who would fight until the end.**

**He was just a common Soldier,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his likes again.**

**For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Soldier's part  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.**

**If we cannot do him honour  
While he's here to hear the praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days.**

**Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say:**

**"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."**