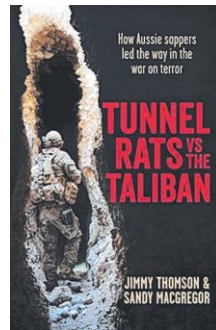




UNSUNG HEROES PROVE TO BE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

TUNNEL RATS VS THE TALIBAN

JIMMY THOMSON and SANDY MACGREGOR
ALLEN & UNWIN. RRP \$30



Vietnam War “tunnel rat” Colonel Sandy MacGregor knows his stuff. He and journalist Jimmy Thomson have opened the curtain on one of the least known stories of the war in Afghanistan. This book tells the gripping story of the sappers, or combat

engineers, the unsung heroes of the campaign. These are the soldiers who travel ahead of convoys scanning with their “wands” for buried bombs or sending their explosive-detection dogs out and prodding the ground when the mutts sniff out a dreaded improvised explosive device (IED). They are also the men who plunge head first into dark tunnels or bunkers searching for bombs or weapons hidden away and often booby-trapped by the insurgents. They carry the flame of their Vietnam War forebears who established the legend of the “Tunnel Rats”. In Afghanistan the engineers sustained casualty rates in excess of 30 per cent higher than their infantry comrades. Many returned home badly maimed or suffering serious psychological damage. When they were not detecting and disarming insurgent bombs, the sappers were out building schools, mosques and bridges to try to win the hearts and minds of the people of Uruzgan Province. **IM**

Verdict: fitting tribute