











Published three times per year, "Spanner News" is the Official Newsletter of the RAEME Association Queensland Inc

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) members – welcome to Edition 3/20 of Spanner News.

In the period July through October, the RAQ held three highly successful gatherings. They were lunches on the Gold Coast, at the Port Office Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast, all of which were well supported and well received, by those in attendance. The RAQ is truly fortunate to have such an engaged membership who genuinely enjoy a good get-together. The support we get from our regular venues is also first class – all the while complying with COVID restrictions and allowing us to do what we do best – enjoy each other's friendship.

On 28 Sep 20, the Committee conducted its AGM via a Web Conference and adopted the new 2020 RAQ Constitution. The old Constitution has been completely revised and the new one will now serve the Association well for the coming years. The AGM also saw biennial elections for the RAQ Committee, the majority of whom have stepped up for another two-year term. May I offer my thanks to our loyal and dedicated membership for your ongoing support. On behalf of the RAQ, may I extend a very warm welcome to Gary Sargent, our new Secretary; and Adrian Butcher, our new Webmaster. Finally, may I publicly thank MAJOR Angela Langdon and Richard Gladdish, for their time in the Secretary's chair this year – it is an important role – we appreciate your efforts despite busy lives.

The Association is still in "strong" position financially, as highlighted in Audited Financial Statement of Affairs and Auditors Report, attached to Friday Files dated 24 Oct 20. For more detail, please go the RAQ website on the AGM for all executive reports. I am also happy to report the RAQ membership continues to grow strongly and we as a committee are especially pleased to report RAQ NQ - Townsville is very active and growing fastest of all. We are still looking to establishing RAQ Darling Downs in 2021.

2020 has been a challenging year and we have had to make many changes to our calendar and to the conduct of events. Rest assured, your committee continues to work towards our goals and looks forward to celebrating and honouring our Corps with fewer restrictions in 2021.

Our Annual All Ranks Luncheon at the Port Office will be held the 29th November. We are hoping for yet another big attendance. I would like to thank all of our members for their continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at an RAQ function in the next few weeks – let's make it a big and successful event.

Arte et Marte

Jeff Maurice Chairman RAQ <u>chairman@qld.raeme.org.au</u>



RAEME Association Queensland – What we are about?

The purpose of the RAEME Association Queensland is to promote and reinforce the spirit, reputation and image of the Corps through its past, present and future members.

The goals of the RAEME Association Queensland locally are to:

- promote the Corps' identity and reputation;
- recognise and celebrate achievements of members of the Corps; and
- provide a focal point for Corps activities.

To gain RAQ membership benefits, join for 10/year, or upgrade to Life Subscription for 100. All proceeds support and promote the goals of the Association.

MESSAGE FROM ACTING HEAD OF CORPS – LTCOL MILES IRVING – CO/CI RAMS



To the men and women of RAEME. Despite COVID-19, I have had the opportunity to travel and rub shoulders (social distancing in play) with many of our outstanding soldiers. Unfortunately, some of these opportunities were born out of two very sad occasions, the

funerals of CFN Matthew Harrison and MAJ Keith Chambers. Very impressive men in their own right, who were still serving when their lives were cut short, and who were so proud to be RAEME. What struck me on both of these occasions is the genuine sense of family, closeness and mateship that is embodied by their many RAEME mates. I know there were other ex-serving RAEME mates who also sadly passed away recently. We are a tremendously proud Corps, which continues to be there for each other, no matter the circumstance; but also encourages celebrating together, commemorating together and grieving together.

As a Corps, we have much to deal with as we prepare for LAND 400, the acquisition of Land Combat Vehicle Systems; and other major programs, such as the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) replacement and acquisition of a light Special Operations helicopter. Skilled RAEME personnel will play a growing and significant role in the future maintenance of these platforms. 2020 has not slowed down that progress and the Corps is surging ahead. It is increasingly important that we continue to develop our maintenance training, aligning ourselves to industry best practice, ensuring our soldiers and officers receive state of the art training, requisite qualifications and experiences to meet the increasing sustainment demands of new Defence and Army capability.

Army Aviation and RAEME aviation support are undergoing a significant Training Transformation Review, which will completely change how we deliver training. A similar process will occur RAEME wide, assessing how to best train and structure ourselves to meet current and future capability requirements. For example, training with augmented reality, exporting courses where feasible and reaffirming our training institutions as centres of excellence to support training within and external to operational units.

It is a privilege to be Acting Head of Corps and deeply immersed in these initiatives. I look forward to hearing more wonderful stories and learning about the great work being done by the Corps. I also look forward to introducing my successor, BRIG James Allen, shortly.

LTCOL A/HOC RAEME

FAREWELL TO BRIG SMEATON RAEME



The following message comes from the REP COL COMDT RAEME, BRIG David Creagh, AM, CSC, to BRIG Ed Smeaton on his retirement after 31 years' service.

"On behalf of the men and women of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers may I not only congratulate you on what has been a long and very successful career, but wish you all the very best for what I am sure will be the next exciting chapter of your life.

It is hard to believe it is almost 31 years since you joined the Army and commenced your career as a Staff Cadet at RMC – time has a habit of catching up on us all! Even at that stage, it was clear you were a cut above the rest; possessing a sharp mind, a fellow who was clearly quick on his feet and possessing a wicked sense of humour.

There have been many notable achievements and too many to mention here. I suspect, as you reflect on your career, your first command as a junior officer, your operational service and commands of 1st Combat Service Support Battalion and 17 Sustainment Brigade's Force Support Group would all warrant a mention.

Regardless of these important appointments, you have always given your all - the consummate professional. You have been a wonderful ambassador for our Corps and a positive role model for what is best about Army. You have spent a long time away from Simone, and your three children, over a number of postings including, of course, your twelve months in Washington DC when you attended the National Defence University. It says much about you as a professional, but equally, the Smeaton clan.

It's been a privilege to work with you and I look forward to our continued association as we work together as Corps Greybeards to advocate on behalf of the wonderful crafts 'men' and 'women' that are the lifeblood of our Corps."

Arte et Marte

Dave Creagh AM, CSC BRIG (RETD) Representative Colonel Commandant -Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers



MESSAGE FROM COL COMDT – QLD

G'day Spanners, Well, hasn't 2020 been a year to remember – or perhaps forget! I'm sure most of us can rattle off statistics about bushfires and COVID and the impact of both upon people and society. Incredibly sobering facts and figures – my thoughts are with anyone who has been personally affected. I also remind everyone to stay vigilant as we may be living under this COVID shadow for quite a while. You only have to look overseas to see how Australia has "dodged a bullet" and how the decisions of our senior leaders and our national posturing have kept the pandemic to manageable levels. At the start of the outbreak the worst-case assessments being conducted in the highest levels of Defence were very, very sobering. I am incredibly thankful these did not eventuate.

During times of adversity, peoples' true colours are revealed. Through the bushfires, RAEME personnel from all over Australia showed their mettle and contributed in so many different ways to help the nation. For many, they were working within their trade and training zone, but others were undertaking duties well outside the norm. The RAEME modus operandi of improvise, adapt and overcome was a necessity and there are many examples of RAEME personnel finding solutions to problems when others couldn't. I also have it on good authority the RAEME esprit-de-corps was undiminished during Op Bushfire Assist with the tri-colour being flown prolifically.

Op COVID ASSIST has also proven to be a "true colours" situation. Again, the RAEME community has risen to the challenge and improvised, adapted and overcome in so many situations. Thankfully, we have only been lightly affected in Qld, however, we cannot let our guard down, particularly as the summer disaster period once again approaches.

Whilst I have been unable to travel this year, I am hopeful I will be able to travel to NQ in the New Year and meet the "Spanners in the North". I am delighted to see the NQ chapter of the RAEME Association – Qld up and running and receiving great support. Well done to all involved in making this happen. For those of you in the Toowoomba region, MAJ Peter Pile is standing up a Darling Downs Chapter. I would encourage anyone in the region to get in touch with Pete.

Most importantly, I am pleased to advise BRIG James Allen is our next HOC. This is a very recent announcement due to BRIG Todd Ashurst deploying overseas very recently.

I wish you all the best for the summer period and hope 2021 doesn't present us with as many challenges as 2020.

Arte et Marte

Steve Evans COL COMDT – QLD steve.evans@defence.gov.au



FEATURE ARTICLE ON 5th AVIATION REGIMENT AND ITS SUB-UNITS

This month, Spanner News features a proud unit and its logistic and technical sub-units. The 5th Aviation Regiment was raised in 1987 in Townsville, and has been in the thick of things ever since. The stories that follow give readers some hint of the organisation, size and complexity of a busy aviation unit with many roles and tasks.

The 5th Aviation Regiment in Townsville comprises three flying Squadrons: A, B and C Squadrons, and two support Squadrons; Technical Support Squadron (TSS) and Logistic Support Squadron (LSS). The large and diverse workforce within the Regt of 530 personnel, supports a total of (currently) 21 aircraft – 10 CH47 Chinook and 11 MRH90 Taipan helicopters. When in barracks, the RAEME workforce is split across C Sqn TST for CH-47F Chinook maintenance; a TSS of 181 personnel and for MRH-90 Taipan maintenance and ancillary functions; and an LSS of 80 personnel, which includes Ground Equipment Repair (GER) responsibilities.

While COVID 19 caused the cancellation of many planned activities, in 2020, typical annual training for the Regt includes: High Density Altitude (HDA) training in Papua New Guinea for both platform types, embarked Sea Series exercises and Ex Hamel or Talisman Sabre. 5 Avn Regt also regularly supports 3 BDE Brolga series exercises, combined 1/5/6 Avn Regt exercises, Special Forces trooping and parachuting, 2 RAR water insertion, the Avalon International Air show, flyovers and many static displays.

The unit's main challenge is maintaining an effective state of readiness for both warlike and non-warlike operations. Our helicopter platforms are frequently requested by Government for DACC/HADR operations domestically and internationally. In the past 24 months the Regt has deployed on operations in support of Solomon Islands Elections, Townsville floods, OP Bushfire Assist in VIC, NSW and SA, and OP COVID 19 Assist. Notable exercises include Sea Series 19 embarked on HMAS Adelaide, Talisman Sabre in Rockhampton, and CH-47F HDA training in PNG. We are clearly a big, busy and bustling unit with a much-valued capability and ability to serve the nation. Let's now look at some of our sub-units in more detail.

Jeremy Mellor MAJ OC LSS 5 Avn Regt

C Sqn Technical Support Troop (TST). This TST is comprised of personnel qualified to operate, maintain and support a fleet of 10 CH-47F helicopters operated and maintained by C Sqn. The ADF has operated the CH-47 since 1974, with the F model variant introduced to service in April 2015.

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The TST comprises of Aircraft and Avionics Technicians, Aircraft Life Support Fitters, Aircraft Structural Fitters, Repair Parts Store and a Maintenance Control Section. 65 military personnel and 24 embedded contractors from Boeing Defence Australia perform the full spectrum of maintenance from daily flight line servicings, through to deeper maintenance up to eight weeks in duration. Unique to CH-47F is that deeper maintenance is not contracted outside of Army. C Sqn TST also supports Army Aviation Training Centre (AAvnTC) School of Army Aviation (SAA), which resides at the 5 Avn Regt and conducts IET Pilot and Aircrewman training; again, a unique arrangement compared to other Army aviation platforms in that AAvnTC does not own any aircraft.

At the start of 2020, C Sqn raised Task Unit (TU) CHINOOK as part of the Multinational Rotary Wing Task Group (MNRWTG) in support of OP Bushfire Assist. Over the course of OP Bushfire Assist, the Australian CH-47F fleet flew a total of 463.4 hours over six airframes and transported 1314 passengers and 215,335kgs of cargo. This also set a new record for the Australian fleet for being the most airframe hours recorded for a one-month period.



C Sqn has also been working with CHUSPO and AATES to support development and improvement of the Common Missile Warning System, Crashworthy Aircrewman Seating and Working at Heights equipment. These systems will provide increased survivability and safety to the personnel working with the CH-47F.

C Sqn TST is currently preparing to support the fleet during the upcoming Ex Vigilant Scimitar and preparing to support possible DACC tasking during the HRWS. Over Christmas RTP a rotor brake modification line will commence bringing all aircraft up to the same configuration. With a new ROE target set by DACM this Financial Year, the Sqn is settling into its new battle rhythm designed to achieve the target and will carry this new normal forward into 2021.

Mitchell Cummings Lieutenant C SQN Technical Support Troop



Technical Support Squadron (TSS). This Squadron contains four Technical Support Troops (TST) which provide maintenance and repair parts support to 11 MRH-90 platforms for two Taipan sqns. A and B TST conduct first and second line maintenance to support daily flying operations. Aircraft Repair Troop (ART) conducts base maintenance on the aircraft and bay servicings on off aircraft components. Finally, Maintenance Supply Troop (MST) manages the repair parts store and provides supply chain support to enable maintenance to be conducted at 5 Avn Regt.

TSS also contains ancillary trades and functions which support both helicopter platform types, such as Aircraft Structural Fitters, Aircraft Life Support Fitters, Non-Destructive Inspection (RAAF), Maintenance Control, Wash Bay, Tool Store and Surface Finishing. TSS manning is primarily military, supplemented by 27 embedded Airbus contractors. OC TSS fulfils the regulatory appointment of Responsible Manager (RM) (formerly SMM) for MRH-90 maintenance conducted at 5 Avn Regt.

OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST. The bushfire emergency in southern Australia in Dec 19 to Jan 20, provided a busy start to 2020, with 5 Avn Regt forming MRH90 TU TAIPAN to provide aviation support to bushfire ravaged NSW and VIC. TU TAIPAN originally deployed to RAAF Base Richmond via STRAT Air to support NSW state emergency services, and later redeployed to RAAF Base East Sale, to provide bushfire and flood assistance in Victoria. As an element of TU TAIPAN, the TST ensured the MRH-90 aircraft were serviceable for the duration of the deployment. This was achieved through the deployment of two Forward Repair Teams (FRTs) that work day and night shifts to provide maintenance support.



An MRH-90 being loaded onto a C17 Globemaster during OP Bushfire Assist

More recently 5 Avn Regt was tasked with transporting the Minister for Defence and VIP party between Darwin and Mount Bundy Training Area, in the Northern Territory, to allow them to observe the ADF's integration with the Multi Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) in EX KOOLENDONG. To complete the task, three MRH-90 aircraft self-deployed from RAAF Base Townsville to

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Robertson Barracks with an overnight stop in Mt Isa. An FRT from A TST was deployed to provide maintenance support to sustain the flying whilst also acting as the Downed Aircraft Recovery Team if a recovery was required en route.



An MRH-90 in Mt Isa en route to Darwin for MINDEF task

Unit's Focus on Productivity. This year has also seen improvements in MRH-90 maintenance efficiency, primarily within A and B TSTs. This can be attributed to the newly implemented maintenance program, whereby A and B TSTs alternate between first and second-line maintenance every fortnight. The ART now conducts base maintenance (heavy OM up to but not including DM) on the aircraft, where previously the Troop only conducted maintenance on off-aircraft components. This provides a layered support approach where the first line TST directly supports flying operations by conducting the turnaround maintenance required to keep aircraft flying. This involves day and night shift work to allow flying sorties around the clock. The second line TST then supports the first line by taking the jobs that cannot be completed within four hours.

Currently, TSS is continuing to support daily flying operations and is preparing to provide support to DACC/HADR tasks during the upcoming High Risk Weather Season (HRWS). Planning is underway to allow MRH-90 maintenance elements to self-deploy, or by STRAT air, or by Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD). This will allow for a timely and coordinated aircraft maintenance response either domestically or regionally to support a wide range of events.

Anil Rajanathan Lieutenant Technical Support Squadron

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Ground Equipment Repair (GER). Within a unit the size of 5 Avn Regt, there is a lot of ground equipment to be looked after. This work is performed by GER located within Logistic Support Squadron (LSS). It maintains and supports all ground-based capabilities in the Regt. Equipment types include Land 121 fleet (G-Wagons

through to 45M Heavy Recovery Vehicles, Legacy fleet vehicles such as Mack TTF-As, Field Power Distribution Systems, small arms weapons and M134D Minigun. OC LSS is RAEME Corps appointment and fulfils the regulatory appointment of RM for all CH-47F maintenance and SMM-ground for Land materiel maintenance.

GER consists of 20 Military Vehicle Mechanics, Fitter/Armourers, Electrical technicians, Recovery Mechanics, and RPS. Its role is unique given the requirement to operate independently of a CSSB and support Aviation specific capabilities. Maintenance beyond the scope of the Troop is arranged directly through JLU-NQ, or at seek support from local units. GER is also tasked with the maintenance of the MI 34D Minigun which is prescribed only to 5 Avn for use on the CH-47F, but is in the process of being introduced to the MRH90.

For the duration of 2020, LSS GER has made strong and sustained efforts to support not only the operation of the aircraft on base, but also operate competently in the field. In July and September, GER participated in two separate activities that provided an opportunity to practice trade competencies in the field. Exercise Pegasus Strafer is a Regiment gunnery activity that provides aircrew the opportunity to qualify for small arms firing from aircraft. Of particular note is the increased utilisation of the MI34D Minigun, and GER was instrumental in providing assistance to ensure that gunnery could continue without issue. During Exercise Pegasus Strafer, as part of LSS, GER operated within a CSST, which enabled a shake-out of our Field Power Distribution System and provide real-time support to a range of vehicles. In September, GER again participated in a field exercise, this time run in support of a I MP Bn run Subject 2 Corporal.

With Ex Vigilant Scimitar imminent, GER will begin its preparation to support the Regiment's refuelling capabilities. A strong focus for this exercise is to enable a FARP to conduct training serials. Given their requirement to continue to operate legacy fleet vehicles, it is paramount GER provides timely and effective FRT support to enable their training outcomes.

Most importantly, in Quarter 4 2020, GER will also be developing a winning Go-Kart for RAEME birthday celebrations. This critical activity clearly assists with the bonding of all trades within the troop and provides great discussion and banter throughout the unit, especially on the Corps Birthday. It is hoped the new Go Kart will enhance GER's push for RAEME dominance through competitive efforts in the LSS champion troop competition.

Jackson Lee Lieutenant Ground Equipment Repair Logistic Support Squadron

ROTARY-WING AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SCHOOL - OAKEY.

Recent Events at RAMS. There have been a number of significant achievements across RAMS since the publication of the last newsletter. These include, but are not limited to: improvements in training delivery, recognition of students, and continuous improvement in aviation safety. Of note, it is very pleasing to see our "Repo Lab" go from strength to strength through evolving 3D printing and scanning technology. Real innovation and passion on display as RAMS continues along its path of training transformation.

RAMS has undergone a formal name correction; not change, correction. RAMS is now known as the "Rotarywing Aircraft Maintenance School", as opposed to the previous "Rotary Wing Aircraft Maintenance School". This small correction eliminates confusion surrounding the acronym and is grammatically correct.

Whilst COVID continues to make its presence felt and provide challenges, RAMS is attempting to stay one step ahead. Training has not stopped, but how training is delivered in some instances has certainly changed. The ARTS course being a prime example, where all Army students are undertaking the course remotely from the RAMS classroom through RMIT in Melbourne. The technology being used enables real-time interactive feedback between teacher and student and vice versa. Innovation is critical for the continued delivery of training without compromising quality. We export our training where feasible, focused on supporting the operational units and minimising travel.



ARTS Course Student learning Hand Drawing Skills

RAMS has recently introduced a "Student of Merit Award" for courses comprising of four or more students. The "Student of Merit" does not necessarily go to the student that achieved the best academic result, but rather, it is awarded to the student who is selfless in nature, a team player, performs well overall and has a willingness to help others. In other words, the man or woman that you would want in your FRT, or in Navy's case, whom you would want in your team at sea. The recipients are gifted a military book kindly donated from the Australian Army Flying Museum. The successful **Spanner News** individual also receives a framed certificate, and their respective unit CO is notified.

RAMS has a strong commitment to continuous improvement of aviation safety. There are a number of initiatives that RAMS has introduced, such as SNAPSHOT of all RAMS staff, and exemplar working at heights system in the CH47 facility to name but a few. RAMS is also pursuing on behalf of the aviation capability, the ability for unit COs to randomly drug and alcohol test their entire workforce regardless whether they are military, APS or contractor.

Finally, I am finding that students coming through RAMS maintain an excellent attitude and understanding throughout the duration of their courses. It is very important to acknowledge the entire RAMS staff who continue to work tirelessly, whilst maintaining a very positive mindset throughout COVID. My teams' ongoing dedication and passion to deliver quality training continues to contribute directly to the aviation operational capability. I am proud of my team!

Miles Irving LTCOL CO/CI RAMS

Multi-Role Helicopter 90 (MRH90) Wing. MRH Wing continues to develop highly-skilled aircraft and avionics maintainers ready to support the demands of operational units. To date, a total of 29 maintainers have graduated from MRH Wing, which comprises Army and Navy students undergoing Initial Technical Trade Training, as well as Army and Navy Transition students with varying backgrounds and experience levels. The dedicated team of instructors, both military and civilian, work tirelessly to deliver training at the highest standard, while ensuring all learning outcomes, competencies and e-Journal entries are appropriately recorded.



MRH90 students learning from the enthusiastic Mr Kurt James

Engine GTD. RAMS formally unveiled the MRH90 Engine Ground Training Device (GTD) on 14 Jul 20 in the presence of AAvnTC Commandant COL Eamon Barton. Also present were the CO RAMS LTCOL Miles Irving, Ms Brooklyn Lett (CASG Training Devices Manager and

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world-renowned engineering master), ex-SI MRH MAJ Michael Fairbanks-Smith, and the legendary CPO Paul Wetherspoon. MRH Wing has already integrated the new training aid into academic and practical courses, to capitalise on its enhanced interactive instruction benefits.

The GTD is a portable, stand-alone, non-sectioned MRH Engine designed to provide technical workforce training across the MRH suite of courses. Prior to the Engine GTD, MRH Wing was required to use the live aircraft to teach engine systems, which forced course managers to de-conflict live aircraft access across multiple, simultaneous courses, and deal with the confined nature of an installed engine.



MRH90 Engine GTD Inauguration on Tuesday 14 July 2020 in the RAMS Hangar

Sam Laspina CAPT OC MRH Wing

REPORT FROM 106 FD WKSP

2020 – The Year in Summary. 2020 started with a number of 106 Fd Wksp members deployed to Victoria on OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST. The range of tasks our soldiers undertook included providing logistics and maintenance support to communities in desperate need of support. They also repaired and serviced vehicles, provided aid to local authorities and distributed supplies and fodder to local farmers and the wider community. The members of 106 Fd Wksp rose to the occasion and made a substantial impact – and this was just the start of 2020.



106 Fd Wksp HRV assisting an emergency services vehicle on OP BUSH FIRE ASSIST

Due to COVID-19, working from home presented a unique challenge to all workshop members – but it gave us an opportunity to use some different skill sets! The initiative and leadership displayed by our members during this time was outstanding. As we returned to work and got back to a bustling workshop floor, the announcement our unit members would now be deploying, on OP COVID-19 ASSIST, saw us quickly adapt and swap trade tools for face masks and gloves.

On 17th July, 7 CSSB deployed a company-sized Force Element (FE) to Victoria as part of OP COVID-19 ASSIST. The majority of 3 PL within in this Coy consisted of members from 106 Fd Wksp. The members conducted a range of tasks in support of the Department of Health and Human Services, including manning of the COVID-19 hotline and processing Rent Relief payments. A number of 106 Fd Wksp members also used their multicultural backgrounds and acted as interpreters at testing sites and on QCM tasks. Again, this operation showed the versatility of our members.



Processing Rent Relief Payments for Department of Health and Human services (Victoria) during OP COVD ASSIST – no limit to their talents!

2020 also saw the addition of a number of new assets to 106 Fd Wksp including maintenance shelters and 42M's Medium Recovery Vehicles. The new maintenance shelters will allow our members greater versatility and flexibility to perform their jobs. In order fulfil the medium recovery capability, three 42M MRVs were issued to 106 Fd Wksp as these vehicles are smaller, lighter and more agile than the heavier 45M version – they have the potential to become the workhorse for our unit in the field.

September was the first opportunity for 106 Fd Wksp to deploy into the field for 2020. As a part of EX LONG HAI, the Coy deployed two FRG's which each completed a 36hour shakeout in WBTA. This EX provided the Coy the chance to conduct a short deployment in convoy to rehearse and completely check field deployment stores before BETA. Concurrent with the FRT serials, live fire CMC was conducted in order to maintain our soldiers' individual skills to a high standard. At the time of writing

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the unit is now preparing for an upcoming FRG deployment to SWBTA as part of a CSST for EX DIAMOND CATALYST. This is a good opportunity to test and push ourselves within the field and do what we do best.

In summary, 2020 has not been a routine year for 106 Fd Wksp. It has, however, allowed us to grow and challenge ourselves in ways we could not have imagined. The unit members approached all of this with the esprit-de-corps and sound morale of our proud Corps and in particular 106 Fd Wksp. We have shown that our unit is indeed "The Punch Behind the Taskforce Fist". Bring on 2021!

Darius Nooriafshar Lieutenant Recovery PLCOMD



NEWS FROM THE ARMY SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (ASEME)

Recovery Training During COVID. Recovery Platoon within Career and Advanced Training Wing (CATW) at ASEME is responsible for the Initial Employment Training (IET) of Recovery Mechanics (ECN 226). The Basic Recovery Course (BRC) is a 147-day course introducing trainees to the Army recovery system. The course consists of many exciting aspects ranging from obtaining a Military Driver Licence to vehicle extraction in complex bogging and rollover scenarios. The BRC culminates in a 10-day field activity in the Yackandandah State Forrest (YSF), where all training learnt during BRC is assessed.



The necessary restrictions imposed to combat the risks of COVID-19 have been challenging to the population of Victoria, with ASEME being no exception. The need for social distancing, limitations on the number of people in enclosed spaces and mandatory use of face masks has altered everyday life at a fundamental level. The BRC adapted to these challenges and continued to provide the highest level of training possible to the next generation of Recovery Mechanics within Army.



Recovery Mechanics (ECN 226) is currently a priority position, due to the high demand from within all units. This situation places a big responsibility on the BRC staff to ensure recovery course graduates attained high levels of competency, on completion of the three courses conducted in calendar year 2020. Within nine months, members are trained from the basics to being able to solve intricate recovery tasks before they commence their On the Job Training (OJT) – this is achieved while posted to one of the Combat Service Support Battalions (CSSB) where their emerging competencies can be properly supervised.



Operating an MRV/HRV Multi-Function Controller (MFC)

Under COVID-19 restrictions, and upon arrival in the Albury-Wodonga Military Area (AWMA), new Kapooka graduates are required to isolate within the barracks environment for a period of 14 days. Every precaution is taken to ensure compliance with Government and Defence regulations throughout the courses affected by the pandemic.

All course work is scheduled to allow trainees to hit the ground running as soon as this period of isolation is completed. Prior to beginning their recovery specific training, all Recovery Mechanics are required to be qualified Military Drivers and are trained to operate the 40M and HX77 recovery vehicles at the Army School of Transport, Puckapunyal. This requirement adds an additional layer of complexity as trainees are required to move between locations to complete their training.

Within the day-to-day conduct of BRC, members are required to remain 1.5m apart, a significant challenge

given the collaborative nature of many recovery tasks. Additionally, precautions are taken to certify a hygienic workplace before and after completion of any work.



Social Distancing while under instruction.

Within the Recov PI Training Area at ASEME, there is a large outdoor area, affectionately known as the "Dust Bowl", which acts as the practice stage for trainees rollover scenarios. The Dust Bowl allows trainees to understand the fundamentals of more complex tasks before they conclude their training at the YSF.



Operating in the "Dust Bowl"

Fortunately, the vast majority of outside recovery training and assessments was able to continue through these uncertain times – in line with Victorian Government COVID regulations. With the BRC running smoothly, Recov PI offered the perfect testing ground for the Land I2I Fleet of Recovery Vehicles, such as the 42M and 45M. Trials prior to roll-out to the wider Army have been incorporated into the training continuum to afford trainees invaluable experience using the brand new Rheinmetall Recovery Variants. This adds an exciting and new aspect to the, already loaded, training package.

Christopher Jones Lieutenant Recovery PL COMD, CATW, ASEME

ASEME Support to OP COVID ASSIST. In keeping with a year of firsts, ASEME was called on to provide both, staff members and trainees to deploy on OP COVID ASSIST. The School members were predominately committed to Task Force JTU629.1.3.1, on the NSW / VIC border, right on ASEME's doorstep. ASEME helped make up possibly the most diverse call sign in the Army's history as it consisted SNCOs with years of operational experience and trainees so fresh out of Kapooka they were yet to march into their initial trade training. Additionally, all Corps were represented, as were the other Services.

Some of the first "boots on the ground" were ASEME personnel, who packed their kit and boarded the bus with less than 2 hrs notice, and began manning checkpoints within 24 hrs. The Task Force was initially responsible for three checkpoints, including the two busiest on the border. The checkpoints processed approximately 20,000 vehicles of all types per day with the busiest being, "The Causeway", peaking at 14,000 vehicles over a 24-hr period. As the ARes commitment drew down, the ALTC component inherited an additional three checkpoints increasing its Area of Operations (AO) to approximately 150km along the sate border.



RAEME Vehicle Mechanic, CPL Michael Hook, manning a checkpoint with his section and members of the NSW Police Force

Manning checkpoints in our "own backyard" allowed us to receive live feedback from the community providing immediate opportunities to adjust and re-adjust our procedures. This allowed us to minimise the negative impacts associated with imposing delays on the movement of the locals. This also served to build on our already established good reputation.

The general consensus from the community was that the public were comfortable with being stopped by a member of Defence because of the professionalism showed by ADF members. The community spirit was also evident as members of the public selflessly donated food, firewood and coffee during the cold and wet weather periods, helping to maintain and boost our morale.

The two command priorities for the taskforce were reputation and force preservation, respectively. In order to meet these priorities, tight restrictions were imposed on the task force members, such as no entry into Victoria, no alcohol and limited reasons to leave the hotel. Even though many of our homes were almost walking distance, no one was permitted back to see their loved ones. In fact, there were members that could see their family homes from their accommodation windows. With the deployment length of approximately six weeks, the ADF Personnel from all three services enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to work with, and learn from, other Corps, Services and government agencies. Each member was given a rare, but invaluable insight into what it's like to serve in the ADF and experience joint effort working toward a common goal on behalf of the Nation.

Lukas Kuiper

Lieutenant

PL COMD, Vehicle Technology Wing, ASEME

INTRODUCTION FROM NEW CO ASEME

Lieutenant Colonel Troy Wilson. Firstly, I would like to thank the RAEME Association of Queensland for this opportunity to introduce myself to current and past members of the Corps. Secondly, I would like to convey how humbled I am for my selection to be CO/CI ASEME.

By way of background, I graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2001 and the Royal Military College in 2002. My regimental appointments included Administration Officer of the Aviation Support Group Workshop, Vehicle Platoon Commander at the 101st Workshop Company, Technical Support Platoon Commander at the 5th/7th Battalion (Royal Australian Regiment), Second-in-Command of 17th Construction Squadron and Officer Commanding Headquarters Squadron 1st Combat Signals Regiment. I have also completed staff postings at Headquarters Training Command - Army, Headquarters Forces Command, Headquarters 17th Sustainment Brigade, Directorate of Officer Career Management – Army as Career Advisor RAEME-A, and Headquarters Joint Operations Command as the SOI Global Logistics Plans Officer. I am currently the SOI Technical Workforce Review Team in the Directorate of Logistics Plans - Army, AHQ.

My operational experience includes deployments as the Technical Support Platoon Commander for Al Muthana Task Group II in 2005/06 and in 2011, I was detached to the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, as the S4 for the 7 RAR Task Group.

I am thoroughly looking forward to my role next year and consider it an enormous privilege to command the school, and fulfil the duties of Deputy Head of Corps (Ground).

Arte et Marte

Troy Wilson LTCOL CO ASEME DESIGNATE



NOTICE. For full details on BRIG Smeaton' service please go to: https://defence.gov.au/Operations/Afghanistan/ Commander.asp

RAQ EVENT REPORTS AND CHANGES

RAQ Sunshine Coast Annual Luncheon. Despite the COVID restrictions, the RAQ Sunshine Coast Chapter held its annual lunch in the Maroochy RSL in a now familiar socially distanced format. And it worked well, attracting 65 attendees, of all ages and backgrounds, and was judged by the attendees, a huge success.



Lunch Time Layout – Observing Social Distancing Requirements

The organising committee is naturally chuffed by the result, but must give credit to the Maroochy RSL staff, particularly those who set up the room, served the meals and refreshments and properly supervising us to comply with COVID requirements on the day. Their very sound organising skills, cheerful and helpful approach was very much appreciated by all guests, all of whom were keen to party and catch-up with old friends.

A big thanks also goes to the guest of honour on the day, Mr Geoff Gillespie, Chief Operating Officer of Raytheon Australia. Geoff very willingly stepped into the breech, when our former speaker, LTCOL Colin Lingo, CO 7 CSSB, was unfortunately and belatedly deployed to Victoria for the second time this year, and couldn't get back to Queensland in time.



Geoff Gillespie in Full Flight

Geoff was a worthy successor and in a booming and enthusiastic way, talked about the working relationship RAEME Association Queensland Inc

between the ADF and Defence Industry, as it was in former times, as it is now; and increasingly, how it is evolving. He highlighted some of the benefits of international companies having a strong presence in Australia, being managed by Australians and picking first class operatives, who in many cases have a RAEME background. His talk was refreshing, "on the money", given current security environment, and relevant to the attendees. Another worthy speaker for our modest lunch.



COL COMDT QLD - COL Steve Evans and his wife, Melissa, sharing the joy in the room

The other feedback, and we have received a lot this time. is that the food was very good and represented value for money. Despite not being able to move around freely at the lunch, most attendees managed to find a way to catch up with their friends; enjoy the atmosphere generated by attendees at a special event; and appreciate the effort put in by the organising committee and the Maroochy RSL staff.

All round a great day that saw some folks stay much later that normal and having to be encouraged to "Go Home"!

May we thank all the attendees for their support and their subsequent kind words. We will see if we can do just as well if not better next year!

Arte et Marte

Ross Grant & Mike Prain RAQ Sunshine Coast Chap



RAEME CMF/Reserve Reunion - Indooroopilly / Sherwood RSL Sub Branch. Fellow RAEME Reservists, as Chairman of the Reserve Committee, I thought that I should let you know that the committee had a meeting on Sunday 30 Aug 20 to reassess the possibilities of conducting the reunion later in the year. As you will know a new wave of the Coronavirus circulated in the western suburbs of Brisbane, so the committee voted unanimously to cancel this year's event. The committee will conduct a meeting in February 2021, and will once again plan for the reunion 2021.

Once again, I trust that you are all keeping well and safe, until we can again enjoy one another's company in the new year.

Ian Leabeater **Chairman Reserve Committee** iwleabeater@bigpond.com



RAEME Association Queensland – Darling Downs (RAQ-DD) FUNCTION. We repeat this notice because we are all looking forward to 2021, AND members may remember our desire to hold an inaugural RAQ-DD function, originally planned for 21 Mar 20, but which had to be postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to advise members that it is still my intention to run the function as soon as COVID-19 restrictions permit, but this is unlikely to be before early 2021.

In the meantime, anyone (serving or ex-serving) wishing to discuss RAEME-related matters situated in the Darling Downs region, or obtain RAEME memorabilia please contact me. as follows:

Pete Pile MAJ **OPSO RAMS & RRRRAMS**



peter.pile@defence.gov.au

OPERATION SPANNER PACK.

The final Spanner Pack delivery for 2020 will occur just after this Spanner News hits the streets. The team has compiled 42 packs which will hopefully be in the hands of the troops in various parts of the Middle East before Christmas.

Thank you to the many folk who have generously donated to the RNN/RAQ Spanner Pack program – you should be aware how much the team appreciates your support, and we wish to re-assure you that COVID restrictions did not get in the way of our work.

For readers, who may wish to assist, please note we do need your help, so if you can donate items, or money, please visit the shop on the RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) Website at www.qld.raeme.org.au where you will find a "make a donation" tag.

Arte et Marte

Raymond Norman RNN Spanner Pack Co Coordinator RNN@qld.raeme.org.au



VALE

It is with deep regret that we advise of the following:

- Langham, L/Cpl Cody passed away on 8 Aug 20, at age 35. Although a VM, Cody was employed as the EME OPS CPL at 106 Fd Wksp. He leaves behind his wife Josie and three children Chase 9, Sasha 6 and Harvey 2. A military funeral was held at All Saints Chapel, Gallipoli Barracks Thursday 20 Aug 20.
- **Benfield**, Frank (18th VM), ex-161(Indep) Recce Flt SVN, ex-183 (Indep) Recce Flt PNG, passed away peacefully on 15 Aug 20 in palliative care after a battle with an aggressive brain cancer diagnosed in February/March 2020. In June 2011 Frank was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to the veterans' community.
- Riley, Major Kevin Maxwell (Retd) (24th VM) passed away on 5 Sep 20. Kevin graduated from AAS Balcombe in Dec 1971 and then OCS Portsea in Dec 73. He returned to OCS as a member of staff in 1980 – 81.
- **Chambers**, Major Keith "Chaz", Vehicle Mechanic enlisted 25/07/1984, passed away Sunday 4 Oct 20. His funeral was held at Townsville crematorium on 15 Oct 20.
- Harrison, CFN Matthew, passed away 8 Sept 2020 after a battle with mouth and throat cancer. A remembrance service was held on 18 Sep 2020.
- McKey, John 'Lurch', passed away on 11 Oct 2020. A memorial service was held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 Lakeview Chapel, Albany Creek.
- Holt, CPL Bruce Anthony passed away 7 Oct 20 after a three-year battle with Leukemia. He had Dianne Ebdon and his two daughters Susan and Emily by his side and he was privately farewelled by his immediate family and friends at the Cowra Lawn Cemetery. Bruce's funeral was recorded and can be accessed at:

https://youtu.be/rpwxOq97DYQ?t=5

WELFARE

RAQ has been advised of the following:

- **Pooley**, Harry has been unwell for some time and is being treated for a tumour behind the eye. His treatment continues Harry appears to be making progress.
- Digweed, John (LTCOL Retd) is suffering dementia and is now in care. John served with 161 (Indep) Recce Flt from 25 Nov until 02 May 69, before being posted to B Sqn, 3 Cav Regt until 26 Nov 70. He was the CO of 5 Base Wksp from 1984 to 1985.
- Parfitt, John was "off air" for a few days having an angiogram as a prelude to hip replacement. Now waiting until Nov 20 to confirm date for hip replacement.

• Edis, Les (LTCOL Retd) came off his bicycle, fractured his clavicle, tip of the radius and broke a rib. Recovering at home after a visit to Caboolture Hospital and came home with script for strong painkillers and told to rest.

As a reminder, please advise me of any brethren and sisters in distress accurately and in a timely way. Please email me with details of welfare matters in Queensland.

Barry Shipway Welfare Officer welfare@qld.raeme.org.au



DFWA AND DVA MATTERS IN SUMMARY

ADF Family Transition Seminars. Due to COVID, attendance at Transition Seminars were cancelled till end of year. In meantime, the ADF trialled a "Virtual" Seminar in September. While the experience was a bit patchy, it at least addressed some of the issues in a coordinated way. Whether the future will see attendance at seminars, or virtual seminars, or perhaps both, is yet to be decided.

Joint Transition Authority (JTA). Following the recent Productivity Commission Report, the budget made provision for the establishment of a JTA, (run by Defence) with the aim of addressing numerous issues concerning transition to civilian life. JTA has an ongoing responsibility extending two years post discharge. Positions for Transition Mentors have been created in all three services to assist in the transition process. Most of these are former Regular personnel now serving on the Reserve. JTA will be responsible for coordinating effort across defence as well as other key players, e.g. DVA and CSC. The bulk of personnel discharging each year (approx. 6000) came from personnel with 8-12 years' service. Of concern, this group has a suicide rate over twice that of the similar male age cohort.

DFWA has expressed concern to MAJGEN Natalie Fox, Head of Defence Peoples Group, that there has been zero consultation with ESO on these issues, yet it is the ESO who have the experience of picking up problems where ADF, Defence, and DVA have failed in the past. We are monitoring the situation closely, and welcome any input from people experiencing transition issues.

Budget. The budget provided some relief to TPI by removing their DVA payments from Asset/Income tests for Rent Assistance. There were also provisions for extra mental health support for Veterans and families, employment and other transition areas, as well as implementation of several Productivity Commission recommendations. It rejected the PC recommendation of removing DVA Gold Card eligibility to war widow(er)s. Full details are on the DVA website.

https://www.dva.gov.au/aboutus/overview/reporting/budgets/budget-2020-21

RAEME Association Queensland Inc

Taxation of DFRDB and MSBS Invalidity Benefits. The ATO appeal against the AAT decision in favour of the three Veterans will be heard by a Full Bench of the Federal Court on 12-13 November barring further delaying tactics by the ATO. It will be done in a "virtual" courtroom. A decision should then be given in the first half of 2021. At last count, there are about five QCs representing veterans, and a huge legal team on the ATO side. DFWA expect an appeal to the High Court regardless of whoever wins the next round. See the DFWA website for updates. <u>https://dfwa.org.au/infocus/veteran-invalidity-benefit-taxation/</u>

National Commission for Prevention of Defence and Veteran Suicide. Legislation for this has been introduced into Parliament. An interim Commissioner (former BRIG Dr Bernadette Boss CSC – ACT Magistrate and Coroner) has been appointed to address the immediate requirement of inquiring into the 419 Veteran suicides and report in 18 months. (Do the maths!). The Attorney General Department called for public comment on the legislation. It has also been referred to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee by the Senate. DFWA made submissions to both the AGT and the FADT. See:

https://www.aph.gov.au/sitecore/content/Home/P arliamentary Business/Committees/Senate/Forei gn_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/NationalCommis sioner2020/Submissions

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This year the editorial staff of Spanner News and Friday Files have been featuring RAEME units in Queensland and allowing our readership to learn about their day to day activities, and in some case, the units' histories. I have been buoyed by the responses from the three units featured so far – 106 Fd Wksp, 102 Fd Wksp and 5 Avn Regt TSS and LSS respectively – given the heavy workload all experienced in this "Year of the COVID". Thank you sincerely for your support and I hope we all know a bit more about your contributions to the Nation as war fighters, and in your many other roles, particularly of late, providing aid to many government authorities and civilian communities. We can all be proud of your efforts.

By the time this edition "hits the streets", there will only be two more RAQ sponsored events to enjoy in what remains of 2020 (given the RAQ NQ Gathering scheduled for 31 Oct 20 will be in full swing) – they are the RAQ All Ranks Lunch at the Port Office Hotel on 29 Nov 20 and the RAEME Birthday Celebrations, Cairns on 28 Nov 20. Importantly, there are also several Unit functions in the same period, so we are certainly celebrating the Corps and it 78th Birthday in style, despite restrictions – and so we should as there is much to celebrate this year. Details of all these events are on the RAQ website at:

https://qld.raeme.org.au/index.php/notices/events

Spanner News

As the Patron of the RAQ, I also want to mention the good work of the RAQ Committee, and the new faces on that hard-working body, following our recent and successful AGM – you have done a great job in 2020, so well-done folks and keep up the good work. I look forward to catching up in person with you all, more often in 2021, and not just on Team or Zoom web conferences.

You would have seen reference to the number of "Secretaries" we had this year in our Chairman's Message – it is a concern we have trouble attracting people to this important position – indeed it is the only position we struggle to fill. So if you can help as an assistant, who can grow into the bigger job, please get in touch with our Chair. May I offer congratulations to Gary Sargent, who has re-volunteered to fill the position, for the foreseeable future.

What year we have had – let's hope 2021 is a better one. I trust everyone has a wonderful Christmas celebration with family and friends, and that 2021 is everything we wish for ourselves, our families and our nation. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

Arte et Marte

Ross Grant Chairman Comms Committee commschair@qld.raeme.org.au





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13 1905 > racq.com/batteries



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RAEME 78th Birthday Dining in Night



The Rotary-wing Aircraft Maintenance School (RAMS) will be hosting an all ranks mixed dinner as a unit function on the evening of Friday 27 Nov 20. The dinner will be a memorable occasion bringing together RAMS staff and their partners as well as past and serving members of the Corps to mark RAEME's 78th anniversary.

TIME: On Friday 27 November 2020 at 5:45 PM **VENUE**: Building C43, CH47 Training Facility **PLACE**: Swartz Barracks, Orr Rd, Oakey, QLD 4401

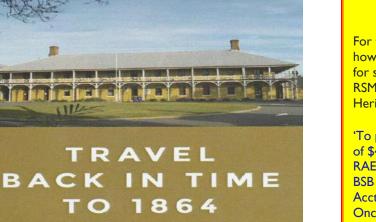
Latest RAQ Merchandise

Now that COVID restrictions have improved somewhat, it's time to get out and about. For those golfers amongst you, why not keep cool on the course wearing an Association polo shirt along with a Corps' cap, and whether it is hot or raining, a large umbrella in Corps' colours, will be the envy of your playing partners.

Don't forget the latest RAEME Corps' Port is coming – may I suggest you order two bottles one to add to your collection and one to drink immediately. Why not pour one into our popular Italian Glass Decanters featuring the RAEME Corps motif.

With the Festive season coming and some lazy summer days likely, you could refresh on past and current history of the Corps by reading our most recent Corps memoir, "With Skill and Fighting". Alternatively, you may find it is a useful Christmas gift for friends and family, especially if you feature in the book.

All these items and many others are available through the RAQ website at: https://qid.raeme.org.au/index.php/shop then go to the "Shop" section and select whatever you fancy. Don't forget, if you are a flag-waving paid up member of the RAQ, login for your entitled discount on the stated price.



When visiting historic Victoria Barracks on Petrie Terrace



BOOK A TOUR \$15.00 per head (Devonshire Tea/Coffee,Booklet& group photo included) <u>www.armymuseumsouthqueensland.com.au</u> 0429954663 bsmithys@bjgpond.net.au



"WITH SKILL AND FIGHTING: CRAFTSMEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY 1942-2014".

For those yet to buy the Corps memoir, here is detail on how to obtain a copy. It may also be a great Christmas gift for someone who has served in the Corps. The Corps RSM, WOI Richard Colefax, and the acting SO2 Corps Heritage, WOI Reinhold Dekrell, are managing sales.

'To purchase a book, you need will need to make a deposit of \$40.00 by electronic transfer to the following account: RAEME Corps Fund BSB – 833205

Acct - 20509705

Once payment is made, please send an email to: **RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au** and add the CC address of WOI Dekrell,

reinhold.dekrell1@defence.gov.au, together with proof of payment (a scanned receipt of deposit), point of contact details and an up to date delivery address. The HOC Cell will distribute the book upon confirmation of payment.'

Note: In the electronic transfer and proof of payment reference field, please include your surname and phone number. Please retain a copy of the deposit transaction, or ask your bank for a receipt, and then send a scanned copy to: IAEME HOCCell(Odefence.gov au. In the email, please ensure you include your name, delivery address and contact phone number. Should you have any queries, please contact the HOC Cell directly on (02) 6055 2274, prior to ordering. Books should be despatched within 28 days of ordering and every effort will be made to inform you of despatch details.

ANNOUNCING A NEW RAQ PRODUCT – A MUST HAVE ITALIAN GLASS DECANTER



RAEME crest etched on a stylish 700ml glass decanter. This quality Italian glass decanter will look perfect in your cabinet or on your bar filled with your best RAEME Port, Muscat, or Spirits.

Pricing as follows: \$39.00 each OR \$35.10 each - for RAQ Financial Members through the online shop.

Click on the image above to view the details.

Numbers are strictly limited.