

EDITION 2-23

SPANNER NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAEME ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND INC

JULY 2023



Featuring 11 CSSB and 108th Fd Wksp Coy



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Spanner News

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome all to the latest Spanner News. In the previous edition I mentioned the RAQ is exploring several ways to better support our growing membership, and importantly, developing approaches to attract new members to our Association. To this end, we've already tried some new strategies, which included:

- successfully supporting the first Spanner Club in Brisbane for 2023 with lucky door prizes, food platters, and some drink sponsorship thanks to Ironside Resources, to attract younger members;
- the provision of lucky door prizes for all who attended the RAQ Darling Downs luncheon;
- providing financial support for attendees and raffle prizes at the post ANZAC Day march in Brisbane; and
- helping the RAQ NQ Team in Townsville with their first \$100 Member Draw for attendees. Thanks also to local member 'Jugs Maloney' who donated a raffle prize to raise help funds for the Memorial fund.

Pleasingly, we have already seen improved membership after all these events, and other functions, which demonstrates the camaraderie of our Corps and the health of our Association is strong. We have planned more functions from mid-August through to the end of the year. Details are on page nine of this edition of Spanner News, as well as the "Events" page of the website. Alternatively, contact one of the regional RAQ Representatives in your area.

To support our goals, the RAQ Executive Team of Paul Gibbs and Mick Patman are reviewing the Functions Funding Policy, along with our FY 23/24 budget, to determine what the RAQ can comfortably support. We want to maximise benefits to our members while managing Association funds responsibly. I expect this review to be completed by October. If you have any feedback, please email the Executive Team via treasurer@qld.raeme.org.au

Another initiative from the 2022 Member Survey is the introduction of our new "digital" membership card. This card allows members to quickly identify their membership level, and for Annual subscribers, their current membership period. As more people get used to using the card, we will be better able to manage discounts for functions, events, merchandise, member draws etc. Simply click on the link at the bottom of Friday Files each week.

Another initiative is to support the current "Women in Uniform" exhibition for 2023 at the Army Museum South Queensland located at Victoria Barracks, Brisbane. The exhibition which runs all year showcases women who have served in the Australian Army. This is a great opportunity for the RAQ to also acknowledge and support "Women in RAEME", including those who continue to serve, veterans, their partners and others with an interest in the Corps. A function is being planned around 11th October in conjunction with the museum, so keep an eye out in Friday Files for more information.

In March our COL COMDT QLD COL Steve Evans detailed the project to establish a permanent RAEME Recovery Mechanics Memorial at Dotswood North Queensland to honour two fallen comrades, Ryan Leslie and Brendon Payne tragically killed in a vehicle accident in 2021. I am pleased to say we achieved the goal of \$40,000. Steve will detail more in this edition on the next steps and the unveiling of the memorial, however I wanted to sincerely thank over 400 private and corporate donors who gave from \$5 to \$5000. The two raffles run in Brisbane and Townsville raised just under \$2000. All contributions big and small were very welcome.

Arte et Marte

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF CORPS RAEME – BRIG BEN SLAUGHTER

Much is happening in Army – here is a summary for your information. Army and Defence are going through a period of significant change. The Chief of Army recently announced the transition of 1, 3 and 7 Brigades to the 1st Australian Division to improve Army warfighting preparedness. There are more changes coming in Army structures, capability and equipment including a greater focus on amphibious and littoral operations and long range fires. I encourage everyone to view the Chief of Army's mid-year video message of 7 July 2023 where he outlines these changes and the further work being undertaken for Army's future. See the video here: <https://youtu.be/qVU4bGmxQDA>

What does this mean for RAEME? I believe our Corps has a very important role in Army's future given our technical and engineering expertise. RAEME can and will lead the way and guide our Army in Motion to be technically enabled; ready now with equipment fit for purpose and future ready to embrace emerging technologies to succeed in contested environments. Now, more than ever, Army needs our skills, technical mastery, innovation, engineering mind-set, fast fixes and pragmatic "can do" attitude. RAEME is vital for Army and Defence's future success. Saying that, there is much to do.

While the Head of Corps team is very small, LTCOL Tim Soper DHOC-Land, LTCOL Rick Watling DHOC-Air, WO1 Jon Tynan Corps RSM, and I, are working with the Master Artificers and other senior members of the Corps along four lines of effort (LOE):

- **RAEME LOE 1 – The Craftsman.** This LOE will get after issues that enhance the opportunities and service offerings for our Craftsmen; we need to compete to attract bright young people with a technical aptitude. The HOC lead for this LOE is Corps RSM.
- **RAEME LOE 2 – The RAEME Officer.** This LOE will explore opportunities for both the engineer and non-engineer officers in RAEME; we need to continue to provide Army with engineering expertise that is underpinned by a thorough understanding of Army's Combat Service Support, Maintenance Engineering and Logistics. The HOC lead for this LOE is LTCOL Rick Watling.
- **RAEME LOE 3 – RAEME Esprit de Corps.** This LOE will explore opportunities to broaden our Corps engagement and interaction. The HOC lead for this LOE is LTCOL Tim Soper.
- **RAEME LOE 4 – The future of RAEME.** Some excellent work has already been done to collect the thinking around RAEME's future. The intent of this LOE is to develop a consistent narrative that the Corps can use to influence and define its future role in Army.

It is your Corps and I seek your help to develop each of these LOE. The HOC team needs your input to ensure

that these initiatives appropriately incorporate the broadest range of Corps perspectives.

This is an exciting time that is full of opportunity for our great Corps. We have an exceptional HOC team ably supported by MAJ Steve Howells, SO2 Corps, a part time position in the HOC Cell. I am excited to be working with the HOC team and meeting as many of you as possible over the coming months.

Arte et Marte

Ben Slaughter
BRIG
HOC



INTRODUCING THE NEW REP COL COMDT RAEME – BRIG ED SMEATON, DSM.

We are very pleased to announce that Brigadier Edward Smeaton, DSM, was appointed Representative Colonel Commandant – RAEME in April 2023 Here is a little about BRIG Smeaton and his plans for the role.

Brigadier Smeaton was born in Rylstone, country NSW. He entered the Royal Military College in 1989, graduating in June 1990 into the Corps of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Brigadier Smeaton served in a variety of regimental positions including as a junior officer with the 16th Air Defence Regiment Workshop, 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, and 1st Recruit Training Battalion. He also served in 7th Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare), 5th Aviation Regiment and 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. His command appointments included Commanding Officer 1st Combat Service Support Battalion and Commander of the Force Support Group / Chief of Staff 17th Combat Service Support Brigade.

Brigadier Smeaton's staff appointments spanned force structure development at Land and Army Headquarters and career management within the Directorate of Officer Career Management-Army. He also contributed to Combat Service Support interoperability within the ABCANZ Armies' Program Office in Washington, DC and to Army's land materiel maintenance reform as Director Plan Centaur.

Brigadier Smeaton's operational service includes Operation Catalyst as the Officer Commanding of the Force Level Logistic Asset and Operation Slipper as Commanding Officer of the Force Support Unit, both in the Middle East. In 2019-2020 he deployed to Afghanistan on Operation Highroad as the Commander of the Australian Task Group and Deputy Branch Head Operational Sustainment in the NATO mission. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his leadership of the national task group and his contribution to the sustainment of the Afghan forces. Brigadier Smeaton holds a Master of Management in Defence Studies and a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy. He is a graduate of the Australian Command and

Staff College (2004) and the United States Eisenhower School of National Security and Resource Strategy (2016).

Brigadier Smeaton and his wife Simone have three children and together they enjoy travelling, cycling, and being outdoors. He is currently employed with Aspen Medical as the General Manager - Supply Chain.

Brigadier Smeaton advises: *“It’s a great honour to be appointed as the Corps’ Representative Colonel Commandant and I am very much looking forward to working with all members of the Corps, both past and present, in this capacity. We have a very proud history and our exceptionally experienced Colonel Commandants across the regions are an excellent connection to the traditions of the Corps. I hope to continue to build upon the strong networks across our Corps and our esprit de corps, bringing the experience of the past to assist with the challenges of the future.”*

Arte et Marte

**Ed Smeaton DSC
BRIG (Retd)
Representative Colonel Commandant**



MESSAGE FROM COL COMDT QLD – COL STEVE EVANS.

G’day Spanners, Two quick points from me for this edition of the Spanner News.

Firstly, a huge thank you to all who have contributed to the fundraising for the Memorial to WO2 Leslie and CFN Payne. We set about raising \$40,000 in under 6 months and I have been in awe of the way the Corps rallied to the cause. It is with absolute pride and the greatest feeling of camaraderie that I watched the tally grow week by week until it reached a point where we were happy to commit to contract for the construction. This is now going ahead with all approvals now complete, through Charters Towers Regional Council. I am also extremely grateful to the men and women of the Corps who have worked to manufacture the centrepiece for the memorial. Bloody well done, team! The official opening is scheduled for 30 August this year, which is the second anniversary of the accident. I sincerely hope that all who contributed to this memorial will be able to attend. If you can’t, we will ensure appropriate publicity is available for viewing.

Secondly, I’d like to officially welcome our new Head of Corps, BRIG Ben Slaughter and our new Representative Colonel Commandant, BRIG (Rtd) Ed Smeaton to their roles. Huge thanks to the outgoing gentlemen, BRIG James Allen and BRIG (Rtd) Dave Creagh who steered us through some of the most challenging years we have faced in recent decades. I’m looking forward to the continued growth of RAEME in both the serving capacity, but also in the ex-service Associations. We continue to be the envy of the other Corps and I’m certain our leadership will keep it that way.

Arte et Marte

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



KING’S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2023

The RAQ congratulates the following officers on their 2023 King’s Birthday awards:

Award of CSC. Lieutenant Colonel Amber Nicole HUMPHREYS RACT. For outstanding devotion to duty as the Staff Officer Grade One - Program Sustainment in Logistics Branch, Army Headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Humphreys’ exceptional skill, drive and dedication has resulted in the refinement of sustainment practices across Defence. Achieving exceptional budget results of within 1% of budget throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and global supply volatility, her exceptional leadership and initiative has significantly enhanced the Joint Land Force and wider Australian Defence Organisation. LTCOL Humphreys is currently CO of 7 CSSB at Enoggera.

Award of CSC. Lieutenant Colonel Wendy Jayne WHEADON RAEME. For outstanding achievement in the application of exceptional skills and judgement as the principal logistics advisor and Brigade Aviation Maintenance Officer within the 16th Aviation Brigade. Lieutenant Colonel Wheadon has displayed exceptional technical skills and judgement in aviation fleet management planning and industry engagement directly resulting in increased Tiger and Taipan helicopter serviceability and operational preparedness. The application of her engineering expertise and risk-based analysis of technical data has been pivotal to the timely and positive resolution of complex maintenance issues resulting in increased aviation support to the Australian Army, Australian Defence Force and Australian community.



FEATURE ARTICLE – 11 CSSB, 108 FD WKSP COY.

11 CSSB is a relatively young Army Reserve unit, which was formed in 1994 at Jezzine Barracks, Townsville. Originally named the 11th Brigade Administrative Support Battalion, it was an amalgamation of many smaller Townsville based units. With several force restructures, it now contains units from all over Queensland and had another name change to 11 CSSB – having absorbed the reserve members from 7 BDE based units. HQ 11 CSSB is now located in SE QLD at Greenbank with major depots at Enoggera, Caboolture, Townsville and Rockhampton.

The unit consists of 108 Fd Wksp Coy, 4 Tpt Sqn and Logistic Support Coy (comprising all the other logistic Corps) with a current staffing level at 80% across the Bn of both SERCAT 7 and 5.

Our dependencies are primarily all units in 11 Bde. but the unit's role is often extended to include support to other units within 2 Div. 11 CSSB's area of responsibility extends from Tamworth in the South, West through the Darling Downs out to Roma, and all major centres North to Cairns with several locations in between. Currently, support is provided to a variety of vehicle fleets, but includes L121 fleets comprised of HX77, PMV-M with the introduction shortly of PMV-L; weapon fleets up to mortars; and the TCN fleet of communications equipment.

In recent years, 11 CSSB's focus has been on supporting COVID tasks and operations, and an assortment of recovery tasks following natural disasters in Australia. 2023 provided the unit with an opportunity to get back to foundation war fighting. Like most units, we have a group of exercises with the name of Ex THETKAW, followed by crawl, walk, run and sprint, depending on where the unit is in the training cycle.



During the “crawl” phase, our Recovery Mechanics placed a PMV training aid (pictured above) for our truckies who were conducting a foot recce patrol to find, report on, and despatch a recovery EMEFIX. The information over the net was an “enemy PMV has been spotted”. We gave them the benefit of the doubt thinking they were clearing and securing the area however, the next thing heard was the patrol requesting permission to enter the CSST

position. I'm not sure what comes before a crawl but the truckies sure know.

What's is a reserve exercise like? It is very similar to a normal exercise but everything is condensed. For example, truckies tend to break the same number of things as they do on normal exercises but they must cram it all in to 48 hours period. In our THETKAW exercises the unit has set up multiple CSST positions to support both real life and training scenario to test the operation of FRTs and conducted training both in trade and military skills. As a reserve unit, we have a wide range of technical and military skill levels amongst our unit members. This allows the “old's”, and I do mean “old's”, to teach the younger members in many military aspects, while the younger soldiers generally have more knowledge on the new equipment fleets – there is often a wonderful meeting of minds on these occasions.



On top of exercises, the unit also supports the local community on ANZAC day parades at Beaudesert, and a full RAEME catafalque parade at Greenbank State School. We have also conducted Defence Force Recruiting support at festivals and community events in our AO. We currently have a couple of members participating on Talisman Sabre 23 in BG Waratah and one member deployed overseas.



Tuesday night in the workshop still involves swinging spanners, but the unit also has set nights aside for trade and military training, together with range shoots and PT. Unfortunately, even as a reservist we aren't immune to the last minute campus course. But the atmosphere is much more relaxed compared to most other workshops.

I put this down to no matter how hard we try, it's hard to kill all the morale in three hours!



We recently farewelled a couple of unit members, who have served significant portions of their life in RAEME – SGT Paul Weir (just short of 40 years) and LCPL Ray Wilkinson (29 years). Both members have made an important contribution to the Army and the Corps – the unit thanks them for their service. If you are currently serving in the Corps and contemplating getting out, and still want to contribute to the Army's maintenance capability, then please reach out to 108 Fd Wksp Coy staff – you will find a welcome home here and a rewarding new career.

Arte et Marte

Nathan Reinbott
SGT
108 Fd Wksp Coy



NEWS FROM OPERATIONAL AREAS

CAPT Kate Thorne has written to the RNN/RAQ thanking us for the timely receipt of her Spanner Pack, but she also tells us a little about her role in Syria.

“Currently I am working with the United Nations in the beautiful lands of Syria. At this time, I have been here for 10 months, with 2 to go in my 12-month deployment supporting the UN trying to “keep the peace in the middle east”, something that is a little harder than the brochure alluded to.

“The country itself, whilst completely shredded by the war, holds some of the most beautiful landscapes and resilient people I have ever met. Throughout my time though, the country has had its challenges: I have survived 2 earthquakes, cholera, COVID, and more bouts of food poisoning than you can poke a stick at. Character building, they say!

“I am the J5 in the headquarters, but as all those who have worked with me before now, I avoid the office like the plague and the wannabe crafty in me found its way into the workshop, and I have been honing my skills with the Syrian locals in camp ever since. By the end of my time, I will have completed my Cert 3 in Bush Mechanics. I might even consider a reverse ASWOC?

“Workplace Health & Safety here is optional, spare parts are non-existent, many tools substandard and my Arabic is even worse! But what the workshop lacks in PPE and basic English

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skills, it makes up for with Mad Max style Mechanics! I am truly amazed with what the mechanics can do with a couple of zip ties and a roll of politically correct tape, as they routinely patch together a dying fleet of up-armoured 200 series Landcruisers.



“All jokes aside – it’s one hell of an experience being here, and the support received from the “RAEME Mafia”, from the retirees, down to my first lot of “Crafties” has been outstanding. The regular check-ins and offers of support reassure me that “old” Marty Burgess guided (aka pushed) me down the right path, and into the right Corps at RMC!”

Arte et Marte

Kate Thorne
CAPT
UN Camp Faouar, Syria



RAQ ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION REPORTS

ANZAC Day Brisbane. RAEME Association Banner at the Brisbane March. Click on the image to view the RAEME march clip at the 1hr 21 minute mark.



ANZAC Day went off very well in Brisbane with over 150 Corps members and guests on parade. Led by our COL

COMD QLD – COL, Steve Evans, the Association was one of the largest contingents marching on the day followed by an even larger turnout at the Port Office Hotel post-march function.



Members and guests at the Port Office Hotel, our traditional post march venue

In my first year as RAQE Chairman, I was very proud to see the large number of RAEME soldiers who represented our Corps in ANZAC Day services, not only in Queensland and Australia, but right around the world.

A big thank you to the OJT from Brisbane who escorted our banner for the parade and attended the post-March function at the Port Office Hotel. We ran a raffle to raise funds for the RAEME Recovery Mechanics Memorial to be built in North Queensland. The raffle raised more than \$1000 towards the Memorial construction. Thank you everyone who purchased tickets. I can report we have now achieved our goal of raising \$40,000.

Organising these events takes a lot of work and planning, I want to specifically thank several members of the Association who contributed to ANZAC Day Commemorations. Without the following, these events wouldn't happen: Paul Gibbs, Mick Patman, Ty Bodle, Adrian Butcher, Bruce Hermann and the team at the PORT OFFICE HOTEL. Thank you all!

More photos of the day's activities are available from the RAQ website on the gallery page.

Arte et Marte

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



ANZAC Day Townsville. RAEME Association Banner at the Townsville March. Click on the image to view the RAEME march video at the 4.25.50 minute mark.



A great turnout in Townsville for ANZAC Day 2023. Approx. 100+ RAEME personnel marched under the RAQ banner along the Townsville Strand before adjourning to Flynn's Irish bar for a well-supported private function.



Ian Moorhouse, Dean Goninan, Wayne Nutchey, Wally Eremas and Tank Pontifex

It was great to see a large contingent of On the Job Trainees (OJT) at both activities keeping old and bolds in check. More photos of ANZAC Day are available on the RAQ IMAGE GALLERY – thank you to all our photo contributors.

Arte et Marte

Tank Pontifex
RAQ NQ

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Toowoomba Army Apprentices ANZAC Day Commemorations. A big thank you to everyone who showed up for the ANZAC March in Toowoomba. It was an absolute pleasure to host you all, and also wonderful to see so many folks in attendance. It was a wonderful day from the Dawn Service to later in the day, with many familiar and new faces.

Many of the local regular attendees were absent, so it was surprising to find we still had around 30 Appies march behind the banner, with others looking on from the crowd, or marching with other units. From the 10th Intake to the 48th Intake, the "Evens" won it on the day, with only a couple of "Odds" attending. The "Odds are Gods" comment shouted from the crowd, much to everyone's amusement, got a lot of giggles from the ranks.



A very big thank you to Bob Bell, 10th F&T, for laying a wreath on our behalf. A big thanks also to Jim Hislop for getting photos to me from the AAS collection held at the Army Museum, Bandiana

Back at The Goods Shed afterwards, we had a brief history and photo display for all to see. Another big thank you to Chris Bell, 20th Elec Fit for allowing us to display a very old Army Apprentice School flag, which was displayed proudly above the 2up ring.

It always surprises me when you recognise people you served with and find out later that they were an Apprentice. We are a rare breed who don't often get the chance to get together and tell our history. I can't wait for the next reunion, which reminds me, the next official AAAA celebrations are in late October 2023 in Albury/Wodonga – see you there.

Regards,

Liz Fitzgibbon
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lizfitzgibbon@hotmail.com



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RAQ-DD Luncheon Toowoomba 11 Jun 23. I've attached some photos from our most recent lunch. I believe that the new venue, Club Toowoomba, was a big hit with everyone and we couldn't have asked for better winter's weather, given Toowoomba's reputation.



I look forward to seeing everyone at the next function on 10th September 2023.

Pete Pile
RAQ-DD Rep
M: 0493 268 868
Southwest@qld.raeme.org.au



Report on the 24th Army Apprentice Annual Reunion South East QLD, 10th June 2023 at Bulimba Bowls Club.

Our annual event was again held on another beautiful winter's day in SE Queensland. Approximately 150 apprentices and partners were in attendance and enjoyed the BBQ and each other's company. Many apprentices travelled from far away to be there on the day. They came

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from many places including Sydney, Perth, Newcastle, and Townsville, as well as many Brisbane and regional locals.

Once again, our two loyal cooks, Mick and Peter, did a fine job – their efforts over many, many years are really appreciated – plenty of food for all.

The “youngest” apprentice intake was represented by Pauline Blackwood 44th, followed by David Barnes and Dan Gough both 43rd – all were VM’s. From the older intakes, we had two members from the 8th, Don Adams C & J and Max Lockwood ET; as well as two from the 11th Intake, Ray Jennings VM and Harry Nielson F & T, and Peter Lambert from the 13th Intake. The largest intake represented was once again the 30th Intake, with 15 members in attendance, closely followed by the 14th with 12 members.



14th Intake attendees L to R Norm Wells, Brian (Vlad) Daley, Graham Poole, Phil (Doc) Livingstone, Rendall (REW) Brown, Alan (Lou) Gostelow, Dave Haxton, John Nickols; Bob King, Alf Richardson, Sid Young, David Grant.

As I previously announced when I turned 80, I wish to retire from being the organiser of this reunion and have called for expressions of interest for a new organiser. To date no hands have been raised. I am very happy to support any person or group who are interested in taking over the running of the Annual Reunion. I have kept the organisational tasks simple, but age does weary you so now it needs a new person or group to take over.

IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO SEE THIS FANTASTIC DAY JUST FADE AWAY.

Brian Daley
Reunion Convenor
Mobile 0412 721 761



RAQ EVENTS AND SOCIAL CALENDAR – 2023

The following social events will happen in and around Queensland in 2023. For further details on any events, please contact the RAQ Functions Officer at: functions@qld.raeme.org.au or check **Friday Files** each week.

To view all functions happening around Australia by the Associations [Click on this link](#)

Event	Date
RAEME Reserve/CMF Reunion - Brisbane	Sun 20 Aug 2023
Spanner Club - Indooroopilly Hotel	Fri 25 Aug 2023
RAQ Gold Coast Function - AEME SLSC Mermaid Beach	Sat 26 Aug 2023
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 10 Sep 2023
RAQ Sunshine Coast Function – Maroochy RSL	Sat 30 Sep 2023
RAQ NQ Gathering - TBA Townsville	Sep/Oct 2023
Women in RAEME - Victoria Barracks Brisbane	Wed 11 Oct 2023
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 26 Nov 2023
RAEME Birthday - Brisbane	Fri 1 Dec 2023
RAEME Birthday - Townsville	Fri 1 Dec 2023
RAQ All Ranks Luncheon - Port Office Hotel	Sat 2 Dec 2023

RAEME Association Gold Coast Lunch – 26 Aug 23. Just a short note to advise the RAQ Gold Coast lunch is scheduled for Saturday 26th August at the Mermaid Beach (AEME) Surf Life Saving Club (MBSLSC) commencing at 1200hrs.

The format will be as per previous years with a very informal social lunch, where attendees will purchase their own meals and drinks off the club menu at the bar.

The Surf Club is always very accommodating allocating us an area on the front veranda overlooking the ocean. This is our 7th or 8th year for our lunch, and we have cracked it every year for a beautiful sunny winter’s day – touch wood the same happens this year.

Don’t forget the MBSLSC offers free Life Membership to financial members of the RAQ. It is a very easy process to take advantage of this program and the application process is detailed on the RAQ webpage. If you take up this offer you should apply for membership in advance of the lunch date, then pick up your card on lunch day. The Club does not post the cards out, they must be collected in person.

You will have received an email requesting notification of your attendance, so please send replies to me ASAP. I look forward to catching up with all.

Regards,

Eddie “Beans” Bevans
Lunch Convenor
beans55289@iprimus.com.au



Next Function for RAEME Association Darling Downs.



For your diaries, the dates for the remaining functions this year are as follows, noting that the RAEME Birthday function* date might change:

- 10th Sep 23, and
- 26th Nov 23 (also our RAEME Birthday function).

Next Luncheon for RAEME Association Queensland Sunshine Coast – 30 Sep 23. As mentioned in the previous Spanner News, readers are reminded that this year's RAQ Sunshine Coast Chapter Annual Luncheon is to be held at the Maroochy RSL on Saturday 30 September 2023.

We have enlisted the cooperation of Brigadier Gabriel Follett AM. Director General Fuel Services Branch, as our guest speaker – see below.



The Colonel Commandant, Queensland, Colonel Steve Evans (Rtd) will host the lunch and as in past years, Brigadier Ross Grant (Rtd) will be our MC. We will once again be well supported by the Maroochy RSL which looks after our every need.

The RSL has waived the cost of room and projector/screen hire and again will offset the cost of the lunch to the sum of \$10.00 per head for the first 80 guests. The RAQ has more than matched the RSL this year by providing a \$20.00 subsidy per RAQ and serving members and one guest, again for the first 80 attendees. For those who get in early, this will reduce the cost per head for members and that one guest to \$28.00.

Details of the luncheon are:

- **Event Date** – 30 September 2023.
- **Timings** – 1130 to 1700hrs.
- **Attendance** – max 80 attendees.

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- **Venue** – Room M4 Maroochy RSL, corner Memorial and First Avenues, Maroochydoore.
- **Menu** – a three course Gold Plated Menu (as for 2023).

BOOK NOW

Important. Note the date in your diary and we look forward to seeing you once again on the Sunshine Coast.

**Ross Grant & Mike Prain
Lunch Convenors
RAQ Sunshine Coast Chapter**



RAEME Birthday All Ranks Luncheon Brisbane – 2 Dec 23. Please find below some early details on the 2023 All Ranks Luncheon for all current and past members of RAEME and their friends to be held as follows:

- **VENUE:** Port Office Dining Room, Brisbane CBD (Port Office Hotel) Corner Edward and Margaret Streets.
- **TIMINGS:** 1130 hrs pre- luncheon gathering for 1230 hrs start, finishing at 1700 hrs.
- **MEAL:** Entree, Main (3-way alternate drop), desert (cake) tea and coffee.
- **DRINKS:** Drink package included for the first hour once seated (after the first hour drinks are at own expense).
- **DRESS:** Smart Casual - Gents tie please.

More details closer to the day

REPORT FROM COORDINATOR RAEME NATIONAL NETWORK (RNN) – BRIG (RTD) ROSS GRANT.

Introduction. The following report is a heavily edited version of my report presented to the RAEME Corps Committee meeting held on 21 Jun 23, on the status of the RNN.

Status of the RNN. I reminded members of the Corps Committee the RNN has been in existence for some 12 years. I went on to say it consists of a loose arrangement of mostly regional and some unit associations spread across Australia and provides a national focus for celebratory activities undertaken by a loyal band of retired Corps members. In line with Corps Instruction (CI) 31, “The RAEME Association”, the RNN generally aspires to the following goals:

- Promote the Corps’ identity and reputation across Australia.
- Recognise and celebrate the achievements of the members of the Corps.
- Provide a focal point for Corps activities nationally and regionally.

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- Foster relationships between Head of Corps RAEME, RAEME Corps Committee, RAEME Serving Members and all RAEME Affiliated Associations and other RAEME groups.
- Undertake tasks that are mutually agreed by affiliates and members that will assist and support Corps members.

Looking to the Future. Although not spelt out in CI 31, the role of the Coordinator of the RNN, is spelt out in other guidance, as follows: “To provide a national focal point for the RAEME family, including the RAEME Regional Associations, and other RAEME affiliated groups, Head of Corps and RAEME serving members.”

Here are some key points, on which we will focus in the future:

- **Membership and Membership Transference.** An organisation which doesn't grow its membership base is doomed. It is important to have good relationships with local ARA and ARES units, which amongst other things, helps the recruiting process, while acknowledging, we must employ all available methods to attract new members to refresh and grow our associations.
- **Levels of Activity.** Each association has determined specific needs of their regions and membership. Some associations are comparably active, working well within their capacity. Some need help and I have spent some time in the last twelve months assisting the ACT and NT associations. In the case of the former, the new Chair and Secretary are doing a great job, while in the case of the NT, I can see they need more assistance communicating to their potentially large local membership base for some time into the future. All associations reported good attendance at their most recent ANZAC Day Marches and post-march activities.
- **Communications.** Newsletters have an important place in the life of all associations, constantly reminding our membership of Corps' development program, but also spelling out forthcoming activities, important Corps initiatives and significant heritage events. These media “platforms” are also very important for keeping the members up to speed on the Corps daily activities in support of the ADF.
- **Website Utility and Accessing Technical Support.** The RNN and Association websites, and the RAEME Facebook are also important tools, and we are blessed to have a great RAEME National Support Team (RNST) distributed across Australia, ably lead by Alex Smithers in WA – but the IT system is under-utilised. Over the last 6-12 months, Alex and his team have updated the network and made it more secure - I believe it is serving regular users well. Most importantly, the network also facilitates the sale of RAEME merchandise. Some associations use the website to gain new members and sell discounted tickets to their events and activities.

- **RAEME Craftsman Magazine.** With the thinning out of the HOC Cell, production of the “Craftsman” falls to SO2 Corps, MAJ Steve Howell, and his editorial team of one, Dave Clark. Steve and I (and recently the Corps RSM) have encouraged the associations to provide articles for the “Craftsman”. It is important for the associations to provide articles and elaborate on what they are doing in their regions – it can also improve their membership.
- **Funding Support.** Most associations are financially viable or have simple funding models to suit their local needs. Most use a basic “pay as you go” model for functions; some use a model that is supported by association subsidies, or a combination of both. All associations are aware that on occasion, they (and RAEME units) may seek financial assistance from the RAEME Corps Committee for some important events, IAW CI No 3 “RAEME Corps Fund Charter”. These subsidies may apply to Corps anniversaries, special unit birthdays, important association events, celebrations and initiatives like Operation Spanner Pack or the RAEME Corps history project.
- **Op Spanner Packs.** Despite fewer RAEME folks being posted overseas on Operations, Op Spanner Pack will continue under the management of MAJ (Rtd) Ray Norman, from his home in Maroochydore. It is clear our members really appreciate receiving these small packs and we routinely receive generous letters of appreciation from beneficiaries.
- **Heritage Initiatives.** Over time, there have been many initiatives to celebrate our Corps heritage, including in 2022, the 80th Anniversary of the Corps. Most recently we have seen the production of two books of RAEME humour – our humour is clearly an important part of our Corps culture, heritage and resilience and needs to be preserved. I commend the initiative and energy of Ian and Sheff and hope the next edition sells well. They deserve to be congratulated for their efforts by HOC and we should contemplate the heritage needs of the Corps in the future.
- **Appointment of a new COL in Chief** – we still await the advice on a replacement COL in CHIEF RAEME with the passing of Prince Phillip but understand the pathway HOC is pursuing, to align RAEME with REME's recent move which sees HRH The Countess of Wessex appointed COL IN CHIEF.

Conclusion. The RNN a single national POC for anyone who wishes to remain connected to friends and colleagues they made in the Corps during their service. Regardless of where an individual exits the Army, the RNN encourage them to look for their local RAEME Association and consider joining. More importantly, we encourage them to consider taking on a leadership role – it is essential we get fresh younger faces in the most executive committees as soon as possible.

Arte et Marte

Ross L G Grant AM
BRIG (RTD)
COORD RNN
rnn.chair@raeme.org.au



SPANNER PACK – A RESPONSE FROM THE AREA OF OPERATIONS

“Operation Spanner Pack” was managed and coordinated by RANSW and RAQ until 2011, at which time, the RAEME National Association (RNA), now the RAEME National Network (RNN), took over responsibility.

Spanner Packs contain small items not available through the military system and includes magazines, grocery items, toiletries, RAEME memorabilia and merchandise, mini solar charging panels, traditional Australian biscuits and sweets to name a few. We are always looking for new and popular items to put in the pack and appreciate feedback on the contents, particularly from younger soldiers and those on deployment.

Donations to Spanner Pack can be made by visiting www.qld.raeme.org.au ‘Shop’ page and ‘donations’.

A further five Spanner Packs were dispatched to our soldiers deployed to PNG in May 2023. This now brings the total number of packs despatched since Op Spanner Pack was formed in 2008, to 4782 (approx 9.5tonne). Here is a response from CAPT Kate Thorne in Syria:

G’day Ray,

The spanner pack has made it across to Syria - I was extremely sceptical it would, but it did :)

Thanks so much for the thought and effort that went into it - the stickers have already been tactically distributed; the shapes were an absolute hit; and the stubby cooler always a fan favourite, remain so!! Here I am - in Camp Faouar, Syria, enjoying my goodies.

I appreciate the thought and support the Corps continues to provide. Keep doing good things!



Captain Kate Thorne Deployed in Syria with the United Nations

Arte et Marte

Major R.G. Norman OAM (Retd)
RNN Spanner Pack Co Coordinator
RNN@qld.raeme.org.au



VALE

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

- **Williams**, Geoffrey John “Barra” (18th VM) passed away on 14 Feb 24 aged 75 years, after a long battle with cancer. His funeral service was held in Maryborough on 3 Mar 23.
- **Miller**, Paul “Dusty” Miller (46th VM) passed away on Sunday 16 Apr 23 aged 48, whilst undertaking a walk on the Kokoda Track in PNG to raise funds for veteran causes. He deployed to International Force East Timor, Iraq, Timor Leste and Afghanistan and served in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, Darwin and Adelaide before he was discharged in 2014.
- **Ross**, James “Jim” late of Hervey Bay, formerly of Rossarden, Tasmania, passed away peacefully surrounded by loved ones on 19 Apr 23, aged 68 years. His funeral service was attended by family and friends at the Fraser Coast Crematorium and Bayside Memorial Gardens, Hervey Bay, 24 Apr 23.
- **Gamble**, Jack (4th C&J) passed away on 28 Apr 23 in John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, aged 90. His health declined recently after ANZAC Day 2023.
- **Husband**, James “Jim” WO1 (Rtd) OAM, BEM, passed away in Coolumb, QLD, on 21 May 23 aged 89. Jim served at the Army Apprentices School (AAS) as a PTI from 1959-1963. As Nov 22 edition of *The Apprentice About* reminds us, Jim was one of the best-known members of staff over that period. [This website](#), while a little dated, features an interview with Jim as he discusses his 25-year military career:
- **Cybulski**, SGT (Rtd) George Luke (17th VM) passed away on 31 May 23 in Toowoomba. George served in SVN with 17 Constr Sqn Wksp and later trained as an aircraft engine fitter and then served in 5 Base Wksp Bn, 1 Avn Regt Wksp and 173 Gen Spt Sqn Wksp. He was 77 years old.
- **Phillips**, Gregory Murray passed away peacefully at his home at Burpengary on 29 May 23, aged 82. He served in SVN with 6RAR from May 1969 to April 1970.
- **Finney**, Richard (Dick) Joseph passed away 13 Jun 23 at age 87. Dick was a Artificer Armament and served with 101 Bty in Malaya and South Vietnam first tour 19 Sep 66 to 10 Jun 67. Dick was an original member of 101 Fd Wksp.
- **Cotter**, CAPT (Rtd) Paul, RAEME and RACT passed away on 16 Jun 23 after a very long illness. OCS Class Dec 72, OCS Wing, Scheyville. Sadly missed by his family, friends and Army colleagues.
- **Groffen**, Dave passed away 21 Jun 23 at St Vincent Hospital, Chermside, Queensland, after a five year battle with cancer.

- **McAuliffe**, WO2 Mark “Macca” passed away in Vincentia 3 Jul 23 aged 55 from a heart condition. Macca served for almost 32 years and deployed to Bougainville and East Timor. He was former infantryman, mechanic, trainer, mentor and good mate to countless “Spanners”. He was also a proud father of three adult children.
- **Davis**, Michael “Davo” (42nd VM) passed away 6 Jul 23 aged 52. Who graduated from AAS in 1988. Michael's funeral service was held at Coffs Harbour, NSW, 14 Jul 23. A further celebration of his life will occur in Coffs Harbour and Darwin sometime soon.
- **Cislowskii**, CFN Harold Francis 'Harry' passed away peacefully in Bundaberg on 14 Jul 23, aged 78 years. Late of Nanango and formerly of Bundaberg, Harry served in SVN with Headquarters, 1st Australian Task Force LAD from May 1967 to Dec 1967.

WELFARE

RAQ has not been advised of any welfare cases this last quarter. **As a reminder**, please advise me of any brethren and sisters in distress, or who have passed, with pertinent and accurate detail in a timely way. Email me at the address below with details of welfare matters in Queensland.

Regards,

Barry Shipway
Welfare Officer

welfare@qld.raeme.org.au



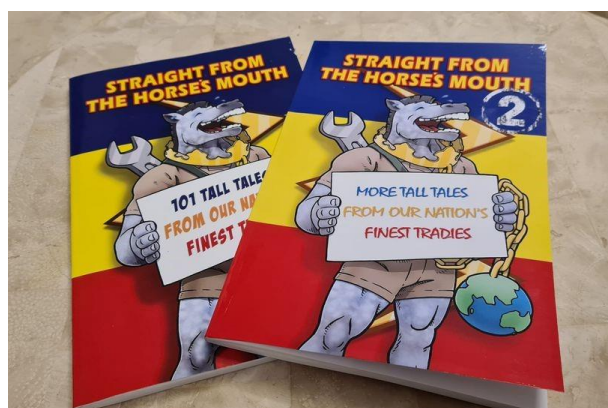
PUBLICATION OF EDITION 2 OF STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Advertisement for Stories and Pre-orders. Pre-orders for RAEME's official humour book, “Straight from the Horse's Mouth”, Edition 2 are now open!

The book will cost \$25 per copy with postage in Australia included for pre-orders. Subject to publishing and postal delays, the books will be in the mail in time for Christmas. Pre-orders can be placed at:

<https://FunnyRaemeStories.square.site/>

Limited numbers of Edition 1 are also available. Package Deals are available for those who purchase Book 1 and Book 2 together.



Stop press: As order delivery is imminent, the editors are about to close off the pre-order feature with the free postage offer. This will occur on Sunday 13 Aug 2023. If you have your order in before this date, you will still receive the book at the discounted rate. After this date, you will more than likely have to pay full price for the book as well as postage.

Your support has been greatly appreciated.

Arte et Marte,

Ian Cook
Book Editor

CONTEMPORARY RAEME HISTORY

102 Fd Wksp – 3 BASB, 1 RAR, Battalion Support Group in Somalia (Feb to Aug 1993). 2023 marks the 30 year Anniversary of the 1 RAR Bn Group deployment to Somalia on Operation SOLACE. Australia's contribution was 990 personnel based on the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. Although 1 RAR, B Sqn ¾ Cav Regt and 3 CER all had their integral RAEME Elements, the 1 Battalion Support Group was made up of a large logistics element (including Medics) from 3 BASB. The 19 person element from 102 Fd Wksp (seen below) were led by LT Jenelle Lawson (Tp Comd) and WO2 Phillip King (ASM) and were deployed to Baidoa approximately 300km inland from Mogadishu.



I BSG Tech Spt members in Baidoa L-R Front row: SGT Rick Conn, CPL Wayne Nutchey, CFN Derrin Ford, WO2 Phil King, CFN Stewart, SGT Darryl Wheelhouse, CFN Damien Telford, CPL Graheme Seccull, CFN Lawson, CFN Brian Savage, CPL Jim Stow and CPL Gus Angus. L-R Back Row: LCPL Shane Cooke, CFN Scott Mitchell, CPL Pete Chalker, LT Jenelle Lawson, CFN Dean Goninan and CPL John Nicholls.

Dean Goninan and Duanne Maggenti are both currently posted back in the 3rd Brigade (Nino in HQ as the Brigade ASM and Maggs as the 1st WO1 ASM of 3 RAR).

We'd hoped to get down to Canberra for the reunion however we didn't make it, so it was great to catch up with Gus Angus and Wayne Nutchey for a beer in Townsville on Anzac Day.



I BSG Tech Spt members with US 43rd Combat Engineer Battalion workshop members (who were co-located initially in Baidoa).

The small group that attended the weekend of festivities led the Canberra Anzac Day March and enjoyed each other's company no doubt spinning many stories. Many hadn't seen each other for most of the 30 years and Phil King has been living in America for most of them.



L-R WOI Dean "Nino" Goninan, WOI Duanne "Maggs" Maggenti, Gus Angus, Mr Wayne Nutchey catching up on Anzac Day at Flynn's Irish Pub in Townsville.



L – R Jim Stow, Brian Savage, Scott Mitchell, John Nicholls, Damien Telford, Phillip "ASM" King attending the Canberra Reunion.

RAEME HISTORY SEGMENT. SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION TO END AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR



Introduction. This history segment concentrates on Australia's commitment to South Vietnam (SVN) 1962-1967. The Department of Veterans Affairs is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War in various ways in 2023, so it is timely to remind our membership of what some of our RAQ members did when serving in SVN over the 10 years Australian forces were committed. For more detail on the DVA activities please look at the [following link](#).

58604 CAPT Les Edis, SO3 EME (EIS) HQ AFV (Army Component) 1969 – 70. In view of my electrical/electronic background, I was quite surprised to learn in early 1969, I was to be posted to HQ AFV (Army Component) as the SO3 EME (EIS), responsible for the routine and cyclic inspection of all vehicle and weapons and other equipment operated by Australian military forces in Phuc Tuy province. I assumed that, like my then current posting as OC 101 Fd Wksp Veh PI, I was being trained to experience different equipment.

I departed Sydney in early April 1969, arriving in Vung Tau on the 9th April, courtesy of Qantas, to be met by my predecessor and quickly transferred to one of the DHC-4 Caribous operated by the RAAF's 35 Sqn. Many of you will know this service by its common name – Wallaby Airlines. On arrival at Saigon's Tân Sơn Nhất international airport, we were ferried to our accommodation building – the Buis BOQ, located in downtown Saigon, then on to the nearby Free World Military Assistance Organisation (FWMAO) building to look over to my new office and to visit COMAFV, QMG Branch (ADEME).

The first few days of Week One were taken up travelling by Wallaby Airlines to 1st Aust Task Force (IATF) Nui Dat to be introduced to the section's inspectors, followed by visits to HQ IATF to meet the Commander, the SO3 EME and other logistics staff. Mutual familiarization visits also were arranged to meet the staff of the major infantry, armour, artillery, engineer, aviation and logistic units, including 106 Fd Wksp, where I was introduced to the various COs/OCs. I also sat in when the report on the

just-completed inspection of 9 RAR's vehicles was presented to the CO by my predecessor.

The remainder of the week was spent at Vung Tau visiting 1st Aust Logistic Support group (IALSG) units, including 102 Fd Wksp, 85 Tpt Pl and 1 Aust Fd Hosp. Following a short tour of the township, I could see why Vung Tau was selected as the site for the Peter Badcoe Club's R & R centre.

The following months saw me overseeing a great number of EIS vehicle and weapons inspections, when the relevant inspector and I initially liaised with unit COs/OCs to both outline the scope and conduct of the inspections and, later, to personally present the report that I had prepared in the FWHQ office, based on the inspectors' notes. There were few arguments from COs/OCs, which said a lot for their commitment to the importance of equipment maintenance in a combat environment. This attitude was aided somewhat by their being left in no doubt about their responsibilities when COMAFV personally insisted on Class I inspection standards.

So many noteworthy incidences arose from our inspection routine, but the one that really amused was when a RAEME unit's wrecker was found in such a bad state that my inspector felt he had no option but to declare it NFW. The OC was forever grateful that we managed to keep the incident under wraps.

I earned many brownie points in deciding to forego the opportunity to visit Bangkok on R & R, instead opting to RTA in time for my wife's birthday and to re-acquaint myself (and her) with my then 20 month old daughter. As those of you who did the same, you will understand the feelings on both sides when wrenching yourself away from your loved ones after a seven day homecoming.



Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time in SVN. The opportunity to meet so many people from so many walks of life - the locals, Americans, Koreans, Montagnards and our contemporaries serving in combat or support roles was priceless - especially witnessing the Yanks failing to cope with beer with an alcohol content greater than 2.3%. Also unforgettable were the daily sounds of combat, including the notable sound of a Huey helicopter and, **Spanner News**

particularly, the incredible experience of being too close to an American 155 mm howitzer barrage. So were the totally different sights and sounds of the country, the amazement of witnessing a Honda scooter loaded with three or more family members aboard, or with so many piglets that the rider could not be seen.

Having said all that, I was so mightily relieved to return to my own country. We really have it all in Oz!

Les retired as a LTCOL in 1984 after 30 years' service, one month and one day (DFRB incentivized) after commencing service as an Apprentice (9th Electrician). He went on to have a very successful business repairing electrical and electronic equipment in civvie street and regularly attends RAQ functions.

243450 CPL Paul Jenkinson 17 Const Sqn Wksp 1970-1971. I was posted to 17 Constr Sqn Wksp SVN in November 1970 on promotion to Corporal, but the paperwork never arrived so the OC, Captain John Fenton, who was not prepared to wait, temporarily promoted me, and quickly, I was put in charge of the B vehicle section.

One interesting aspect of the B vehicle section was that there was a program called "a five year plan". By checking the workshop records I found that one vehicle - a Mk 5 truck - was continually being cannibalized due to poor repair parts availability, for some urgent jobs. Although this kept many other vehicles on the road, it was not normal work practice/policy, so as a section, we endeavoured to do our best to rectify the situation at all costs. We almost got there several times, but it was still a five year plan when I left SVN, due to the priority to keep the rest of the fleet in a task worthy condition.



After approximately six months I was moved to the C vehicle section where I remained for the rest of my posting. During this time, we assisted the engineers move the barbed wire fence and manufacture a new gun emplacement and sleeping quarters for the picket by welding together three small shipping containers. This was necessary due to the sand dunes at Vung Tau moving all the time from the wind and weather and burying the existing barbed wire etc. After positioning the containers and rolling out three reams of barbed wire, we then positioned all the trip flares, supervised by the engineer in

charge. He decided to celebrate his hard day's work by visiting the town of Vung Tau that night and stayed out long after curfew. Therefore, to avoid the MPs at the front gate on his return, he decided to come back in through the new wire, but he must have forgotten the position of the flares and set one off.....and then another one. By this time those on the machine gun were ready to fire, until he yelled out, "It's me, it's me. Don't shoot!" It took some time to disentangle him and his clothes from the barbed wire, after which he emerged torn and bloody.

The standard after hours pastime was visiting the boozier of course but a few of us ventured down to the tennis courts where a Korean black belt was conducting tae kwon-do (TKD) classes. I trained 5 nights a week and by the time I returned home, I was halfway towards gaining my black belt. After only 8 months back in Oz, I received a posting to Singapore, and after another year of TKD training, I gained my blackbelt. This proved to be fortuitous some years later.

Once again back home, I was posted to 101 field Workshop and later to RAEME Training Centre. Because this was the first non-field force posting that I had received in many years, it was here I decided to start my own TKD Club and taught 5 nights a week and Saturday mornings. I had several postings after this, the highlight of which was a posting to Vanuatu as a technical advisor to the Vanuatu Mobile Force and police force.

Paul transferred to the Army Reserves after 27 years' service, starting his career as a 20th VM and finishing as a WO1 ART VEH. He and his wife, Robyn, have been deeply involved in their local RSL sub branch, and for 13 years, their local surf club, training club members to become bronze medallion holders, for which they have received many, many awards.



Presented with the Lobin Cup from Noosa Surf Club, won jointly with Robyn, for outstanding and continuous service to the Club, members and the community, (2021-22). This Cup is the highest award for Lifesaving except for Life Membership and has not been awarded for the previous 6 years!

48675 CFN J. A. Owens 161 (Indep) Recce Flt 1969-70. In 1967, nearing the end of my apprenticeship, at 2 Base Wksp Bn, Moorebank, my "cruisy life" was upended when I was sent to RAAF Base Amberley to undertake technical training to become part of the fledgling Army aviation capability. During that time, we were mentored by NCOs, both Army and RAAF, who had just returned from SVN, and gave us a very different outlook on life and what lay ahead. My posting order soon arrived, and I replaced Willy Windberg in 161 Recce Flt, SVN, on 16 April 1969.

On arrival it all became real as we were quickly issued with a weapon and live ammo. Wow, I am on active service. So followed 365 days and a wakey, as well as the normal first night ritual in the boozier catching up with old mates and making new ones. I'd only had a couple of cans when I was asked to accompany "Doc" Lindsay to the flight line to arm one of our Cessna "Fighters" with rockets. So here I am doing OJT, holding the rockets in their tubes ready to be hooked onto the cargo hooks. "Doc" says don't let them slip, so of course they slip, or I thought they did, because as we hooked them up, the artillery across from us let loose.

Eventually, the neighbourhood noises became part of our work routine. Our tasks consisted mostly of Flight Line duties, preparing Cessna aircraft and Sioux helicopters for first light reconnaissance tasks in support of IATF. Other tasks included refuelling aircraft and quickly turning aircraft around following minor repairs or battle damage.

D servicings and engine changes also kept us busy with electrical tradies conducting electrical checks and maintenance while assisting black trades with their jobs. We became a well-oiled team and routinely worked through the night to ensure aircraft were available for missions the next day. We continued to assist in all areas while we carried out maintenance tasks on batteries, ensuring they were charged and serviceable and modifications were incorporated. This wasn't my favourite job as most mods were dreamt up by some cruel person who liked to annoy electricians. Any electrical tradie would know that when aircraft are built most electrical components are hung in space and everything else built around them, necessitating having double offset elbows.

So life settled in to a sensible routine, but, and there is always a but, the adage, soldier first tradesman second, soon came into play. I undertook routine military duties, dixie bashing, piquettes and patrols – the latter were normally two nights and three days duration, over about five kilometres distance out from the wire.


Parfitt's julie@parfitts.com.au
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I also went on flying missions as an observer dropping white phosphorous grenades as markers for air strikes, or as my old mate Beans Bevans recently wrote, dropping night flares from Cessna "Fighter" aircraft.

One of the highlights was a detachment to 3/17 Air Cav flight out of Di An flying as door gunner on an Iroquois for five days. That was an eye-opener on the might of the American war machine. At all times we had Cobra escort aircraft. One night, we resupplied an American unit in contact with NVA. At one stage through many beads of sweat rolling off my brow, while on the ground, I witnessed two Cobras following each other in a continuous circle belting rockets at the NVA while we quickly unloaded a load of ammo – quite an experience.

Not long after this adventure, I returned to Australia.

Joe's final posting was to AAS Latchford Barracks Bonegilla as WSM Electrical Wing after 20.5 years' service. His first civvie job was as a car salesman, which predictably, lasted only 10 months before he moved into the service department. He continued his association with the ADF in the ARES, and later, as a civvie supervisor at 4 Base Wksp Bn, Bandiana. Apparently, Joe maintained his fitness regime up to age 58 and could still gain A pass for the BFT!

17048 MAJ Claude Palmer, OC 106 Fd Wksp. By October 1968, the need for a Field Workshop under command of 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF), Nui Dat, Vietnam, had become a priority. Having served as OC Recovery Platoon of the (then) 101 Infantry Workshop, 1 Signal Regiment Light Aid Detachment, 17 Construction Squadron Workshop, the (then) Director Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Brigadier Harry Martins, advised me I was to command 106 Fd Wksp, which was about to be raised in Vietnam. However, my current posting bore the glorious title of Deputy Assistant Master General of Ordnance (Guns), and my replacement was not available until December. so the Corps posted Major Norm Hicks-Hall to raise 106 Fd Wksp on 15 Nov 68, to handover to me in 11 Jan 69. Norma was then promoted to Assistant Director, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering,

Headquarters Command Australian Forces, Vietnam. I was privileged to serve in 106 Fd Wksp until January 1970.

106 Fd Wksp was allocated the area previously occupied by the 1st Armoured Squadron Workshop, at Nui Dat, which presented some challenges. Yet, as always in the Corps, all ranks met every demand, providing not only Field Repair and Recovery for the whole Task Force (a Brigade Group), but also Battalion Group Detachments, Forward Repair Teams, and Equipment Projects of great value to the Task Force (quote by Comd 1 ATF Brigadier S P Weir).

Battalion Group Detachments included supporting 9 RAR, where at the time Lt (Later General Sir) Peter Cosgrove was a Platoon Commander. Sir Peter recalled being impressed by the Repair Team he saw in action. In November 1969, Fitters' M113A1, Callsign 88 Hotel, deployed in support of an operation in which a Centurion Tank's transmission failed. The replacement transmission was prepared at Nui Dat and flown to the site by Chinook helicopter, escorted by RAAF UH-1 Gunships. This task was later depicted in, and selected for, the Corps Painting – see above.



As a graduate of the Royal Military College of Science, Comd 1 ATF added Task Force Technical Staff Officer to my duties. In that role, I supported CO 5 RAR, who had requested an investigation into M60 Machine Gun stoppages. The outcome was that the US Logistic System was supplying incorrect receiver rivets, the protruding heads of which fouled the gun's operating rod! Another task was the investigation of the Battalion Mortar Platoon's issue to reduce excessive baseplate sinkage. The solution saw the design of a bolt-on annular plate, which then tested, and fabricated by 106 and 102 Fd Wksp, and on approval of Comd 1 ATF, issued to all Mortar Platoons. The SAS Squadron had a need for a multiple Claymore Mine Firing Device capable of testing circuitry and selecting/firing up to six Claymores. That Device was designed, tested, built, and issued by 106 Fd Wksp within weeks.

Since Recovery Teams usually ran at the rear of escorted convoys, 106 Fd Wksp M 543 Wreckers were fitted with an M 60 Machine gun mounted over the co-driver. Within a month, the value of this armament was proven while

escorting a US Army convoy. At a curve in the road, there was a Viet Cong (VC) ambush. The VC happened to be in full view of the 106 Recovery Team NCO, who happened to have an interest in history, radioing: "Am about to engage the enemy". Reply from 106 Command Post: "This is Sunray 88; Australia expects this day that every man will do his duty". Two belts of machine gun fire broke the VC ambush, and the convoy proceeded without a casualty.

In addition to the primary roles of 106 Fd Wksp, the up armoured of the M113A1 APC is the best known, having saved numerous casualties from mine/explosive device penetration, particularly due to failure of the sponson plate under the Driver. The additional plate was designed, tested by the unit in the presence of Comd 1 ATF, and then fabricated by 106 and 102 Fd Wksp.

106 Fd Wksp upheld the finest traditions of the Corps, providing "The Punch behind the Task Force Fist".

After Vietnam, Claude was posted to 28 Commonwealth Brigade, Singapore, where he planned and raised the RAEME / REME / RNZEME / Singapore Civilian Workshop. He later became the first RAEME Staff Officer I Mobility / Engineering at the AAS(W) USA. Transferring to the Army Reserve in February 1978, he retired in Sept 1987. In 2018, commemorating the 50th Anniversary of 106 Fd Wksp, the Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove named the new 106 Fd Wksp Headquarters at Gallipoli Barracks: "Major Claude Palmer Building". Having served as an Volunteer Veterans' Advocate for 28 years, in the RSL, Claude was appointed Life Member in 2021.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I hope readers are enjoying the stories from a range of Corps soldiers recounting their experiences while serving in South Vietnam. It is also interesting to learn about their lives after operational service and their ongoing contribution to the ADF and to their communities in their civilian lives.

I know many Vietnam Veterans will commemorate more formally and informally at a national service at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra on 18 August 2023 commencing at 10:00am. The following link provides further detail and explains that the commemoration "..... encourages Australians throughout the year to honour and remember the service of some 60,000 Australian men and women who served in the Vietnam War and their families. Tragically, 523 Australians lost their lives in the war, and over 3,000 were wounded":

<https://www.dva.gov.au/recognition/commemorations/commemorative-services/commemorative-services-australia/50th-0>

Most readers would know that beside my role as Patron of the RAQ, and Editor of Spanner News, I am also the Coordinator of the RAEME National Network (COORD RNN). In line with the theme of this edition of Spanner News, to attract younger people to the many roles within our associations and the RAQ, I am desirous of stepping down from a couple of roles to concentrate on the communications role for the RAQ. Therefore I'd like to inform everyone I am searching for a replacement for the COORD RNN position, who will retain the responsibility for providing a strong voice in the Corps Committee to enable the Associations' views and to convey the needs of retired members of the Corps.

The member who fills this position also ensures sound lines of communication between the Head of Corps Cell and all Associations. I do not believe the task is too demanding, as I take a "minimalist" approach, and simply concentrate on supporting the various association executives around Australia while maintaining a regular flow of information to and from them.

If you would consider nominating yourself or another retired Corps member for this position, please email me at the email address below so we can start the conversation.

Arte et Marte

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



IMPORTANT NOTICE

RAEME CRAFTSMAN MAGAZINE EDITIONS #73 AND #74

The 2022 RAEME Craftsman Magazine (Issue 73) was released in late May 2023. It can be downloaded from the [Association website](#).

The 2023 RAEME Craftsman Magazine (Issue 74) is being compiled now for release in early 2024. There is however still time to get your submission in.

If you have anything that you believe the Corps would enjoy reading, please forward it to Head of Corps Cell (raeme.hoc@defence.gov.au) no later than 01 Oct 2023. Submissions later than this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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Women In Uniform Exhibition



Army Museum South Queensland - Victoria Barracks, Petrie Terrace, Brisbane
24th February 2023 - 06th December 2023

Showcasing the rich history of women serving in Queensland 1899-2023, with snapshots dating from nurses volunteering during the Boer War, through all campaigns where Australians have served.

Original uniforms, artefacts, photographs and figures Showcasing women serving in Army in Queensland from 1899– 2023.

For more information [click here](#)