

Review of Dave Sabben's book, "Mentions in Despatches"

2Lt Dave Sabben MG (Platoon Commander 12 Platoon 6RAR) has produced an instant classic with his book "*Mentions in Despatches*", chronicling the experiences of a typical Australian Infantry Platoon in Vietnam during 1966-67. He has clearly achieved the aim he set for himself at the outset - to familiarise the reader with the day-to-day highs and lows of those brave young Australian soldiers, both National Servicemen and Regular Army, who served in an often publicly "unpopular" conflict. He also goes to great lengths to acknowledge the other military units that supported his Platoon during an often-trying year.

Sabben skilfully evokes many emotions in his audience, ranging from admiration, compassion, pride, comradeship, grief, fear, fun and all the way down to boredom, the mundane and the odd bit of mischief. Most importantly, he has the reader feeling part of the team, actually being there, on the ground with his soldiers. His characters are all real people who, by the end of the book, seem to have become your "mates", as well.

As a highly regarded and decorated Platoon Commander, Sabben has created an authoritative record of what any aspiring young Infantry Officer can expect to experience. This book is a "must read" for them.

Congratulations, Dave Sabben, on your masterfully written account of what daily life is all about, in an Infantry Platoon, in an active conflict theatre.

Take a bow, Dave!

David Gulliver
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