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# The Granville Guardian

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**The next general meeting of  
the Granville Historical  
Society will be held at 2.00  
pm on Saturday  
23 July 2016  
At our Research Centre  
62 Railway Parade  
Granville**

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **Granville Historical Society**

*“A Place where heritage & culture are valued & celebrated.”*

Firstly I would like to thank the committee and the members for their dedication and hard work for the society in the 2015-16 year. It has been a very busy year once again.

With my election as President of the Granville RSL Sub-Branch, I would like to thank the Granville Historical Society for its support for the Cooee March re-enactment and the ANZAC Day Dawn Services. I also acknowledge and thank your work with Granville Diggers by allowing the use of your WW1 information; it is pleasing to work with a volunteer organisation that is generous of spirit.

The return of the remains of soldiers who died in the Vietnam War last month resulted in the return of Mervyn Arthur Frederick Wilson who was born in Granville. Thank you to members who researched the story, to Guardian Funerals and the photographs they supplied. Gerard Corkeron, a retired Army musician, had researched a lot of information on Mervyn and we have him to thank for the story and the information. Colin Humphreys has written a story about the family. It is gratifying to see the amount of early research by Lorraine Crocker, a past member, is still being utilised. It is her research that started our family research files, which are added to by members every week, and maintained by Daphne Wiles and Frances Bluhdorn.

We wish to thank Roy Burton for spending time on the committee and it is with regret that he will be standing down, but has graciously indicated he will remain Speakers Convenor for the remainder of the year.

**Our work with schools has been very busy this year with visits to our centre by Granville Boys High School and William Street Public. We have also attended Delaney College to give them research skills and resources for their projects. The Parramatta City Council has provided a grant for three schools to tour the Parramatta Female Factory later on in the year.**

**Since the society formed in 1988 we have worked to protect the heritage of Parramatta. In 1990 we worked with Dr. Carol Liston to save the Female Orphanage School, now called the Whitlam Centre. We have many projects like the Granville Swimming Pool, the Lennox Bridge and the Fleet Street Precinct. To this end, our project of Saving the Parramatta Female Factory, took a surprising new twist this year after listening to numerous concerns of members when they spent five months using our centre because their meeting place “Hambledon Cottage” was having maintenance on it. As you are aware June Bullivant has been very active in her work to protect Parramatta. To this end she decided to stand for office for the Parramatta Female Factory Friends.**

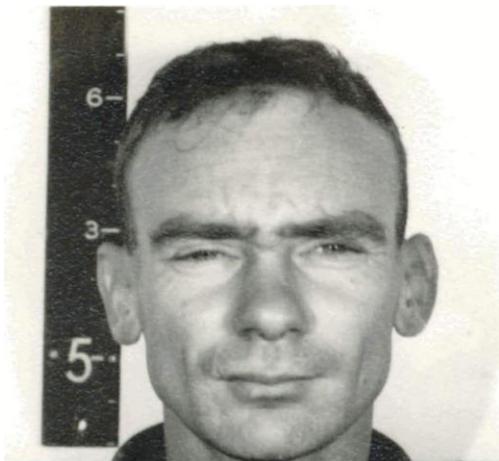
**June was elected to the position of President, joining a hard working committee and assisting to further the work that the Friends have done over the five years since their incorporation. Congratulations to June on her election and we hope we can assist the PFFF in their future endeavours.**

**We look forward to our new committee being elected and hope that the many projects we are finalising will continue, so that future success by the young people of the area can be measured by the information they receive from our society. The society has no boundaries for our assistance to young people. When our community was formed there were no council boundaries; now both the City of Parramatta and the Cumberland Council have offered their support for our work.**

**Barry G Bullivant OAM, President**

#### **VIET SOLDIERS RETURN**

**One of the Australian soldiers whose remains were flown recently from Malaysia to Sydney for interment on home soil was a Granville man, Mervyn Arthur Frederick Wilson.**



**Private Wilson was killed in action against the Viet Cong in Vietnam on 8 January 1966. At the time, service personnel who died overseas were buried abroad. Private Wilson was buried in the Terendak Cemetery in Malaysia, but a “Bring Them Home” campaign persuaded the Australian government to change the policy. On 2 June, the remains of 33 Australians, including Mervyn Wilson and 21 other Vietnam War casualties were flown to Sydney. His remains were finally laid to rest at Rookwood Cemetery the following day.**

Mervyn Wilson was born in Granville on 11 November 1936 to Albert Arthur Wilson and Martha Lillian Mallinson, who married in Granville in 1935. The Mallinsons were a successful Granville family, descended from two brothers who emigrated from Yorkshire in the early 1880s and thrived in their new land. Merv Wilson and his sister Eunice grew up on the central coast of New South Wales. He was a keen musician, and like many boys who live near the surf became a surf lifesaver after training in the junior ranks of the movement. On leaving school, he worked as a telegram delivery boy and in a bakery. Then he obtained a position with the railways, and on 9 November 1960 he enlisted in the army a few days before his 24th birthday. He married Patricia Ann Edwards a year later and they had two children.



Private James Edward Mallinson

The army placed Mervyn in the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment which had returned from 18 months of intensive patrols during the Malayan emergency. His musical ability won him a position in the Regimental Band, and he also trained as a stretcher bearer/medic. Perhaps he was inspired to join up by the family service record in the Boer War and World War 1. In April 1900, a great uncle-by-marriage, Sidney Frank Smith, enlisted in the New South Wales Bushmen's Contingent as a 21-year-old, and saw service in the Boer War for nearly 15 months. In World War 1 three great uncles enlisted in the AIF. Two came back, but James Edward, son of George and Martha

Mallinson of The Trongate, was killed in action on 4 October 1917. His brother, George Richerby Mallinson, was awarded a Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty under heavy enemy shell fire near Ypres on 29 October 1917. A cousin, George William Mallinson, also returned safely.

After returning from Malaya, the 1st Battalion was based at the Holsworthy barracks in Sydney. Its next overseas tour of duty was in Vietnam. The government announced in April 1965 it was sending the 1st Infantry Battalion to South Vietnam to provide military assistance under the Anzus Treaty in the war against the Viet Cong. The Battalion arrived at the Bien Hoa air base in June and was placed under the command of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade, with responsibility for security at the base. But in



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Australian troops in Vietnam

September its role was changed: it was to carry out search and destroy missions against the Viet Cong. Within weeks it had been involved in several fire fights in the jungle and attacks on fortified villages. On 8 January 1966, 1 Battalion RAR and two US battalions were airlifted by helicopters into the Ho Bo Woods north of Saigon for Operation Crimp. Their goal was to find and destroy a Viet

**Cong base, that controlled all VC operations around Saigon area from an underground tunnel complex.**

**As the Australians moved forward from their helicopters, they were unaware they were above the underground bunker system. Platoon leader, Lieutenant Bob Bourke, who was seriously wounded in the engagement, later wrote in his diary:**

*There was a washout in front of us where the water had gouged out the track like a creek bed. That's where we had our first casualties. As the leading sections moved into the open...they were engaged by a Viet Cong soldier firing a Thompson machine-gun. [Bourke's] men rushed forward and sought cover in the depression caused by the sunken road. A mound of earth like an island dominated the washed-out gully where the Diggers took cover. The mound had been hollowed out and small firing slits constructed so VC soldiers could crawl through a connecting tunnel undetected and fire at troops crossing the clearing.*

*The opening burst of automatic fire from the mound scythed through Corporal Ron Smith's section...Smith took two bullets through the eye [and two other men were also wounded.] As Smith's forward scout, Private Barry Delaney, turned to assist Smith, he was hit in the stomach and chest with three bullets at point blank range.*

**Lieutenant Bourke tried to bring Delaney and Smith back, but was shot in the face. Private Wilson gave first aid to Bourke and morphine to ease the pain. He then moved on to treat another wounded man, Private Delaney, while a second medic, Private Chris Clark, bound a man's head wounds.**

*Using the same slit that he had used when he shot Delaney, a Viet Cong soldier shot Wilson in the neck as he administered first aid. Wilson fell on Delaney, bleeding profusely. Clark saw Wilson had been hit and despite warnings of the soldiers nearby, crawled towards his fallen comrade. As he opened his medical pack to pull out a dressing to staunch the gushes of blood from Wilson's punctured jugular vein, Clark was shot in the back at point blank range and died quickly. Wilson bled to death next to him.*

[From Bob Breen's book *First to Fight*, published by Allen and Unwin, 1988.

**The 1st Battalion suffered eight casualties in the engagement. The bodies of Merv Wilson and Chris Clark were retrieved, and later buried in the Terendak military cemetery in Malaysia. They were reinterred in Rookwood Cemetery last month.**

**Colin Humphreys**