

SPANNER NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAEME ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND INC

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Featuring 9th Theatre Maintenance Company
9th Force Support Battalion



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Bracken Ridge Qld

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the third and final edition of *Spanner News* for 2024! RAQ has been very active supporting events across the state, many of which are featured in this edition. Alongside other Executive members of the RAQ, I've attended several functions, including the Sunshine Coast Luncheon and, more recently, the Townsville gathering. Both events saw record numbers of members and guests enjoying themselves.

At the Sunshine Coast Luncheon, I spoke on our achievements this year, acknowledging the dedication of our members, volunteers and partners. It's your support that enables the Association's growth across Queensland, helping promote the Corps and supporting our serving and retired members. We're deliberately being bold and proactive engaging with all areas of the Corps, from recruitment to those serving and veterans, and our efforts are paying off.

On a sombre note, we marked the third anniversary of WO2 Ryan Leslie and Craftsman Brendon Payne, who tragically lost their lives on exercise at the Townsville Field Training Area on 30 August 2021. This year, around 30 people gathered to remember Ryan and Brendon at the memorial site near Townsville. The memorial is a reflective space where their service is honoured and will never be forgotten.

It is also my sad duty to announce the passing of an Association and Corps stalwart, Raymond Norman, OAM. Ray dedicated over three decades to the Australian Army, serving in Vietnam, later as Corps RSM and RSM Log Command, achieving the rank of Major and being honoured with an OAM. His passion and contribution to the Corps leaves a lasting legacy. Rest in Peace.

Recognising outstanding contributions is one of the most rewarding parts of my role. At a North Queensland gathering on 12 October, I had the privilege of presenting Chairman's Awards to Brian Robb, Doug Merry and Robert "Tank" Pontifex. Their commitment has been instrumental in our successes in the region – on behalf of the RAQ, thank you gents, for your ongoing support.

Looking ahead, our AGM is scheduled for Wednesday, 4 Dec 24. This meeting provides a valuable opportunity for members to receive updates on our progress and financial standing and discuss and pass important motions. Elections for Executive positions will also take place, and I encourage all members to attend, share ideas and help shape our future.

At a national level, discussions are underway regarding the future of the RNN IT system. Joomla has served us well, and we are also supported by a dedicated RNN IT Support team. While the platform itself is less critical than its functionality, the challenge now lies in finding a new sustainable hosting solution. Funding remains a hurdle, as each Association's capacity to generate funds differs. The RAQ is advocating for a system that meets our Association's needs, as national discussions explore options for a RNN-wide solution.

Finally, we're approaching our Corps' 82nd Birthday celebrations statewide with events in Brisbane, Amberley, Darling Downs and Far North Queensland. The RAQ will provide financial support to ensure these gatherings are memorable for all. This year in Brisbane, we're also celebrating with a "Bring Your Daughter to Work" day, hosted by Women in RAEME at 106 FD WKSP, offering families a unique opportunity to engage with the Corps.

Thank you all for your continued support and involvement. Let's carry this momentum forward as we close out 2024 on a high note!

Arte et Marte

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM RAQ PATRON - COL (RTD) TONY BORG

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family all the very best for Christmas and New Year. For those RAQ members travelling, whether it be on posting or for holidays, please be extra vigilant on the roads over the holiday period. Take plenty of time to get to your destination; after all better that you arrive safe and sound rather than not at all.

Arte et Marte

Tony Borg
COL (RTD)
RAQ Patron



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE – RAEME ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND

Membership Update. I am pleased to announce that membership has continued to grow strongly over the last year. From 1 Nov 23 until 1 Oct 24, we had 105 new members, 32 opting for annual subscriptions, with 73 opting for life subscriptions. Members came from all over Queensland, but predominately Brisbane and Townsville. 11 came from Interstate and two from overseas – one from the UK and one from the USA.

There are many benefits of being a member of the RAQ. For a start, the RAQ continues to support and provide subsidies to functions throughout the state, in particular to lunches on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Toowoomba and Townsville. The RAQ also supports RAEME Birthday events across the state as well as ANZAC Day commemorations. The RAQ has also provides support to off-base Spanner Club functions and we will continue to support “Women in RAEME” functions and new events in 2025.

To this end, the RAQ has established a junior member position on the Executive, to liaise with the younger members of our Corps, encourage them to participate in our events and identify their particular social needs. The RAQ is established for all ages, RAEME service backgrounds, all ranks, genders and encourages full participation in our rich range of annual events.

An important bonus to RAQ membership is that all financial members can, on application, become Life Members of Mermaid Beach (AEME) SLSC free of charge.

I look forward to increasing membership in the coming years from the many innovations we have put in place.

Arte et Marte

Kingsley Pocock
RAQ Membership
membership@qld.raeme.org.au



FEATURE ARTICLE – ESTABLISHMENT OF 9TH THEATRE MAINTENANCE COMPANY 9TH FORCE SUPPORT BATTALION

Introduction. The changing strategic landscape outlined in the Defence Strategic Review (DSR) and the National Defence Strategy (NDS) has precipitated numerous changes to Army's organisational structure and unit deployments. For the 9th Force Support Battalion (9 FSB), this has seen the unit focus on sustainment support along lengthy lines of communications.



45M recovery vehicle lifting flatracks off an HX77 on Exercise South Queensland War fighter

Maintenance initiatives. From a maintenance perspective, 2024 saw the formation of 9th Theatre Maintenance Company (9 TMC), which has been grown from the former 9th Logistics Support Company (9 LSC). The role of 9 TMC is to provide integral, close and general maintenance support to the Land Force, which differs from the previous role of 9 LSC, which performed an integral logistics support function for 9 FSB only. Given this focus, 9 TMC is now responsible for generating and executing maintenance and recovery capabilities at the Operational Level, which requires linkage to the Strategic sustainment network.



9 TMC operated in arduous conditions on Exercise South Queensland Warfighter

Training program. Achieving our new mission has required a foundational analysis of platforms, personnel, infrastructure and training systems. Assets and personnel take time to grow, so our initial efforts have been oriented to the development of good training programs to meet our new role. Throughout 2024, the team has been working hard focussing on basic infantry minor tactics through to maintenance support training on large scale exercises, while concurrently supporting other important 9 FSB tasks, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Army Community (AACAP).



On the road to Amata, South Australia for AACAP

Exercises. The most notable activities for 2024 have been: Exercise Surus Crawl – honing infantry minor tactics; Exercise Bulldog Walk – conducting company maintenance; and importantly participation on Exercise South Queensland Warfighter – executing maintenance as part of formation tactical activities.



9 TMC soldiers patrolling on Exercise Surus Crawl

I am very proud of the achievements of our personnel who have consistently and enthusiastically operated in the spirit of the Corps. But no one wants to hear an OC bang on about their team's achievements; below are some honest thoughts and views from the soldiers who actually did the work. I am also grateful for their literary contributions.

Arte et Marte

MAJ Jeremy Fetter
OC 9TMC

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Forward Repair Team Tasking. In April, I was tasked with providing FRT support for AACAP. It involved a five-day road move to Amata, South Australia from RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland. It was a great opportunity to see parts of Australia I haven't seen before and to be a part of a program that supports the Aboriginal community.

Most repairs were conducted during first and last parades. Knowing what the common issues are with the vehicles employed in the task allowed us to prepare our GMM with the likely tools and parts we'll need. It also afforded a smoother diagnosis and repair process during the journey. This was especially important with the time restrictions in place, as packets were required to leave at specific times, and delays could not be afforded.

There were plenty of legs throughout the journey where we were without phone reception, so it was critical that everyone had a thorough understanding of the convoy orders. Overall, the task was successful in supplying the 6th Engineer Support Regiment (6 ESR) with the supplies they required to complete their objectives. It was also a great opportunity to see a considerable amount of Australia and to take part in an initiative that supports local communities.



CFN Rory Bullard
Vehicle Technician

Related Support. During both Exercise Surus Crawl and Exercise Bulldog Walk, our team provided a mobile armoury that allowed the team to conduct on-the-move high security item (HSI) activities, thus making us more efficient in the field environment. Field training fostered adaptability and resilience by simulating real-life conditions. Infantry minor tactics and shakeout exercises ensured we were better prepared to perform in our various roles, both mentally and physically.



Practicing personnel extraction from a 45M recovery vehicle on Exercise Bulldog Walk

9 TMC also underwent an expansion in its RPS capabilities in order to accommodate theatre maintenance support. By increasing the availability and variety of repair parts to suit our new role, RPS was able to ensure equipment and vehicles were maintained and repaired more quickly and efficiently in the field than previously. This has helped minimize downtime and keeps critical systems operational, which is essential for sustaining missions in theatre environments.

Arte et Marte

PTE James Raad
Distribution Operator



2ND/14TH LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT (QUEENSLAND MOUNTED INFANTRY)

Changes in 2024. The maintenance organisations of 2/14 LHR (QMI) have continued to provide leadership through their support to the Regiment throughout the year. In a 'quiet' non-Talisman Sabre training year, the outcomes of the Defence Strategic Review have reshaped the Regiment and its technical support as we implement the transition from an Armoured Cavalry Regiment to a more traditional Medium Reconnaissance organisational. This has seen a significant turnover of both equipment and our much valued technicians.

The withdrawal of tracked vehicles from 7 Brigade has seen us farewell our M88s and logistic variants of the battle-hardened M113AS4. This has also reshaped the Regimental ORBAT with A, B and C Squadrons shifting from BOXER Block I, ASLAV and MIAI to BOXER Block I, BOXER Block II and ASLAV fleets. The impact of this change will test our reconstituted AIEchs and Technical Support Troop as we progress towards Talisman Sabre 2025. Another significant change to maintenance processes stems from the planned introduction to service of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program, replacing the familiar Military Integrated Logistics Information System (MILIS). The RASM, SQN ASMs and EMEOPS continues to drive the innovation and training required to facilitate the new method of logistical and resource planning.



2024 also saw the continuation of the critical partnership with our defence industry colleagues, primarily General

Dynamics Land Systems Australia (GDLS-A) within the main workshop and for A Squadron, Rheinmetall Defence Australia. The efforts of GDLS-A cannot be understated, particularly with the withdrawal of MIAI MBTs and ongoing support to our ageing ASLAV platforms. GDLS-A, led by Mr Dave Langley, has fostered an enduring partnership with our technicians throughout day-to-day maintenance, field exercises and regular participation in Regimental and RAEME functions.

Arte et Marte

CAPT Luke Sudholz
TST Commander



Technical Support Troop (TST). The TST hit the ground running in the first half of this year starting with mandatory training, HRWS standby support, preparing for the relocation of tanks to Bandiana and SOARM. All this was completed while transitioning from MILIS to ERP, managing an early start to the campaign season, while maintaining an ever expanding and simultaneously ageing fleet, while losing personnel across all trades.

Maintaining such a diverse fleet of platforms including PMVL/M, ASLAV, AS4, Tank, and the long list of B vehicles, whilst in a challenging field environment, is no easy task. The expertise and rigorous approach of our TST ensured essential maintenance was carried out efficiently despite the logistical and environmental constraints. The TST endured lengthy periods of surge maintenance leading up to the exercise period to ensure optimal operational readiness, with many personnel foregoing the luxuries of activities such as sport, PT, social functions and the prospects of the cheeky EKO. This proactive approach enabled sustained operational effectiveness, maintaining the momentum of the campaign and ensuring mission success during both exercise KOSTER RIVER and DIAMOND DAGGER.



During all this activity, the TST maintained a high level of morale despite environmental and logistical constraints. This was exemplified by our experienced personnel, including specialised welding support from "Macca the Welder", who addressed critical repairs and reinforced vehicle integrity. Macca's expertise in welding, complemented by his personality and work ethic, was instrumental in addressing complex structural issues,

thereby enhancing vehicle reliability and minimising downtime for the A1 and A2 echelons.

In the midst of a demanding exercise period, TST was tasked with more than just vehicle maintenance. Our mission extended into the realm of soldier training and specialist courses. This included running and participating in advanced weapons training and driver's courses to meet the occupational capability for a forever-changing battlespace. Selected members also participated in ADFFL courses, overseas deployments and specialist trade courses in preparation for new challenges that will accompany the new fleet of vehicles and the upcoming integration of BOXER Block II in the coming year.

In summary, although a very busy and challenging year for TST, all the vital steps and foundations have been put in place or are taking place, in order to put us in a much better posture at the back end of the year and be ready for 2025. This couldn't have been achieved without the extraordinary effort, sacrifice and hard work from all our tradies this past year.

CPL Russell Penn

Recovery Sect. Recovery Technicians within the 2/14 LHR (QMI) have exhibited exceptional adaptability and resilience in the face of staff shortages across the Regiment. Traditionally, our dedicated Recovery Technicians have been pivotal in ensuring the operational readiness and mobility of the Regiment's recovery assets. However, due to current personnel constraints, they have been centralised into Support Squadron within the barracks environment. This move has necessitated junior Recovery Technicians assuming greater responsibilities, often beyond the conventional scope of their roles. This has also helped generate a culture of versatility and professional growth.



Exercise DIAMOND DAGGER 24 served as a critical test of the Regiment's operational capabilities under these new conditions. Despite an adequate headcount, Recovery Technicians were tasked with manning multiple platforms simultaneously within a demanding field environment. Their performance was exemplary, conducting numerous vehicle recoveries and ensuring mission continuity without compromising the Regiment's operational tempo or safety.

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Furthermore, our "Tow Rags" demonstrated a commendable commitment to professional development by undertaking and completing multiple operator courses for various recovery platforms during the exercise. This dual focus on immediate operational demands and long-term capability building underscores the Regiment's strategic foresight and the Recovery Technicians dedication to excellence.

In summary, the Recovery Technicians of the 2/14 LHR (QMI) have not only met but exceeded the challenges posed by current staffing levels. Their ability to adapt, innovate, and maintain high standards of operational effectiveness is a testament to their professionalism and the robust leadership within the RAEME network.



CPL Jake Hughes

Repair Parts Store. (RPS) The RPS at 2/14 LHR (QMI) operates in collaboration with all maintenance elements to ensure seamless maintenance support and operational readiness both within barracks and during training exercises. The RPS, while understaffed, has provided workshops with impeccable results in providing and acquiring the parts needed by the workshop to sustain 2/14 LHR (QMI). The RPS has played a pivotal role in supporting the workshop teams by maintaining a comprehensive inventory of critical items needed for repairs and maintenance of military equipment and vehicles.

During exercise KOSTER RIVER and DIAMOND DAGGER, the RPS supported the workshop unreservedly. Working closely with A1 and A2 echelons to provide immediate access to repair parts and where needed liaised with other units to acquire items needed to address any electrical or mechanical issues that occurred. This capability was essential for maintaining the operational tempo of training exercises, enabling technical personnel to repair capability to achieve mission success.

The back loading of all M1A1 and M88 parts from the RPS was a significant logistical operation for 2/14 LHR (QMI) driven by the relocation and introduction of the M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams to 3 BDE. This process involved meticulously organising and transporting essential components necessary for the maintenance and support of the remaining M1A1 Abrams tanks in Townsville and SOARMD.



CPL Christian Gray

A Squadron AI Echelon. The AI Ech began its year with its support of the BOXER driver/gunner conversion courses in the first half of 2024. During these courses, the AI Ech soldiers, or “Spanners”, assisted in recovery support and vehicle breakdown maintenance, most commonly tyre replacements. Concurrently, every non-qualified member of the AI Ech completed the non-RAAC ASLAV driver course, significantly increasing the AI Ech’s current capability.

The soldiers of “Anarchy” deployed to Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA) at the end of March and completed 6 weeks of field training. During this time, they supported A SQN with both ATL3 and ATL5 live-fire activities. They also completed extensive Troop and Squadron level training to perfect their individual soldier skills and more broadly, their Armoured Cavalry Regiment (ACR) specific skills.



At the conclusion of field training, the AI Ech returned to barracks and began a significant maintenance period working with Rheinmetall Defence Australia (RDA). During this time, much work was completed to get the BOXERs “road-worthy” for public road moves. This marked an important milestone as it was the first time the BOXER vehicles had been driven on public roads by ADF crews.

The AI Ech has moved into a forecasting period. As a large number of A SQN members are leaving for courses, activities and deployments, maintenance is being conducted now to get ahead before they depart.

In the New Year, the regiment will be welcoming a new iteration of BOXER, known as the Block II, Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle. This will signal a new era for the RAAC and RAEME with a drastic change to how we conduct maintenance and servicing on our armoured vehicle fleets. The BOXER vehicle platform is a very large beast, but it is incredibly reliable, exceptionally capable and offers a wonderful future to the Armoured Corps and our RAEME support elements.

CPL Jack Preedy

B Squadron AI Echelon The staffing issues felt around the Corps has meant that Recovery Technicians and Electrical Systems Technicians were relocated from AI Ech and consolidated in Support Squadron. This reduction along with the decreases in SNCO staffing levels came with a huge increase of workload for Craftsman and JNCO’s. Our workforce is only six personnel strong. Luckily for 2/14 LHR (QMI), RAEME personnel this year have ably demonstrated their strong esprit de corps mitigating this shortfall. Where necessary, other Squadrons have provided staff to assist in maintenance tasking to allow junior soldiers to stay up to date with courses and personal commitments. Within the SQN we have seen this teamwork with both CPL Telford and CPL Meredith stepping up for half of the year into SGT positions.

There was a new addition to the AI Ech with the “trial for re-treads” providing us with Trainee/SGT Ringshaw for the year. This program has been amazing because we have a trainee attached to us who is both driving and servicing qualified – this situation has created significant interest in transfers to RAEME. In addition, SGT Brown has fitted well into the SQN as acting ASM, with his uncanny resemblance to CFN Bruce, completing our team.

The first exercise for B SQN to allow us to display our trade skills was to Shoalwater Bay in May. The team was joined by two Recovery Technicians from Support Squadron, CPL Hughes, and CFN Smith. The group demonstrated a wealth of knowledge consistent with the informal ASLAV SQN slogan of, “V2 make do”, with the ageing fleet of ASLAVs keeping them on their toes. Prior to heading to the exercise, there was over 200hrs of maintenance surge to be performed. CPL Telford and CFN Ryan being both fitters showed their experience working on the fleet assisting the mechanics to get all repairs completed on time.

Once on the exercise, the unit showed how interconnected RAEME elements were during a complex recovery, involving both C SQN and B SQN’s vehicles to assist another SQN’s rolled vehicle using the joint experience of all the SQN’s Recovery Technicians. A single set of vehicle stands almost broke the AI Ech fearless leader, CPL Meredith, who was forced to conduct multiple vehicle lifts to exchange on a swing arm between two vehicles. The difficulties experienced and overcome by CPL Meredith definitely lifted the spirits of the group. The humour and mateship was carried out throughout the rest of the exercise reflecting the consistent smiles on the faces of all members of the AI Ech.

When the field exercise was completed, CFN Ryan and I headed down to assist JLU-V Puckapunyal for three weeks where we assisted in maintaining the SOARMD fleet for courses. This experience was beneficial to us providing awareness of civilian maintenance systems and on the

content of broader maintenance requirements. We gained a great wealth of knowledge from the more experienced tradesmen that will prove beneficial moving forward. (However, we were both happy to get back into Brisbane and away from the cold.)



Focus has now shifted for the next half of the year to courses with CPL Telford on the BOXER maintenance evaluation, followed by jungle warfare, and CPL Meredith and CFN Ryan completing the last of their subject courses. The rest of the AI Ech is continuing their maintenance tasking with the continuous morale of CFN Bruce keeping trade outcomes “moving forward”.

CPL Maddison Kaindl

Squadron AI Echelon. T38 started the year off with some fresh new faces into the AI Ech, and immediately hit the ground running. With half the callsign spearing off for courses, we were left with a skeleton crew to service and repair the Squadron’s fleet of MIAI and MII3AS4 in time for deployment to Wide Bay Training Area for ATL2.

After a successful hit-out at Wide Bay, it was another tight turn around period between exercises. With T38 complete and back on deck, and a few late nights repairing and servicing, it wasn’t long before the “heavy horse” was once again loaded onto trucks and headed north to Shoalwater Bay for ATL 3 and 5, and their last live fire as C Squadron, 2/14 LHR (QMI).

After another successful five weeks away the Squadron returned back to barracks. Vehicles were cleaned, equipment de-stowed in preparation for the next big hurdle facing T38 – the drawdown of MIAI from the unit. This involved a one week turn-around of four vehicles despatched to the SOARMD. Closing out the first half of the year the Squadron hosted a farewell dinner of the fleet from the unit, as well as providing us with a great opportunity to farewell WO2 Terry Lemmon and recognise his incredible 41 years of service.

CPL Brendan Devine

Conclusion. To round out the content provided by the team at 2/14 LHR (QMI), let me say 2024 has indeed been a demanding year so far. As with all units in Defence, 2/14 LHR (QMI) has had its fair share of challenges, with the ongoing rebalance of PMV-M/L & MHC, withdrawal of tracked vehicles from Brisbane IAW the DSR, IIS of LAND 400-2, hollowness within the workforce, MILIS-ERP transition, struggles with external repair agency output and several high performing personnel re-assessing their career paths outside Defence.

However, the whole team in the Regiment (including RPS) have upheld the RAEME ethos to an unprecedented standard. This was made most evident during the RASMs Golf Day held in July. Awards for best dressed the longest drive and closest to the pin were given out on the day. CPL Hughes won the best dressed for his impression of John Daly, Sky (GD) took out the longest drive and the Troop Leader CAPT Sudholz took out closest to the pin.



Their collective morale is incredibly high given the pressure everyone has been under. The troops have pulled out all the stops to ensure the Regiment has as much operational capability as is needed to achieve their mission.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that part of this team are our embedded GDLS-A personnel. Without them to bear the brunt on the MIAI/M88 and ASLAV maintenance, we surely would not have achieved what we did. Now that Tank have departed, they have the opportunity to focus their efforts on, and re-energise, the ASLAV fleet IOT improve capability to enable the Regiment’s success in TS25 alongside BOXER Block II (we hope).

In a nutshell, maintaining the ageing ASLAV fleet as well as the BOXER Block II fleet, and everything in between, has shown that the drive, morale, attitude and performance of the 2/14 LHR (QMI) members of this esteemed Corps are the envy of the Regiment. As the Regimental Artificer Sergeant Major, I could not be prouder of their achievements in an ever-challenging environment and consider this posting/position as one of my personal/career highlights.

Arte et Marte

WOI Steve Bartlett
Regimental Artificer Sergeant Major



5 AVN REGT TECHNICAL SUPPORT SQN

Introduction. As 2024 draws to a close, the technical workforce at 5 Aviation Regiment has the opportunity to reflect on another busy year. The Regt closed out 2023 and started the new year providing support in Far North Queensland with evacuation and recovery efforts after the devastating Tropical Cyclone Jasper. That busy pace continued throughout 2024 including an Air Assault field training activity, participation in Exercise Vigilant Scimitar and support to a multitude of wider army exercises and activities.

In August, C Squadron Technical Support Troop (TST) completed Exercise Brahman Rebuild, achieving a CH-47F Chinook teardown, C-17 load, and rebuild. This exercise aimed to enable junior craftsmen to develop their maintenance experience with a focus on deployability, work with our RAAF counterparts and gain the technical knowledge to carry the torch into the future.



September 2024 saw the Regt depart Townsville on Exercise Helicon Luk. This activity saw four Chinooks deploy to Madang, Papua New Guinea (PNG) with the aim of achieving High Density Altitude flying operations in the remote highlands region. C Squadron TST were immediately operating in a challenging logistic environment with unreliable power and no access to ground support equipment (GSE). Eventually RAEME personnel were able to liaise with the local airliner, Air Spanner News

Niugini, to borrow GSE to make life much easier for the conduct of vital maintenance. The first week resulted in long maintenance days to rectify aircraft unserviceabilities, enabling the achievement of the required flying training. Despite this, spirits remained high among the men and women of the TST, with the Tri-colour flag frequently being flown from the aircraft being maintained.



Conclusion. Chinook deeper maintenance teams have been consistently working hard all year to provide the aircraft needed to support these activities, which enable the 5th Aviation Regiment to continue to provide a proven reliable aviation capability to the ADF.

Arte et Marte

Henry Jeffers
Junior Engineer Officer
C SQN TST



EVENT REPORTS ACROSS QUEENSLAND

Annual RAEME Reserve / CMF Reunion – Sherwood / Indooroopilly RSL, Corinda 17 Aug 24. 55 members attended the function and the RAEME spirit permeated the day and old memories flowed freely. The meaning of reunion was highlighted throughout the day. One reunion was that of Colin Mounsey and John Parfitt who had not seen each other for 54 years when they served together at Bulimba Barracks. They also served a CMF RAEME 2/14 QMI LAD based at 104 Fd Wksp Bulimba maintaining Saracens, Saladins and Ferret Scout cars. Many other similar reunions occurred over time.



Old friends John Parfitt and Colin Mounsey

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We are thankful for the raffle donations from Westside HQ, formerly Sherwood Services Club, who donated items to the function. They have supported our Reserve function for many years.

The Chairman Ian Leabeater welcomed everybody to the function and spoke of the activities of the committee in conducting the function.

The bar-b que was appreciated and the RAEME cake was delicious and was ably presented by Phil Kyle and Ian Leabeater (son of the chairman and Wendy). The cake was cut by Ian Gordon who has recently retired from the Police Service after 60 years' service.

Members of the RSL again supported the day with Phil Kyle and Graham Farrell providing a great deal of assistance. Julie-Anne Wolfe and Ian Leabeater (junior) were new volunteers for the day, and all did a fantastic job which ensured a successful event.

Another function is over, and we look forward to socialising again next year.

Cheers,

John Parfitt
CMF/ARES Reunion
Convenor



Darling Downs Lunch – 18 Aug 24. Approximately 30 local folks attended our popular lunch at the Toowoomba City Golf Club. Some of whom were “first timers” but most were catching up with old friends in glorious Spring weather. I was particularly pleased that a number expressed an intention to join RAQ, so hopefully we see that membership spike in our region in the coming months.



The event coincided with Vietnam Veterans (VV) Day, and we had two VV in attendance, Barry Skinner and Bob Turl. I took the opportunity to welcome both of those gentlemen and thank them on behalf of all present. There was a spontaneous round of applause, which I think pleased them, especially Bob, who was one the “first timers”.

The winners of the three RAQ Vouchers were: Barry Skinner, Dennis Dowling and Ted McKellar. Thanks to

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you and the RAQ Committee for providing those vouchers.



Our next function will be the RAQ-DD RAEME Birthday function, scheduled for Sunday 17th Nov, to deconflict with other RAEME Birthday events/functions in SE Qld. After that function, I'll provide a combined post-function/CY 24 summary report.

Cheers,

Peter Pile
Darling Downs
Convenor



Gold Coast Lunch – 24 Aug 24. The Mermaid Beach Surf Club was the perfect venue for our annual lunch this year offering a stunning backdrop of clear blue skies and the sparkling ocean. With ideal weather and comfortable temperature attendees were treated to a relaxing afternoon by the sea. Though the turnout of 30 people was slightly down on previous years, especially before the COVID-19 pandemic the event was still a great success, bringing together members for a memorable day.



A highlight of the afternoon were the three lucky draws, made possible by the support of the RAQ. Congratulations to Lyn Morrissey, Chris Beck and Brian Daley, who were the lucky winners. It was great to see some familiar faces and also to welcome those who travelled from afar for the lunch. Alan Satchell came down from Ipswich, Steve and Christine Beck and Dennis Dowling were down from Toowoomba, Steve Baxter down from Cleveland and Joe and Cheryl Owens travelled

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up for Wodonga. We also had several guests from the Brisbane area and their effort to make the trip was much appreciated.



Overall it was a very pleasant afternoon with good company and the beautiful beach setting that only Mermaid Beach can provide. We hope to see everyone back next year including some local faces from the Gold Coast and Southeast Queensland for another wonderful gathering.

Eddie “Beans” Bevans
Gold Coast
Convenor



Sunshine Coast RAQ Annual Lunch – 21 Sep 24.

The Sunshine Coast RAQ Lunch was once again well attended with 78 past and present members of the Corps and wives/partners and friends enjoying the hospitality of the Maroochy RSL. Again, difficult road conditions on the Bruce Highway caused a few late arrivals at the venue, however the late comers arrived in time for the serving of the entree.



A wonderful setting, service and meal at the Maroochy RSL

Following the welcome address by BRIG Ross Grant (Rtd), our MC for the day, attendees enjoyed the RSL's Gold Plate Menu, excellent service and good company. COL COMDT QLD, COL Steve Evans, was to have hosted our day, however, was a late withdrawal due to an

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illness in the family. COL Tony Borg (Rtd), the previous COL COMDT and now the RAQ Patron, stepped in for COL Evans and gave an entertaining and informative presentation on the state of the Corps and advised that the replacement COL COMDT QLD and new Corps Colonel in Chief (CinC) were yet to be decided. One point COL Borg raised was the fact that the previous CinC, HRH, the late Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, despite giving up most of his other like appointments upon his retirement from public life, retained his appointment as the CinC of RAEME up to his death.

The Guest Speaker - COL Kane Wright, Director of Logistics Army. COL Wright gave a very informative presentation on Army's restructuring resulting from the recent Defence Strategic Review and what that means to RAEME organisations and personnel, in particular our Craftsmen. In essence, Army is largely going 'back to the future' with the re-establishment of a Light Brigade in Darwin, a Heavy Brigade in Townsville and a Motorised Brigade in Brisbane. An amphibious Brigade is also to be established with its HQ centred on Brisbane.

COL Wright also provided interesting insights into his recent appointment as Defence Attaché to Fiji. ADF's involvement in the South West Pacific is increasing and as the SW Pacific Nations modernise their defence capabilities, this opens up exciting opportunities for the Corps, at all levels and trades, to assist various south Pacific nations under bilateral Defence Support Arrangements.



COL Wright explaining changes to the disposition of RAEME units

This was a true all ranks function with a good mix of old and young, all ranks, ground and air backgrounds and apprentices and adult tradesman with their wives and partners. Once again, the Maroochy RSL didn't disappoint, and their service and the meal were up to recent high standards. The convenors were very pleased to see most of the RAQ executive and other lunch and event convenors supporting our humble lunch and coming from as far as Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Toowoomba. There were no interstate visitors this year, but one couple did come from all the way from Rockhampton.

RAEME Association Queensland Inc 11



Our colourful venue and guests at the Maroochy RSL – which again looked after guests in their traditional way

Our oldest attendee was retired WO1 Stu Wools-Cobb, ART AVIONICS, who is 91. This was Stu and Dian's first lunch despite living on the Sunshine Coast for over 30 years – they will be back, so Stu says.

RAEME Association Queensland. The President of the RAQ, Peter Matthews, gave an update on where the Association is heading and in particular continuing to support all RAEME personnel, but encouraging younger members and female members of the Corps to join our fast growing association. He also advised that there are now in excess of 1000 members in the RAQ with 105 having joined in the past 12 months - an outstanding result.

Closure. BRIG Grant closed the proceedings by thanking all for attending and, in particular, our guest speaker, COL Wright. Given attendance this year was the highest since COVID and the fast take-up of tickets, he suggested that in 2025 we may see closer to 100 personnel at the lunch. He also thanked the RAQ Exec for their support and subsidy, which made the lunch a great value for money occasion. Finally, he thanked his co-convenor, Mike Prain, for his hard work, together with the support provided freely by Mike's wife, Barbara and Leonie.

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



RAQ NQ gathering – Townsville. The RAQ NQ chapter enjoyed a fantastic afternoon at the Townsville RSL on Saturday, 12 October, with around 80 members and friends in attendance. The atmosphere was lively, filled with good mates, good banter, and delicious food, creating the perfect setting for event.



L-R - Gayle Walkom, Dale Donovan & Christine Jackson

Highlighting the event were the raffles, where Brains Tarrant won the coveted RAEME badge proudly manufactured by Mick McMillan from AEV, much to the delight of the attendees. Ty Bodle won one of the RAEME coins and CFN Riley Madison from 10FSB won the other RAEME coin. Special thanks go to Jeff Maurice, whose generous donation of RAEME coins adding to the raffle. The winner of the bottle of RAEME Rum was Wayne 'Stumpy' Cuppitt The coveted \$100 lucky member draw went to none other than Robert 'Tank' Pontifex!



L-R Dave Young, Darren Campi, Ian Joyce, Ian Moorhouse, Dan Halliday & Josh Jones

A big thank you to the RSL staff for their outstanding service, ensuring that the event ran smoothly and was enjoyable for all. We look forward to our next gathering sometime in December to see off year and the continued growth of our network in the region.

More pictures of the day are available in the [photo gallery](#).



L-R CFN Riley Madigan, Mr Richard Todt, CFN Ben Sandercock, WO1 Dwayne Maggenti, CFN Alexander McGregor, SGT Mark Lennox & WO2 Greg Jones

COMING EVENTS

RAQ All Ranks Luncheon - Port Office Hotel Brisbane Sunday 1 Dec 2024. An invitation is extended to all current and past members of RAEME and friends of RAEME to attend our Annual All Ranks Luncheon at the iconic Port Office Hotel. This year we will celebrate the 82nd Anniversary of the establishment of the Corps and the luncheon provides an opportunity to celebrate our achievements.

- **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 1700hrs
- **Meal:** Entree, Main (3-way alternate drop), desert (cake) tea and coffee.
- **Drinks:** Drink package included for the first two hours once seated (after the second hour drinks are own expense)
- **Dress:** Smart Casual
- **RSVP:** Registrations close Monday 24 November 2024. If you have any dietary requirements or would like to book table seating requirements, please [email the Deputy Chairman](#)

Limited to a maximum 100 tickets.

Ticket	Price (Per Person)
Financial RAQ Member/Serving Soldier or one Member/Soldier guest	\$55.00
Email Affiliates, Non-Members & extra Guests	\$65.00

BOOK NOW

The following social events are planned for later in 2024 in and around Queensland.

Event	Date
RAQ Darling Downs RAEME Birthday Luncheon - Toowoomba City Golf Club	Sun 17 Nov 2024
RAEME Birthday - Brisbane	Fri 29 Nov 2024
RAEME Birthday - Townsville	Fri 29 Nov 2024
RAEME 82nd Birthday	Sun 1 Dec 2024
RAQ All Ranks Luncheon - Port Office Hotel	Sun 1 Dec 2024

For further details on Events please contact the [Functions Officer](#). To view all functions happening around Australia by the Associations [Click on this link](#)

SPANNER PACK CONTINUES ITS GOOD WORK IN PNG AND THE SOLOMONS

At the time of writing this section, we have just been advised of the passing of our hardworking convenor of Operation Spanner Pack, MAJ (RTD) Raymond Norman, OAM. Ray wrote the following article just before his sudden death.

"Readers should be aware that I am in the process of handing over my responsibilities for Spanner Pack to MAJ (RTD) Tom Cross, a retired RAEME officer. MAJ Cross enlisted in 1992 and served for 31 years. Initially he served as a Technician Electronics Systems Ground before commissioning in 2013 as a RAEME general service officer. He served in various workshops, instructional, logistics, command and Intelligence Corps postings. Highlights of his career include deploying with Task Group Taji-2 in 2015 as the Training Team Logistic Staff Officer, followed by commanding the 9th Logistic Support Company, 9 FSB. Tom is looking forward the opportunity to support deployed RAEME personnel with the Spanner Pack program.

"It comes as no surprise that at any time, the Corps has many soldiers serving on operations and undertaking overseas deployments. The RAEME National Network (RNN), with your assistance, send "Spanner Packs" to our soldiers on operations. These packs contain items not supplied by Defence or which are not locally available.

"To October 2024, 4849 (approx 10,000 Kg) Spanner Packs have been dispatched to RAEME members on operations in Kuwait, Middle East, Sinai, Iraq, Afghanistan, PNG, Solomon's and Timor including embedded RAEME members.

"If you know of someone who is currently serving overseas and would benefit from a pack, please contact the Spanner Pack Committee, via me, but soon Tom Cross: RNN@qld.raeme.org.au or the qld.raeme.org.au

The RAQ proudly supports this initiative on behalf of the RNN. If you would like to support Spanner Pack, please click on this link to donate: RNN@qld.raeme.org.au

Arte et Marte

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



EDITORIAL NOTE. Ray will be missed by his family, in particular his loving wife Karen and his family, his many RAQ brethren and sisters, his long serving colleagues in the Corps and all who benefitted from a Spanner Pack over the last 10 years or so. RIP Ray Norman

VALE

Passing of MAJGEN (RTD) Arthur Douglas Powell

The RAQ has received advice from the President of the RA ACT, and COL COMDT NSW/ACT, COL Andrew Adams of the passing of MAJGEN (RTD) Arthur Douglas Powell.

“For those not aware, we have recently farewelled another of our Corps faithful who achieved the rare feat of being promoted MAJGEN, having commenced his service as a direct entry officer. MAJGEN Powell leaves a rich legacy of being a committed and talented engineer, a major influencer of our Corps’ capabilities and a dedicated husband and family man. He had many direct touch points with the management of the Corps throughout his military career including serving as DGEME-A (HOC) as well as in his civil capacity post military service that focused on the connection between the military and industry sustainment. On assumption of his appointment as DGEME-A in 1978, he was credited with observing: ‘The greater challenges included providing services for the latest technological acquisitions while ensuring the continuing use of current equipment and a lean, adaptable inventory system.’ In that sense nothing has changed for our Corps.



“It is always difficult to capture the influence, passion and support provided by an individual, particularly one where self-aggrandisement was not in his nature; but suffice it to say, MAJGEN Powell will be remembered as a RAEME officer who walked his talk ‘every member needs to exercise skill and dedication to achieve the results required’.”

The RAQ wishes to express its condolences to GEN Powell’s family.

It is with deep regret we advise of the following deaths amongst the members our Corps:

- **Poor**, Gregory Phillip 'Bluey' passed away 18 Jul 24, aged 71. He was a Clerk Admin and his career was marked by service across various units, including the RAEME Training Centre, Puckapunyal Workshop, RAEME Aircraft Maintenance School and Chief Clerk HQ 1 DIV EME. Bluey was farewelled at a service at Hervey Bay Crematorium at 11am on 26 July 2024.
- **Powell**, MAJ GEN (RTD) Arthur Douglas passed away on 12 Aug 24 aged 94. He is now reunited with his beloved late wife, Beverley. Aside from the many distinguished positions General Powell held throughout his career, from Jan 78 to Aug 80 he was our Head of Corps whilst posted as the Director General of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (DGEME). In this role, he was instrumental in leading changes that strengthened the foundations upon which our Corps stands today. He is also have been the first RAEME Officer to attain the rank of Major General. A private funeral was held at Le Pine Funerals, Box Hill, VIC 19 Aug 24.
- **Bignell**, CAPT (RTD) Ross Melville, 11th VM, OCS Dec 1964, passed away on 15 Aug 24 aged 82. Ross was a member of the RAQ No 469. He served in the AFV Det, 1st Div Sup Tpt Wksp from Aug 1969 to Aug 1970.
- **Brown**, Reginald Oscar (18th Blacksmith) passed away on 18 Aug 24 aged 78. He served two operational tours in Vietnam in 1967 and 1970 with 101 Fd Wksp, 102 Fd Wksp (x2) and 106 Fd Wksp. On discharge Reg served in the Tasmanian Police force. His funeral was on Friday, 23 August 2024 in North Hobart
- **McCormack**, Rodney Oliver 'Grumpy' (19th VM) passed away on 26 Aug 24 aged 76. A devoted member of the RAEME family, Rodney enlisted in the Australian Army in 1966. He served on operations in SVN as a Corporal with the 1st Australian Task Force Headquarters Light Aid Detachment from September 1969 to September 1970. He was an RAQ Life Subscriber 678. A celebration of his life was held at the Souths Sports Club, Acacia Ridge with family friends and fellow veterans.

- **Moon, MAJ (RTD)** David Edward (10th F&T) passed away on peacefully on 12 Sep 24 aged 85 in Hervey Bay. Dave served for over 27 years, with many postings in Australia, including service overseas in the UK and PNG. After retiring in 1982, he remained active in the 4WD community as President of the Queensland and National Associations, and as a 4x4 trainer. He was also a passionate shooter, involved with gun clubs in Toowoomba, Bundaberg, and Fraser Coasts, holding various positions including Club Captain. David's funeral was held on 30 Sep 24, at Kirk's Funeral Chapel, Hervey Bay.
- **Norman, MAJ (RTD)** Raymond George passed away on 29 Oct 24 in Buderim aged 80 following treatment for several ailments including pneumonia. Ray served in SVN with 4 Fd Regt LAD from 25 Feb 70 to 16 Feb 71. He served for in excess of 30 years' in RAEME during which time Ray rose through the ranks to retire as a MAJOR. He also served as RSM 4 Base Wksp Bn, Corps RSM and RSM Logistic Command. His drive, organisational ability and enthusiasm will be missed by many in the Corps, but also in the RAQ. Ray is best known as the convenor of OP Spanner Pack which he ran for over 10 years and his total commitment to the RAQ where he was Chairman and an active Committee member for over 20 years.

WELFARE

RAQ has been advised of the following welfare case over the last four months.

- **Edis, LTCOL (RTD)** Les, advises he is improving since his open heart surgery in April/May. He is looking forward to meeting his recovery goals set for Dec 24 by his surgeon. He patience is being tested but he sticks to his rehab program.
- **Reardon, WO2 (RTD)** Brian was readmitted to hospital for a total laryngectomy as of 24 Sep 24. He is still in hospital and can't speak at all. He's doing well considering his medical situation, and except for the frustration and minor anxiety attacks due to him worrying about complications when he coughs, his doctor is very happy with the healing process. He is confident all cancer has been removed from the neck but he will have to learn to speak again.

Please Note. Please advise me via email address below, of any brothers and sisters, who have passed, or are in distress, in Queensland. Please ensure the detail provided is accurate and as complete as possible.

Arte et Marte

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



RAEME HISTORY SEGMENT – REMEMBERING TIMOR OPERATIONS 1999 – 2000

The 25th Anniversary of Australian service in Timor-Leste, was marked by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) which held a National Commemorative Service at the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial in Canberra on 20 September 2024.

For those in the RAQ who couldn't attend, but have many memories of that time, here are some excerpts from the Corps History Book "With Skill and Fighting – Craftsmen of the Australian Army 1942-2014" published in 2014. Copies are available at <https://raeme.org.au>

The following stories illustrate what some current members of the RAQ did during their time in Timor-Leste. **Some are now members of the Executive Committee, and we are very proud of their service then and now.**

Operations in Timor Leste. "Indonesia annexed the former Portuguese colony of East Timor during 1975 resulting in almost one-quarter of a century of bloodshed, until eventually, in 1999, the Indonesian Government agreed to a ballot to allow the East Timorese to vote on their future. UNAMET (United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor) was established by UN Security Council Resolution on 11 June 1999 to organise and conduct the ballot which was held on 30 August 1999. The result was an overwhelming vote for independence. In the wake of the ballot, pro-Indonesian militias, at times with not so covert support of Indonesian security forces, commenced a campaign of destruction against pro-independence supporters. Amid bloody violence, many East Timorese were killed.

"The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor referred to a minimum of 102,800 conflict-related deaths between 1974-99 and as many as 500,000 displaced from their homes. As the violence was beyond their control, Indonesian authorities agreed to the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force into the former colony. Australia developed the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), which was authorised by and operated in accordance with UN Resolutions and commenced operations on 12 September 1999. Australia contributed over 5,500 personnel to INTERFET under force commander, Major General Peter Cosgrove.²

"Indonesia withdrew its armed forces, police and administrative officials from East Timor; and the UN established the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to administer East Timor. The hand-over of military operations from INTERFET to UNTAET was completed on 28 February 2000. Australia provided landing craft and Black Hawk helicopters to these operations in East Timor and committed 1,500-2,000 personnel. Since then Australia's involvement in East Timor has progressed through a number of UN managed operations including the United

¹ <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/>

² <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/peacekeeping.asp>.EastTimor

Nations Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET) which commenced after the new nation was officially recognized and ended in 2005. Australia again provided troops to East Timor in 2006 for the purposes of additional security after local political unrest.³

“RAEME involvement in the East Timor operations commenced from the earliest days of INTERFET operations through to the withdrawal of UNMISET forces in 2005 and redeployment in 2006. The RAEME contribution to these operations was characterised by long hours of hard work and a readiness to assist the overall force by accepting tasks that were beyond the normal RAEME role. OPERATION WARDEN, from 16 September 1999 to 10 April 2000 provided for broader ADF involvement during the 1999 East Timor deployment, including logistic support from the Australian support area. The deploying force, particularly from a RAEME point of view, gained great benefit from the presence of men, such as Sergeant Rocky Hema, with recent operational experience gained on UN deployments.

“We got back to Townsville after exercising in Shoal Water Bay Training Area (SWBTA) during late August 1999 to be told we were deploying to Timor at short notice. I was attached to 1 Troop of B Squadron 3/4 Cavalry Regiment (3/4 Cav Regt) as a part of the logistic support element for this on-line Troop. We were to further regroup with the on-line Battalion, 2 Battalion Royal Australia Regiment (2 RAR), for battle preparation. Needless to say, there was some frantic refurbishment of the vehicles and other general preparations to complete before deploying.



23 Sep 99: Callsign 84A, an M806A1 ARVL 84A, B Sqn, 3/4 Cav Regt at Fort Hill Wharf, Darwin, waiting to be loaded for shipment to East Timor

“Two of 1 Troop’s (1Tp) Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) were airlifted to Darwin, to form part of the air assault group to fly into Dili with C Company 2 RAR. The remainder of the troop made an early road move to Darwin while the rest of the Squadron moved by road a little later. 1 Tp’s road element arrived in Darwin safely and waited its turn to be lifted across

the water. We spent that time billeted in the transit compound of Robertson Barracks with the New Zealand Battalion. We still had some post-SWBTA-exercise maintenance work still to be done on our vehicles so we were not idle. All around us there was frantic activity as units made last minute preparations for the deployment. The air assault element had crossed the start line about two days before the rest of the troop finally sailed for East Timor.

“The East Timor operations provided many Australians with the opportunity to engage with and assist the local population. In this aspect, RAEME tradesmen were better placed than most, as their trade skills enabled a more direct approach to be taken in the provision of aid. This was the case during the INTERFET deployment for CPL Paul Gibbs. Paul’s unit the 1st Joint Support Unit (1 JSU) had established its workshops in Dili and as the situation in the city stabilised, Paul and his mates were moved to try to assist a local school.



Dili 1999: 1 JCSU Wksp

“I was able to procure enough material to make two large swing sets for the school. The only thing that I couldn’t get my hands on was chain for the swings themselves. Enter Telstra! The guys, who were setting up a mobile phone network out of the Oribarracks’ site, imported 25 metres of chain specifically for me and the swings. They also decked out all the workshop guys with the first mobile phone sim cards in country. We were grateful for both. The swings were completed and moved to the school in quick time.

“I can safely say that it may be one of the reasons that there are limits on package sizes and quantity of free post available to deployed Defence personnel. When I had the opportunity, I wrote to my mother to say that the local people did not have much and that anything she could organise would be gratefully received as the post was free!! From that point on, I was receiving about a Unimog truck load of donated clothing and equipment each month from the ‘Thongs for Timor’ drive in the Riverland of South Australia. We regularly did trips to the Dili orphanage to drop off the items received at 1 JSU through myself and other like-minded individuals. The orphanage held a dinner at the end of the rotation for a number of us, to say thanks, which was a good night but a bit embarrassing all the

³ Morgan, B J. A Brief History of Australian Army Operations in East Timor, 1999-2005,

same. It was great to see the kids with kites and balls and clothes and, of course, thongs!



Two of our current RAQ Executive, CPLs Michael Patman and Paul Gibbs at presentation of swings

"One of the most touching moments of my Defence career occurred as the time to leave for Australia arrived. CPL Michael Patman and I, kept aside some sports equipment, toys and bikes from the donated items for donation direct to the children of the houses behind the workshop compound. Being mobbed by gleeful kids trying to get their hands on the toys was like being Santa in a shopping mall. Then eight of us decided we would donate excess food and our unwanted clothing and equipment to our washing lady. All eight of us, had employed her to wash our clothes every day for US\$10 a fortnight.



CPL Paul Gibbs at Dili orphanage after the presentation of Australian donations.

"This was a sizeable wage for her and her family was very happy to be receiving the income. I've never witnessed such a reaction as we received at her house, a tiny two-room shack of cobbled together wooden planks for walls and a leaking corrugated iron roof. Within its walls lived an entire family of three or four children, parents and grandparents. We asked where they wanted our gifts and began to unload boxes of donated food items, clothing, pillows and bedding and toys for the kids. I will never forget the whole family, in tears of gratitude, shaking our hands and thanking us. Grandfather was particularly moved and he held my hand for nearly the whole time we were there, speaking to me constantly in words I couldn't understand but whose meaning I understood, thanking

us for everything while tears rolled down his cheeks. It was an amazing feeling to be able to help so much and yet so humbling as well.

UNTAET⁴. Following the transmission of authority from INTERFET to UNTAET the Australian contribution to East Timor was reduced, to an Infantry Battalion Group with supporting air, armour and logistic elements. The Australian battalion, AUSBAT, had its Area of Operations (AO) along the border between East and West Timor with BHQ initially located at Balibo. AUSBAT technical support was provided by RAEME Craftsman embedded within the Battalion's Logistic Support Company. Their primary task within AUSBAT was to provide first line technical advice and support. However, on some occasions they were tasked with other duties as was the case during 2001 when Craftsman (CFN) Christopher Lach deployed to East Timor with 4 RAR. In addition to traditional RAEME tasks CFN Lach and his colleagues expected, accepted and actioned extra tasks.

"Early in the Battalion's deployment on Operation TANAGER, I accompanied the water and fuel trucks out to Patrol Base Marko. It was on the way back that a Unimog driver decided to follow the river and cross it without the aid of either a bridge or a crossing point. Needless to say he didn't make it. CPL P L McCauley, RAEME, tried hooking up the 6 x 6 Land Rover for an attempted tow, but succeeded only in getting six wheel drift. A radio message was sent and CFN Rusty Crawford (Recovery Mechanic) came out and recovered the truck.



Technically Stuck



Rusty Crawford (Recovery Mechanic) to the rescue

⁴ United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.



The unsuccessful 6 x 6 Land Rover tow

"From April to October 2001, 4 RAR (CDO)5 Log Spt Coy was tasked to secure the re-transmission station during the conduct of the election. A section of RAEME, RAAOC and RACT personnel were given the task and most of us thought it would be a holiday. We had seen the rest of the Area of Operations (AO) while conducting numerous repairs at various patrol bases. However, this was going to be somewhere new and we were keen to go. We packed the Russian helicopter with our gear and supplies and crammed onboard for a flight that was postponed for a day due to bad weather. The re-trans station was situated at 1700m above sea level, on the knife edge of a mountain range. It was quite a lot cooler up there than down in the usual high humidity and temperatures of the coastal areas of East Timor. We considered it similar to Canberra in August.



The Re-Trans Mountain side as the cloud rolls in

⁵ 4 RAR (Commando) had been redesignated as a light Infantry unit for the 2001 deployment to East Timor.

⁶ L to R Back: LCPL Tame (Tpt), CPL McCauley (VM, partly hidden), CFN Kelly (Boffin), Pte Harding (Q), CPL Poultney (Q),

"Our home for the next week was well dug in and we wondered why. Well we found out that night. The wind blew sideways at gale force as sheets of rain pelted down. The main pit had a roof and a single side. The tents were low and dug into the spur with sandbags on the outside to help shield them from the high-velocity wind. All our warm and wet weather gear was necessary and worn. Bed was a welcome place to get out of the weather. The days that followed were spent huddling in a small tent, playing UNO or cards in between shifts to pass the time. The inclement weather was unrelenting for four days before the sun finally broke through. Even then warmer conditions did not last long. At around 1600 hours every afternoon, like clockwork, a misty cloud would start cascading over the adjacent peak meaning we had no more than five minutes to get suitably clothed before getting blasted by a return of the cold, windy, wet conditions and fading visibility.



The 4 RAR (CDO) Log Spt Coy Re-Trans Security Team.⁶

"The toilet was three sheets of tin with no door which gave an excellent view of the valley below when seated. The shower was an old ration pack tin with a few holes in the bottom hanging from a tree. You had to be quick and the cold water temperature encouraged water conservation. Then on the scheduled departure day, the weather turned bad and so our stay on the mountain was extended by three days until it was clear enough for the Russians to land their helicopter for the pick-up and return flight to the Battalion.

More interesting stories in the next issue of Spanner News of our people in Timor.

Arte et Marte

Ross Grant
History Editor SN



More information on the conflict in East Timor can be found at [this web link](#).

CFN Dare (VM). Front: Pte Bridge (Q), Pte Morris (Q), CFN Lach (VM).

In my capacity as the Coordinator of the RAEME National Network, I was invited to participate in the RAEME Corps Committee meeting held in Townsville on 4 Oct 24, on line, following the RAEME Corps Conference. This is a most useful meeting where I am able to explain to the HOC, BRIG Slaughter, the Representative COLONEL COMMADANT, the Deputy Heads of Corps, Corps RSM and the regionally appointed COLONELs Commandant what our associations around Australia are doing on behalf of members of the Corps – past and present.

I also learn about the many changes underway in the ADF, resulting from the recent Defence Strategic Review, and most importantly, the impact of those changes on RAEME organisations and personnel. I hope to receive copies of the minutes which I can then share with readers in Spanner News. On that matter, I am interested in getting in touch with unit correspondents in all QLD unit, especially those going through DSR changes in Darwin, Townsville and Brisbane so I can publish stories in the first and second editions of Spanner News in 2025.

On RAQ matters, the RAQ Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 4 Dec 24. May I encourage all readers to consider assisting the RAQ Executive and be involved in our vibrant and well-focussed team – we always need new faces to plan for, and execute, our busy association activities across the state. So put your hand up – you will be joining a wonderful team of “Doers”, who live up to the tradition and standards set by our recently departed former Chairman, Ray Norman. Ray got things done and never baulked when asked to volunteer. We will miss him greatly, but he has left a wonderful tradition for us all to emulate.

Have a Happy Festive Season and enjoy the break with family and friends.

Arte et Marte

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



WOMEN IN RAEME HOSTS – BRING YOUR DAUGHTER WORK DAY – BRISBANE - 29 OCT 2024 – 7CSSB



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13 1905 > racq.com/batteries

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RAEME Association Queensland Merchandise

The RAQ has a huge range of merchandise on sale at or shop, [click here](#) to visit.

Search under "Categories" for the following items many of which are relatively new products. Make sure you have a good look at the complete range on our website - Christmas is looming, and whether it is a RAQ shirt, decanter, or one of the several jewellery lines, all would be good gifts for family and friends. Here are a few to consider:



RAEME CORPS SHOP

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

For those yet to buy the Corps memoir, there are still copies available, detailed below is how to obtain a copy. It may be a great gift for someone who has served in the Corps.

Books are only \$40.00 plus postage. Copies can be ordered from the Corps Shop, which is available on the RAEME National Website

(<https://raeme.org.au>). Whilst on the site why not check out the other items available.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to drop us a line at

RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au

Please be patient, there are only a couple of Defence Members in the HOC Cell and they have other tasks.