

**2412487 WO2 Arthur (Robbie) R. Robinson RAA (Special List) BEM, DCM.**

**Author (for the most part) Rudi Poldoja,**

After enlisting in the Australian Regular Army in 1950 Warrant Officer Robinson served in several appointments as a physical training instructor until his discharge in 1963. He was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1957 for his outstanding service. He rejoined the Regular Army in 1966 and spent much of his time at a Physical Training Instructor at Kapooka. He was posted to Vietnam to the Australian Army Training Team in December 1967.

'Robbie' was a remarkable soldier in his day, with a span of service from the end of WWII in the British Army and then, from 1950, in the Australian Army until 1976 where he was proud to qualify at PTS (then School of Land Air Warfare) in 1953 as a Basic Parachutist and later as Parachute Jump Instructor #3 on the first Parachute Jump Instructor course held in Australia - he appears as a WO2 in course photos of that era as an instructor, the 17/54 course being an example. He represented the School in 1956 carrying the 1956 Olympic torch in the Newcastle leg of the torch relay and was awarded the BEM for his contribution to parachute training, the first instructor to be honoured in this manner. Names such as Warrant Officer's 'Dutchy' Holland and 'Buck' Buchanan, and Squadron Leader Guthrie featured in his descriptions of life at the School in those days, when some pioneering work was done for the parachute capability that we have today.

He went on to serve in the Australian Army Training Team - Vietnam where he won his DCM in 1968. Robbie served with 11 Battalion ARVN Artillery, Quang Tri during Dec 67 and Jan 68, from Feb to Jul 68 with 1/1 ARVN, 1<sup>st</sup> Division, Quang Tri area and from Aug – Nov 68 with Duc My Ranger Training Centre. He was also recognised for his gallantry by the Americans with the Silver Star and the South Vietnamese with the Cross of Gallantry - each of these being among several other awards. He was inducted into the American Rangers Hall of Fame in 1999, the only foreign soldier to have achieved this honour at that time. Among his friends overseas are British and American parachute soldiers of ranks up to and including the Lieutenant General commanding the US First Army, several with service in the great airborne battles of WWII.

His citation for the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) reads;

*“On 1 March 1968 Warrant Officer Robinson was an adviser to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, Army of the Republic of Vietnam which was on a search and clear operation in Quang Tri Province. The Battalion encountered an entrenched North Vietnamese Battalion and became pinned down by heavy and accurate enemy fire. During a critical phase of the battle a rifle Company on the left flank of the Battalion was forced to withdraw creating a precarious situation. Warrant Officer Robinson quickly realised that the company must go forward and retake the lost ground before the enemy reacted. Disregarding the heavy enemy fire he moved across to the company, reorganised them and personally led the assault which recaptured the lost ground. Under enemy fire he carried to safety a seriously wounded*

*soldier, possibly saving the soldier's life. Warrant Officer Robinson's bravery and devotion to duty were an inspiration to the Vietnamese soldiers and contributed significantly to the success of this operation in which 129 enemy were killed. On a number of other occasions he has shown exemplary conduct under fire and his professionalism and outstanding leadership have earned the respect and admiration of those who have served with him."*

In 2012, Robbie was appointed Honorary Life Patron of the Red Beret International Paratroop Association Inc.

Robbie died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 at his home on the Gold Coast.

RAAHC