

MARINKO “TICH” TOMAS



Marinko Tomas was born at Nannup on the 6th of January 1945, attending the Cundinup school during 1950 and then the Nannup Catholic School (1951-56) Nannup State School (1957-59), completing his education at the Harvey Agricultural High School (1960-61). Marinko worked on the family farm at Cundinup where he enjoyed fabricating farm machinery, putting his agricultural high school learning into practice.

Marinko was an active member of the community, being involved with the Junior Farmers, local Bushfire Brigade and participated in recreational events.

The name “Tich” is a contraction of the Croation word “Chicha” meaning “little old man”. This nickname was bestowed on him by one of his father’s friends when Marinko was very young, presumably because he behaved in a manner much older than his years.

Marinko was called up for National Service training on the 30th of June 1965. After completing his basic training at Puckapunyal (Victoria), Marinko undertook Infantry training at Singleton New South Wales, after which, he was posted to the 5th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, assigned to 9 platoon, C (Charlie) Company. Before leaving Australia for South Vietnam, Marinko was promoted to Lance Corporal and as such, became 2nd in charge of his section.

The 5th battalion Royal Australian Regiment was raised at Holsworthy, New South Wales on the 1st of March 1965. It was comprised of surplus soldiers of the 1st Battalion (1 RAR) and some of the first conscripts (National Servicemen).

Marinko, along with the rest of the battalion arrived in South Vietnam during April / May of 1966. The battalion formed half of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) with 6 RAR. 1 ATF replaced the 1st battalion RAR and was to be stationed at Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy province.

Both 5 and 6 battalions were responsible for the establishment of the bas at Nui Dat and once this was completed, the task force began patrolling within the province.

From the 6th to 20th of July 1966, 5 RAR were engaged in operation “Sydney”. The primary role of operation Sydney was to investigate and sweep the area around Nui Nghe, a prominent feature and the highest piece of ground within a few kilometres of the Australian bas at Nui Dat. On the 8th of July at approximately 1700 hrs, Possum (helicopter) took ground fire, artillery engaged at Grid Reference 396724, but several rounds cleared crest and inflicted 1 casualty on Charlie Company. At 1730 hrs, “Dustoff” requested (Evacuation of wounded soldier by helicopter). At 1821 hrs the Dustoff was complete.

Lance Corporal Marinko Tomas died of his wounds sustained from friendly fire at approximately 1958 hrs 8th of July 1966.



The memorial pictured left stands adjacent to the park named in honour of Marinko Tomas and was donated by the Free Vietnamese Community. Sculpted by Van Khoat Nguyen.

