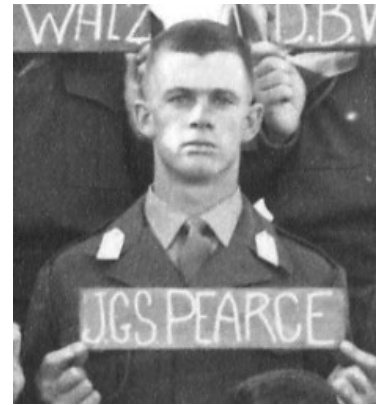


**John Gregory Stinson Pearce** was born in Sydney to Douglas and Elizabeth (nee Stinson) Pearce on 14 August 1945, the older brother to Jeremy, Robert and David. After finishing school and finding work, John was called up for National Service with the 2<sup>nd</sup> intake in 1966, commencing at 1 RTB, Kapooka, on 20 April 1966. Selected for officer training, John commenced at the Officer Training Unit, Scheyville, on 6 May with Class 2/66. He was allocated to 6 Section, 2 Platoon, A Company with Cadets Geoff Bennett and Michael Darby, who would both Graduate. John's 'Father' was Officer Cadet David Gillis, who also graduated. In his Senior Term, John remained in 6 Section with Bennett and Darby, under Cpl Eberhard, with Clive Carroll as Platoon Sergeant. His 'Son' was Cadet Leslie Herbert, who would graduate. John was given the option to Repeat his Senior Term and took up the opportunity. He was transferred to 4 Platoon, B Company, under Sergeant Alec Ball, as the Section Commander of 11 Section. He was not allocated a 'Son'. It is not known when John left OTU, but he did not graduate and was posted to 1 RTB, Kapooka, as a Corporal. Keen to prove himself in battle, John requested a transfer and was posted to the Infantry Centre, then at Ingleburn in Sydney's South-west. From there John was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment at Holsworthy and extended his 'Nasho' to be able to serve in Vietnam.



John arrived in Vietnam as a member of 1 RAR on 18 March 1968. A few weeks after arrival, his battalion was dispatched to Fire Support Base (FSB) Coral, landing there late on 12 May 1968. There was no opportunity to co-ordinate a defensive layout between 1 RAR and 3 RAR, who were already on the ground at FSB Coral. That evening, FSB Coral was attacked. Both battalions commenced intensive patrol programs.

Wikipedia reports: On 14 May there were patrol clashes in AO Bondi, as both sides tried to determine the intentions of the other. The Australians sent out platoon-sized defensive patrols between 3 and 4 kilometres from the FSB and in nine contacts they suffered three killed and five wounded, while enemy casualties included 12 killed and two wounded. Later, two more Australians were wounded by an RPG fired into FSB Coral. During the afternoon, the patrol activity resulted in heavy fighting, and two

separate actions fought within half an hour of each other by different platoons from 1 RAR led to two Australians being awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM)—Lance Corporal David Griffiths and Private Richard Norden. Norden's DCM was upgraded to the Victoria Cross for Australia in 2024 following a review by the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal.

The 1 RAR Unit Commander's Diary for 14 May 1968 records:

12 Platoon were ambushed by at least 3 NVA resulting in the death of Corporal Pearce (a result of fragmentation wounds) and the wounding of 'Nasho' Privates Saunders, Lindsay and Hare and ARA member, Private Lee. John Pearce was buried at Terendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia. His body was repatriated to Australia on 2 June 2016 and reinterred at the Sydney War Cemetery at Rookwood.