

CJ (Stretch) Lawley - Reflections on a Trooper

On the 8th May 2019 Christopher Lawley passed away

This is a tribute to that man, a man that stood head and shoulders above the rest of us. A man that I am so lucky and proud to call my mate. Christopher John Lawley - "CJ" to his mates.

I first met CJ in 1971 at Puckapunyal, last C Squadron Camp, through a mutual friend and fellow Lancer, Phil Marks, who went to school with CJ. I was a recruit and CJ was a Cook. A friendship developed through a common interest in our former occupations, as we were both Butchers by trade. As time went by we became good mates and CJ moved over to the 1/15th RNSWL and became part of B Squadron 2 Troop.

There are so many moments and memories about CJ of my own and many others who had the pleasure of being a mate of CJ (Stretch to some), I can go on about the times and fun we all had with CJ but I'm sure there are other mates who also want to add to this short tale about a giant of a man, both physically and mentally. I remember one episode at a Bourke Camp, before we set off on an exercise outside Bourke on the Louth road where we were camped. We had a piss up and CJ got so pissed he couldn't stand, so I helped him back to his vehicle, but on the way he was sick I couldn't hold him up anymore so I hung him on the barb wire fence by his tank suit, up next morning he was still there feeling very sore.

CJ would never have a bad word to say about anyone, I would see this time and time again, either in the Army or outside the unit, socially and in a work situation. CJ was truly one of nature's gentleman.

CJ, myself and a number of 2 Troop B Squadron had a wide social circle outside the Lancers and regularly had trips away to the bush, motor bike riding and shooting, CJ preferred his Bow and Arrow to a Rifle. In our later years CJ and I enjoyed sailing together and spent many happy hours in each other's company on the water. I'm sure a lot of our mates in the Regiment can tell of the mateship they had with CJ, it was a real honour to be called a mate by CJ.

CJ moved to Queensland a few years ago but we kept in touch and despite his long battle with cancer he was always more concerned with other people than himself and I am so glad that his mates were able to make the journey to see him in his last few weeks.

Have a pleasant journey mate, you will be missed by so many and have left a big hole. You have given joy to so many who knew you.

Drew E.C.
Sgt 2141271
B Sqn 2 Tp

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“Stretch” was an outstanding soldier in more ways than one. Eric’s “Reflections” reads well and is from the heart. I can’t think of anything to add other than to recall that back then, when “Stretch’s “ vehicle passed by, I often wondered that , if we ever went into combat, did the seat in the carrier drop low enough to get him completely behind armour?

John McPhee
OC B Sqn, then CO 1/15 RNSWL

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Remembering Chris.

As you all know Chris and I went to school together at Birrong Boys High and its was always a joke for both of us whilst in the cadets and at 1/15 - that when we were to form up on ceremonial parades when the order was given - “tallest on the right and shortest on the left” we always knew our position and I can still remember during these times looking at each other and smiling.

Phil Marks.

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RIP Tpr Chris (CJ) Lawley

2 Troop B Squadron

1/15 Royal New South Wales Lancers

Occupation: Driver/Signaller Crewman, M113A1 Armoured Personnel Carrier

Troop Leaders: Captain Brian Turner and (later) Lt Tony Fryer

Chris saw service in the Regiment (and the Troop) throughout the 1970’s; however he only left the Troop on 8th May 2019.

Chris will continue to be remembered as the gentle man he always was; always ready to fulfil his role in the Troop ... and loads more. He was a ‘team’ player as a crewman and, like us all, he revelled in the freedom, fun and hard work of the Troop in the field.

In later years Chris has endured a very difficult time; he has borne the burden of illness bravely and with optimism and reality - a true Trooper in many ways!

May he truly rest in peace - we’re now a Driver short  .

Tony Fryer
Lt 2190424
B Sqn 2 Tp