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Spanner News

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Bracken Ridge Qld

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the First Edition of Spanner News for 2025! Here we are already in April! As we embark on another year, I warmly welcome our new Head of Corps, Brigadier Gabrielle Follett AM. We look forward to her leadership in strengthening and growing the RAEME community.

We also welcome COL Piers Cambridge CSM as our new Colonel Commandant Queensland. With a distinguished 34-year career, Piers has held key operational and leadership roles in logistics, ICT development and strategic sustainment in Australia and overseas. His significant contributions to rewriting the Corps logistics doctrine earned him the Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM) in 2004. Piers is honoured to be continuing the great work of COL Steve Evans and looks forward to engaging with the Corps community, especially in Queensland.

We extend our sincere gratitude to COL (Rtd) Steve Evans, who has served as Colonel Commandant Queensland since 2019. His leadership was instrumental in strengthening the Corps, with key contributions to projects such as the North Queensland RAEME Recovery Mechanics Memorial, the Women in RAEME Event, and the Mermaid Beach AEME SLSC Book Launch. Steve's dedication has left a lasting legacy, and we thank him for his exemplary service.

In February, we gathered to honour Raymond Norman OAM, a stalwart of our Association, at his memorial service. Ray dedicated over five decades to supporting our great Corps, and it was with great pride that I announced the Chairman's Award would be renamed the "Raymond G. Norman OAM Chairman's Award" in recognition of his contributions. This award will continue to acknowledge those who demonstrate commitment to RAEME and the Association, reflecting Ray's passion for supporting our members and their families.

A major milestone last year was the introduction of Tyler Pidgeon as our dedicated Youth Member on the Committee. Additionally, the new "Women in RAEME" (WIR) Committee, led by Suzanne Shipp and Bec Rasmussen, successfully hosted the second WIR event at 7CSSB, fostering a more inclusive and connected community.

At our AGM in December, members voted on key updates to our constitution, reinforcing our role as a community-focused organisation. These changes will enhance our support for the Corps and strengthen our community involvement. If you have ideas on how we can further support the community, please reach out to one of the Executive members or attend a monthly meeting.

So far in 2025, we have already held successful functions on the Darling Downs and in North Queensland, with a full program of events planned for the year. I encourage everyone to attend and support their local regions.

On 25 April, we will again commemorate ANZAC Day, with the Association officially organising and attending the parades in Townsville and Brisbane. This solemn occasion is well attended, and I encourage all members to participate in a parade or dawn service where possible. It is an important time to remember, and reflect on, the sacrifices of all Australians and New Zealanders who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations, and to honour the contribution and suffering of all who have served.

Arte et Marte

Lest we forget

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



BIO OF NEW HEAD OF CORPS – BRIGADIER GABRIELLE M. FOLLETT AM



Brigadier Follett commenced training at the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1996 and graduated from the Royal Military College – Duntroon in December 1999.

She has served in a variety of regimental appointments including OC Operational Support Squadron, 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, and the OC Gallipoli Company, Royal Military College – Duntroon. Brigadier Follett commanded the 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion in 2016-17.

Brigadier Follett has held a range of challenging staff appointments. She has deployed to Timor Leste twice, with the 5th/7th Royal Australian Regiment Battalion Group on Operation Citadel (2002) and as the Plans Officer of the International Stabilisation Force on Operation Astute (2010). From June 2007 – January 2009 she deployed on Operation Paladin, first as a United Nations Military Observer in Syria and subsequently as the Staff Officer to the United Nations Head of Mission based in Jerusalem. Brigadier Follett has also deployed to Afghanistan twice, firstly to Tarin Kowt with the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Operation Slipper, 2012) and in 2018 to Kabul as the embedded Australian member of the US Army Commanding General's Commander's Action Group (Operation Highroad).

Brigadier Follett has humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations experience in Sumatra, Indonesia, as part of Operation Padang Assist following an earthquake in 2010. Also domestically, she deployed on Operation Relex (2001) conducting border protection operations from on board Navy vessels.

Brigadier Follett holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Mathematics, a Bachelor of Medical Science (Pathology), a Master of Arts in Strategy and Policy, a Master of International Relations, and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Brigadier Follett completed the Australian Command and Staff

College in 2011 and the Defence and Strategic Studies Course in 2022.

Brigadier Follett was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours and assumed the role of Director General Estate Service Delivery earlier this year.

MESSAGE FROM REP COL COMDT – BRIG ED SMEATON, DSM

2025 is already off to a flying start and it's hard to believe ANZAC Day is already approaching. With the new year comes some new appointments across the Corps and I would personally like to thank those who have served in Corps appointments and welcome our new cadre of leaders and representatives.

A number of Regional Colonel Commandant appointments have concluded; including Colonel Andrew Herbert (TAS/SA), Colonel Martin Griffiths (VIC), and of course here in Queensland Col Steve Evans. Andrew, Martin and Steve have been great ambassadors for our Corps covering a wide range of representational duties and being active across a variety of events. I'd particularly like to call out Steve Evans to the RAQ membership. Steve has tirelessly championed the Corps across Queensland, supported the RAQ leadership, and been a regular face at meetings and events. Among many achievements, Steve was instrumental in the establishment of the recovery mechanics memorial in North Queensland.

Many of you will already have met Colonel Piers Cambridge, the new Colonel Commandant for Queensland. Piers has recently retired from the Army and settled in Brisbane and is a great choice to continue the close relationship with the RAQ and represent the Corps. I'd also like to acknowledge Colonel Andrew Adams (ACT/NSW) and Colonel Mark Sweetman (WA) who have both extended in their respective appointments.

This year we also welcome a new Head of Corps, Brigadier Gabrielle Follett AM. Some of you will have met Brig Follett at the Sunshine Coast luncheon in 2023. BRIG Follett has a wealth of experience across the Corps and in joint/tri-service and deployed postings. I'm sure we'll get to see more of BRIG Follett during her tenure.

Lastly I'd like to acknowledge the outgoing Head of Corps Brigadier Ben Slaughter as he retires from the full-time Army. BRIG Slaughter was visionary in his direction for the corps, driving thinking and initiatives. Supported by the Deputy Heads of Corps and Corps RSM, he pursued a number of lines of effort including the soldiers and officers of the Corps, Esprit de Corps, and the future of the Corps. Under BRIG Slaughter's leadership it was great to see the St Eligius competition run at the Army Logistic Training Centre in Bandiana in late 2024 and

Queensland's 7 Brigade team taking out the inaugural trophy.

I look forward to what 2025 has to offer and working with our new Head of Corps representing RAEME. I hope to engage with many of the RAQ members at events this year.

Arte et Marte

Ed Smeaton DSM
BRIG (RTD)
REP COL COMDT



NEW COL COMDT QLD – COL PIERS
CAMBRIDGE CSM



The CA has recently appointed me as Colonel Commandant Queensland for the Royal Australian and Electrical Engineers. I have assumed the appointment from Colonel Steve Evans who is now taking a well-earned break. Consequently, I want Queenslanders, serving and ex-serving members of the Corps, and their families to know I am available to support you - and that I wish to continue the good work of Steve Evans.

By way of background, I retired for the Army in April 2024 after completing nearly 34 years' service as a RAEME Officer. I have held various command and staff appointments, but more importantly have always been a strong advocate of the Corps.

I see this role as an important one in fostering and maintaining esprit de Corps. In particular I believe the key aspects of my role are:

- Linking current serving members with the ex-service Associations, predominately the RAQ.
- Meeting with and discussing matters with soldiers (hopefully during unit activities in barracks, or in the field) so that I can represent those views to the Head of Corps, or other senior staff and commanders within Army.

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- Attending Corps and unit events where I can assist Commanders in presenting awards and recognising our soldiers and officers efforts. This includes RAQ events in each of the QLD regions.
- Providing advice to commanders and staff on Corps issues.
- Assisting the Regional Representatives with nominations the various Corps awards.
- Meeting with our soldiers and young officers and engaging with them, listening to their stories and witnessing their work so that I can continue to talk with authority on the work that they do and represent their interests.
- Ultimately, my goal is to meet with and talk to our RAEME Soldiers.

At this stage I am still working through the administration of being appointed to the position (I am not a serving member); however, I will soon be in a position to visit units and participate in those events you would like me to attend. I recognise that having visitors such as myself can be overtly demanding - my pledge to you is that I will remain a low key, low administrative burden! So if you are having a field activity, a training day or unit or Corps function please invite me along!

Separately, I will reach out to the RAEME Regional Representatives, and try and coordinate visits to the regions as the travel budget is somewhat limited. I live in Brisbane, so I have much more flexibility to support those of you based in the SE QLD region.

I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you all in due course.

Kind regards

Piers Cambridge CSM
COL (RTD)
COL COMDT-QLD

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS – 2025

Appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in the Military Division (AM):

Colonel Thomas Robson MCDERMOTT CSC. For exceptional service as the Headquarters Joint Operations Command lead planner for the development of an Australian Defence Force operational contingency plan in support of Australia Defence Force Operations.

Colonel McDermott is an officer of impressive intellect and dedication to duty who made an exceptional contribution as the lead planner for a highly consequential theatre-level operational contingency plan. Colonel McDermott displayed an outstanding leadership style that cultivated strong, cooperative relationships and a collaborative, whole of headquarters effort to generate outcomes that will have lasting positive effects on Defence and Australia's security.

Ed Note: COL McDermott was previously CO 2/14 LHR (QMI) Cav Regt and played a vital part in establishing the memorial to WO2 Ryan Leslie and Craftsman Brendon Payne, two Recovery Mechanics tragically killed while on a military exercise in the Townsville Field Training Area on 30 Aug 21.

Awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM)

Craftsman N. For meritorious achievement in the application of remarkable judgment in non-warlike situations as a Heavy Marine Maintainer within the 2nd Commando Regiment.

Craftsman N demonstrated a superior level of dedication to duty and technical mastery during 2024 in his meritorious achievements as a Heavy Marine Maintainer within the 2nd Commando Regiment's Technical Support Platoon. Craftsman N displayed remarkable initiative in maintaining specialist Special Force marine equipment and boats through his achievements in identifying and rectifying significant faults in material readiness. He has enhanced the capability of Special Operations Command and the Australian Army.

Awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM)



Major Katelyn Clare THORNE. For meritorious achievement in streamlining operational reporting, systems administration and governance for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation on Operation PALADIN from July 2022 to July 2023.

Major Thorne is an exceptional officer who made a conspicuous contribution by removing redundant forms and duplicate operational reporting in an international operational environment to the benefit of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation. Displaying the ability to identify a problem, develop a solution and implement a change management strategy resulting in immediate operational reporting to Headquarters United Nations. Pivotal in improving Operation PALADIN administrative systems and better value for money accommodation for the Australian Defence Force.

REGIMENTAL TIER C APPOINTMENT – HONOUR FOR WO1 BRADLEY BARGENQUAST RAEME.

WO1 Bradley Bargaquast OAM, pictured alongside his family, the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army (RSM-A) WO1 Kim Felmingham, and the Chief of Army LTGEN Simon Stuart, AO, DSC, has achieved a significant milestone with his appointment as the Command Sergeant Major (CSM) of Aviation Command, effective 25 Jan 25.



A proud member of the Corps, Brad is the first RAEME soldier to be promoted into a Regimental Tier C position. Brad graduated as a 48th Intake Apprentice vehicle mechanic. His career exemplifies the values of dedication and excellence that define the Corps.

Brad is a RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) Member No.891. On behalf of all RAQ members, we extend our congratulations to him on this achievement.

Celebrating Dedication – Robert “Rawby” Sawford Two Federation Stars.



On 20 Nov 24, a significant milestone was recognised in a special ceremony at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera. MAJ (RTD) Robert Douglas Sawford, fondly known as “Rawby,” was presented with two Federation Stars by

the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO, DSC.

Robert is a 32nd Intake Army Apprentice, who commenced his career in 1977 as an Electronics Tradesman, setting the foundation for over 45 years of dedicated service, retiring in 2022.

Robert has had many experiences, but advises one of the highlights of his career was being selected for Exercise Long Look in the UK. "While there, I took part in Exercise Lionheart, which involved the largest movement of NATO troops since World War 2." Another was his involvement as a team leader on Exercise Pacific Partnership on the United States Navy Ship Mercy in 2012, providing civil and military cooperation and humanitarian aid to the Philippines, Vietnam, and Cambodia. His other was as OC of the Ninox Validation and Support Team (NVST), conducting census and validation activities on the Army, Navy, and Air Force suite of night fighting equipment across Australia.

CFN A Collins Awarded the 2024 National Army Reserve Craftsman of the Year.



It was with great pride and gratitude that CFN Collins accepted the ARES Craftsman of the Year Award for 2024 from Brigadier Benjamin Slaughter, Head of Corps RAEME, at the RAEME Birthday celebrations held at 7 CSSB 29 Nov 24.

CFN Collins enlisted in 2019 as a SERCAT 5, ECN 229, with 20 plus years' experience as a civilian mechanic. In recent years it has been a very challenging time for him as he juggled family life, a full time job and part-time military service with 11CSSB's 108 Field Workshop in Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane. CFN Collins says "I have enjoyed my time thus far serving as an active member of the workshop, engaging in a vast amount of soldier and trade specific training, as well as vehicle maintenance and repairs, and community engagement through DACC tasking."

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Currently he works for Thales Australia, maintaining the PMV-M fleet of vehicles, conducting all levels of repairs and uplifts as an OEM repairer. With excellent support from his employer, 2024 was a particularly busy year allowing him to be involved in a wide range of DACC 2 tasking and many later exercises.

In accepting his award, CFN Collins acknowledged that his achievement was only possible with the support, understanding and assistance of his family, friends, employer, fellow Craftsmen and my CoC.

Winners of the Inaugural St Eligius Trophy – 7BDE.



St Eligius Trophy donated by MAJ Steve Howells

The inaugural St Eligius Trophy event was conducted at ASEME prior to the Corps Birthday in Dec 24, involving teams from 1, 3 and 7 BDE. To get the event underway, and to ensure it success long-term, three Brigades were selected as the inaugural participants. Next year will see more teams and an international component.

A huge thank you to MAJ Steve Howells, outgoing SO2 Corps HOC Cell, who commissioned the artwork and donated the trophy as a gift to the Corps. In addition to the trophy presented to the winning team (perpetual – not to leave ASEME), each member received a miniature of the statue engraved with their personal details.

The Corps Master Artificers, in conjunction with members from Workforce and Training Group, built scenarios that required teams to undertake multiple tasks and test many disciplines of military and trade proficiency, including the following:

- **WTSS – RP3A:** Testing marksmanship and weapon handling.
- **1km Run and Falling Plate Shoot:** Test of physical endurance and shooting precision.
- **FRT-Based Scenario:** Incorporating rapid troubleshooting and repair tasks.
- **PMTT – PLCOMD Orders (Interactive Map):** Evaluating tactical planning and decision-making skills.

- **Convoy Incident Response:** A multi-faceted task with quick decision events.
- **Recovery Task:** A team-based exercise assessing collaborative problem-solving and leadership.
- **Individual Trade Assessment:** Theory and practical tasks assessing core trade competencies.

No information was provided to the teams prior to the competition, so no one had time to prepare, rehearse, or revise knowledge or skills. The winners of the inaugural competition were 7 Brigade led by LT McAlpin and CPL Pettigrew.



Congratulations to all members. It was very closely fought.

Images and information courtesy of Defence

6RAR Technical Support Platoon Awarded Gold Commendation - Brisbane



Members of the 6 RAR TSP with Chief of Army LTGEN General Simon Stuart, AO DSC. and RSM-A WO I Kim Felmingham.

On Wednesday, 20 Nov 24, 6RAR Technical Support Platoon (TSP) was presented with the prestigious Army Group Gold Level Commendation. Gold Commendations are awarded to soldiers and teams for exceptional achievements that have had an observable

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effect at the Army level. The 6RAR TSP members of 2023-24 displayed exceptional dedication and professionalism bringing credit to the Army – their consistent hard work was critical to maintaining operational readiness of the Battalion.



TSP Vehicle Technicians repairing an AS4 during Ex DIAMOND STRIKE 2023

Despite 50% staffing in Vehicle Technician and Weapon Technician sections, the TSP was able to achieve a serviceability rate of 95% useable equipment (RU/FF) for Exercise DIAMOND STRIKE and TALISMAN SABRE 2023. The TSP was also able to maintain this equipment at 95% availability to enable 6 RAR to also achieve its ambitious combat team live fire program and Ready Battle Group (RBG) certification.

Many months of PT was lost to enable trade tasks to be achieved, sometimes working extended hours to surge before field exercises. This hard work carried over into the field with technicians regularly working long hours with minimal, or no sleep, to solve maintenance problems. Further, between exercises, when the rest of the Battalion was enjoying rest and recreation, the TSP remained on the tools to enable the unit to return and carry on the exercise.



TSP working hard to repair AS4s between major exercises during Battalion R and R

The excellence work of 6RAR TSP continued throughout 2024, as the workshop later supported the Battalion's change of role from a Mechanised to Motorised Infantry

battalion as a result of DSR initiatives. TSP's flexibility and dedication saw 6 RAR deploy both the M113 and PMV Bushmaster fleet into the field on exercise within a space of two months – a true testament to the professionalism of the maintainers.

The work of the TSP often goes unnoticed, but it is essential to enable combat arms soldiers in achieving tactical outcomes. This award recognises the achievements of 6 RAR TSP and serves as a testament to the vital role that all RAEME workshops perform in enabling the Battalions, Regiments and Brigades they support to achieve training and operational outcomes.

Some images and information courtesy of Defence.

CAPT Gallagher
TSP Comd
6 RAR



CHANGES TO ROYAL SYMBOLS ACROSS DEFENCE



On 27 September 2022, Buckingham Palace announced updates to Royal symbols to reflect the reign of King Charles III. The late Queen Elizabeth II's Cypher (E II R with St Edward's Crown) is being replaced by His Majesty's Cypher (C III R with Tudor Crown). This transition represents a significant update to the symbols that embody royal authority across Commonwealth institutions, including the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The Department of Defence has received formal advice from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) regarding these changes. Following the United Kingdom Government's approach, Australian Government Departments will update Royal symbols in line with the Symbols of the State Guidance. The Secretary of Defence and the Chief of Defence Force have tasked ADF Headquarters (ADFHQ) with leading this transition, including the establishment of a working group to evaluate the scope, costs, timing, and potential impacts of these updates.

Defence will adopt a measured and cost-efficient approach to implementing these changes. Guided by a "grandfathering" principle, existing symbols will remain

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valid, and updates will be introduced progressively to minimise financial and operational disruptions. No specific timeframe has been set, and Defence organisations are encouraged to avoid unnecessary expenditures. This deliberate approach mirrors the ten-year transition during Queen Elizabeth II's reign, ensuring continuity and consistency in adopting the new Royal symbols across Defence.

RAQ AGM KEDRON-WAVELL SERVICES CLUB – 4 DEC 24

The RAEME Association Queensland's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 4 Dec 24, with a wonderful turnout of local members. Attendees heard a great deal of good news including the superb membership figures for 2024 – a record both in South East Queensland and North Queensland. Several key resolutions were passed and updates provided.

Whilst the minutes are available to all RAQ members, in Friday Files, I would like to provide the following update.



Many wise heads around the table for RAQ AGM – working for RAQ Members

The Financial Statement for FY23/24 was presented by the Treasurer, Mick Patman, and accepted by the members. Similarly, the Auditor's Report for the same period was approved, with Julie Parfitt from Mourfields Accounting and Business Advisors, was appointed as the auditor for the upcoming financial year.

Members agreed to maintain the current stance on public liability insurance, noting that the RAQ continues to operate without such coverage. As a volunteer organisation, the Statement of Remuneration confirmed that no member receives financial compensation for their contributions. Notably, the proposed amendments to the constitution were reviewed, accepted, and officially passed.

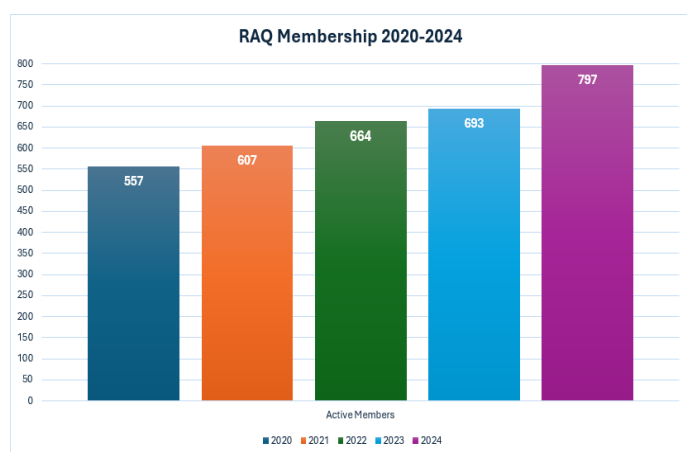
The AGM also confirmed the re-election of the Executive Committee for an additional two-year term. This decision reflects the membership's confidence in the existing leadership team to continue guiding the Association effectively.

Ty Bodle
Secretary
secretary@qld.raeme.org.au



RAQ MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Wow what a year, I am pleased to announce that membership has continued to grow significantly from 1 Nov 23 until 4 Dec 24. We had 124 new members, of which 39 opted for Annual Subscription whilst 85 opted for Life Subscription. Also, we had 19 Annual Subscribers upgrade to Life Subscribers – this is a 15% increase on the previous year. Unfortunately 11 members were deceased and 7 members failed to renew their Annual Subscription, leading to a nett increase of 106 new members. Upgrading to Life Subscription makes it easier to move interstate or overseas without renewing your Annual Subscription – most importantly, members can still maintain contact with RAQ by way of Friday Files.



The RAQ has continued to support and subsidise functions throughout the state, including luncheons on the Gold and Sunshine coasts, Toowoomba and Townsville. It has also provided support for RAEME Birthday events around the state as well as to ANZAC Day functions and two very successful off-base Spanner Club gatherings in Brisbane and Townsville.

The RAQ will continue to support functions held by “Women in RAEME” The last one held at Enoggera Barracks on 30 Nov 24, was well attended by families with some very interesting guest speakers.

The Association has also instituted a junior member whose function is to liaise with, and advocate on behalf of, all Crafties in north and south Queensland to encourage further membership.

As a bonus to Membership of the RAQ, all financial members can, by application, become Life Members of AEME Mermaid Beach SLSC – this wonderful surf club is very welcoming to all RAEME folks in Queensland.

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

Arte et Marte

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



FEATURE ARTICLE – 2 CAV REGT SPT SQN / TST

In 2024, the Australian Army implemented changes to its organisational structure under the Defence Strategic Review (DSR), transforming the 3rd Brigade into the Amphibious Armoured Brigade. This shift significantly altered the Army's capabilities and centralised all heavy armoured assets within the 2nd Cavalry Regiment.

The transition from the Armoured Combat Reconnaissance (ACR) structure outlined in Plan Beersheba has led to the Regiment comprising two reconnaissance troops, each supported by Australian Light Armoured Vehicles (ASLAVs), and two tank troops, now equipped with the newly introduced M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks. This restructuring presents both challenges and opportunities for the Regiment's 50 maintainers, who now manage nine different platforms ranging in service life from 50 years to just five months.



Members of 2 CAV REGT SPT SQN TST

Each of the line four squadrons currently operates at roughly 50% of its established strength for maintenance personnel, with 5–6 Craftsmen under the guidance of an ASM. This staffing shortfall necessitates that the Regiment's maintainers act as single points of knowledge, demonstrating and applying technical proficiency beyond what is typically expected for their rank and experience. Their dedication to ensuring squadron readiness highlights both their strong bonds with the fighting elements and their professional pride.

The maintainers of the Support Squadron further enhance the Regiment's operational effectiveness by introducing new Craftsmen to the realities of maintaining heavy armoured vehicles. Many join the Regiment straight from completing On-the-Job Training (OJT) and undergo rigorous preparation to operate tactically in a fast-paced, mounted environment while also balancing the training required to qualify for squadron deployment in the following year. Their role is critical in ensuring the

long-term sustainability of the Regiment's capability and operational requirements.



ARES OJT undertake trade sign-off support Regt on Ex BROLGA RUN

Throughout the 2024 training year, maintainers supported the Regiment in deploying on a variety of exercises. The deployment of ASLAVs to Papua New Guinea (PNG) in support of Exercise WANTOK WARRIOR in October marked the first use of armoured platforms in PNG since the end of the Second World War. Concurrently, maintainers deployed alongside tanks in support of Exercise INDO PACIFIC ENDEAVOUR, culminating in Exercise KERIS WOOMERA—the final instance of an MIA1 Abrams tank being live-fired within the Australian Army.



M88 off-loads MIA1 on Ex KERIS WOOMERA in preparation for final life fire

The Regiment's high operational tempo and its impact on armoured fleets would not be sustainable without the support of 102 Field Workshop 3rd Combat Support Services Battalion. In recent months, the workshop has integrated MIA2 maintenance within its facilities and provided forward repair teams to support ASLAV fleet repairs. This partnership will continue to develop throughout the 2025 training year as the Brigade prepares to introduce new heavy armoured capabilities, including the Huntsman and Breaching and Bridging engineering assets.

During the Regional Warfighter Exercise in May, the Regiment enhanced its ability to conduct field repairs by employing Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) maintainers in operational environments. Under the guidance of the RASM, General Dynamics Land Systems Australia integrated directly with the Regiment's

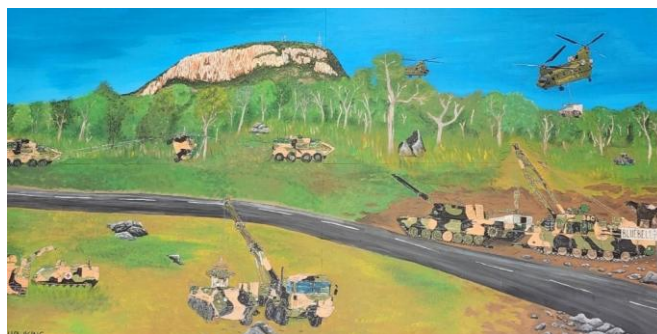
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maintainers in the field, significantly reducing backload times and enabling repairs to be conducted further forward, thereby improving operational effectiveness.



First time maintenance of MIA2 being undertaken in 102 Fd Wksp

Despite the relentless pace and numerous responsibilities, the Regiment's maintainers have not lost sight of their unit's heritage. Craftsman Codie Hawkins commemorated all those who have served within the Regiment by creating a mural and a nominal roll, ensuring their contributions are remembered.



Artwork by CFN Codie Hawkins presented to 2nd CAV REGT WKSP

Looking ahead to the remainder of the training year, the transformation of the 3rd Brigade under the DSR will continue to challenge the maintainers of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. As the Brigade integrates new heavy armoured capabilities, it will be the Craftsmen of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment who will be relied upon for their experience and leadership. Their forward-leaning approach will be critical in ensuring lessons are learned and best practices are established in maintaining this evolving capability.

Arte et Marte

CAPT Timothy Hess
A/2IC & TST Commander
Support Squadron
2nd Cavalry Regiment



6ESR WKSP – Important Contribution to AACAP 2024 and 2025. In 2024, 6 Engineer Support Regiment (6 ESR) deployed 17 Construction Squadron on Exercise Saunders as a part of the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) to Amata, South Australia. AACAP has an objective to improve the

environmental health and living conditions of Indigenous Australians by developing basic but necessary infrastructure for the local community.

6 ESR also deployed an FRT to remote South Australia consisting of CPL Maxwell Gerrard, CPL Bradley Smith, CFN Jarrad Rollond, CFN Rhys Jones, CFN Andrew Reina, CFN Xander Hague-Naismith and CFN Liam Hutchison. The FRT was also supported by external attachments inclusive of CPL Ashley Doyle, CFN Finlay Graham (both 1 CER), LCPL Joe Teis and CFN Ethan McAllister (both 6 RAR). The nature of the deployment limited logistical support and ease of access to repair parts, so in true RAEME fashion, the Crafties used their initiative, intuition and “tinkering” skills to fix complex issues with the deployed equipment. Just to top it off, in their spare time they turned a rusty bonnet into Corps memorabilia (see below). The bonnet was presented to CO 6 ESR for display at the unit’s “boozier” (Bailey Bar).



In 2025, the unit is focussed on the Torres Strait for AACAP 25. A similar sized contingent will be deployed across multiple small islands. Once again the Crafties will be in a relatively isolated part of Australia with minimal logistical support. There will be limited scope for resupply and parts availability, and a mission critical need to maintain construction, power generation, real life support and transport equipment. It is anticipated to be a fantastic opportunity to exercise skill, innovation and adaptability. As a bonus, the area is also rumoured to be an excellent fishing spot!

Arte et Marte

CAPT Chaitanya Gunturi
Troop Commander
Operational Support Squadron
6th Engineer Support Regiment

Update from HQ I (AS) Div. By now you are all aware, that at the end of 2024 HQ I (AS) Div was given

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the honour of taking over command of 17 Brigade and 10 Brigade to add to the three combat brigades from 2023. Div HQ also took on some more Direct Command Units (DCU) as 6 Bde units were reallocated. The Division now manages day-to-day activities of the five Bdes and six DCUs. This Div HQ now exerts command over almost 13,000 personnel.

The change in command arrangements over the last 18 months has also generated an exponential increase in workload. As such, there has been a need for a well-staffed Div HQ full of hard-hitting, keen Officers, WO and SNCOs. Of note, there has been no increase to the staffing of the Div HQ since the Combat Brigades were transferred. The HQ has a staff of 238 (135 ARA and 103 ARES), of whom only two are corps coded RAEME – the Div Engineer and ASM positions. There are, in fact, 16 RAEME members posted to the HQ (10 ARA and 6 ARES) filling any Log and any Corps positions. Most branches have RAEME representation (DQ, G1, G3, G4, G5, G8), showing the versatility of our RAEME personnel.

HQ I (AS) Div is a great place to work for exposure to higher level planning and for gaining a better strategic perspective. Being an all-corps and tri-service organisation, it helps to build a broad work cohort and support network, whilst developing a wider understanding of Army, Navy and RAAF planning. There are many opportunities to deploy overseas on operations and specific activities. Last year, RAEME members participated in activities in Japan, South Korea, USA and most of the islands of the South West Pacific. Most importantly, being posted to an all-corps posting also enables the continuous glorification of the mighty Corps to other Corps; “peacocking” the tricolour paraphernalia at work stations throughout the building.

So, if you like working at a more strategic level, meeting new and interesting people, getting overseas on activities, living in Brisbane and showing off your RAEME merch..... maybe working at HQ I (AS) Div is for you.

Arte et Marte

MAJ Russell Haycock
G15 - Large Scale Combat Operations
HQ I (AS) Div



3 RAR Logistical Mastery and Mission Success. Over the period 3 – 14 Mar 25, Technical Support Platoon (TSP), 3 RAR deployed to Townsville Field Training Area (TFTA) as part of Exercise Kapyong Warrior 25 practicing their technical and tactical proficiency as the backbone of the Australian Army’s Armoured Infantry Battalion.

Battle Preparation. Preparation for the exercise saw TSP complete huge amounts of work to “get the battalion out the door” including many late nights at the

workshop for the vehicle mechanics. The huge work load inevitably saw TSP's own field/vehicle prep being completed last minute demonstrating TSP's commitment to sustaining the force.

Deployment – A1 / A2 Echelon. The TSP deployed with 5 x Forward Repair Teams (FRTs). This was the first time 3 RAR has deployed under an Armoured A1 Echelon FRT (K18, K38) and Motorised A2 Echelon FRT (K51, K58) construct.



Look carefully for the Tricolour – opportunities are never passed up

B Echelon. Armoured Logistics Company tested our capacity to force generate a B Ech capability with a team operating from Kapyong Lines. The B Ech achieved outstanding results bringing another 10 x AS4's online whilst also conducting 12 and 24-month servicing across all trades. B Ech also completed scheduled weapon annual technical inspections from numerous armouries.

FRTs. Throughout Exercise Kapyong Warrior 25, FRTs played a pivotal role in maintaining operational tempo for the Battalion. This was achieved through rapid response times, on the spot maintenance and repairs to critical equipment, including a night time dual “pack pull” on one of our Protected Mobility General Maintenance Variant's and an AS4 Gun Car.



TSP, 3 RAR conduct PMGMV “Pack Pull” by Night

The A1 teams used every available second to work on all the small 1% tasks on both vehicles and weapons, minimising equipment downtime and keeping essential assets in the fight. The FRTs proved to be an **Spanner News**

indispensable force multiplier, reinforcing Technical Support Platoons role as the backbone of ‘Old Faithful’.

Lethality. In addition to sustaining the Battalions equipment, TSP demonstrated their tactical proficiency enhancing their lethality through qualifying ALC on three new weapon systems – the Minimi, Mag 58 and 12.7mm QCB. Our instructors spent hours ensuring drills were to the highest standard and that operators could employ the weapons in both offensive and defensive operations.



TSP 3 RAR conduct 12.7mm QCB Qualification

Mission Success. The success of Exercise Kapyong Warrior 25 could be seen as a direct result of TSP dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment to 3 RAR. Their achievements serve as testament to the critical role that technical support elements play in military operations, proving again that without logistics the fight cannot continue. As the Battalion looks forward, TSP performance during Exercise Kapyong Warrior 25 sets a high standard for logistical excellence. The ability to adapt, repair, sustain and train is essential to the delivery of maintenance effects.

CPL Moorhouse
TSP
3 RAR



EVENT REPORTS ACROSS QUEENSLAND

Darling Downs Lunch – 17 Nov 24. The Darling Downs branch held its 4th and final function of 2024 - RAEME Birthday function - on Sunday 17th November. As for previous functions, the venue was the Ambrose Deck at the Toowoomba City Golf Club - a particularly nice venue at this time of year, overlooking the practice greens and fairways.



Members and guests at the luncheon

We had approximately 35 attendees, including Ross and Leonie Grant, Tony and Alison Borg, Pete Matthews, and Barry and Kay Skinner - all of whom are thanked for having travelled to attend the function.

Pete Matthews spoke about the RAQ including membership growth, and plans for the future; then Ross Grant gave an update about the RAEME National Network, and the moves afoot within the Corps to incorporate operational and technical changes resulting from DSR implementation. These updates were much appreciated by all attendees.



Members and guests welcomed to the luncheon by Deputy Chair Paul Gibbs

With not a spare seat left, the event commenced with pre-luncheon drinks. Setting a welcoming tone, MC, Paul Gibbs, had everyone seated for the formal proceedings, extending a warm welcome to key representatives, including BRIG Ed Smeaton (Representative COL Commandant), COL (Retd) Piers Cambridge, and Patron COL (Retd) Tony Borg.



Ross Grant and Alison Borg (above) cutting of the Corps Birthday cake, which was provided by Kate Wallace of Kate's Kreations, who did an amazing job with the customised icing. Thanks Kate!

Arte et Marte

**Peter Pile
Darling Downs
Lunch Convenor**



All Ranks Lunch – Port Office Hotel Brisbane. On Sunday, 1 Dec 24, the RAQ gathered at the Port Office Hotel for our traditional annual All Ranks Luncheon, a key event celebrating our Corps Birthday, Corps achievements, and the enduring legacy of the Corps. The program featured a blend of tradition and innovation, providing members, partners and guests with an opportunity to reconnect and reflect on the Association's journey throughout the year.



A luncheon highlight was an address by LT Rebecca Rasmussen, an accomplished Engineering Officer with 106 FD WKSP. Rebecca shared insights into her military journey, including her studies in mechanical engineering, her recent leadership roles, and her commitment to fostering connections within the RAEME community.



A special moment was the cutting of the cake by BRIG Smeaton and LT Rasmussen, symbolising both traditions and the future of RAEME

This luncheon demonstrated the vibrancy of the RAEME Association Queensland and its dedication to fostering a strong community presence and a united Corps family.



L-R Karen Cairns, Michelle Lafferty and Pete Yates



RAQ Webmaster and Chairman's Award recipient Adrian Butcher

All the pics of the day thanks to our photographers Ewan McLeod and Barry Shipway can be found in the [Photo Gallery](#).



RAQ NQ Gathering – Townsville. The RAQ-NQ wrapped up the year in style with a festive gathering on Saturday, 14 Dec 24, at the Kirwan Tavern in Townsville. Over 60 members and guests came together to celebrate the end of what has been a busy and rewarding year in 2024, as well as marking another successful year for the association in the NQ region.

Special thanks to the RAQ-NQ organising team – Tank Pontifex, Doug Merry Brian Robb and Jason Ballard for their hard work and dedication in making this and other events throughout the year such a success.



Alison Bird and Gus Angus toast 2024



L-R CPL Ben Woodhouse, CFN David Gadsen, CPL Thomas Couper, WO1 Paul Vonow, MAJ Kevin Moran and WO2 Greg Jones



Mick Robinson, Simon Hurdell, Mick McMillan, Mark Petrie and Tony Gordon

As the RAEME family in North Queensland reflects on a fantastic year, it's clear that the bonds continue to thrive. Here's to another great year ahead for RAQ-NQ! More pics are in the [Photo Gallery](#).

PICS FROM RAEME BIRTHDAY ENOGERA – DEC 2024



COMING EVENTS

ANZAC Day 2025 Commemorations – Warning Order Brisbane



Lead by our COL Comdt Queensland COL Piers Cambridge CSM, the 2025 parade will get underway from Adelaide Street, between George Street and Creek Street commencing with the Governor of Queensland's address at King George Square, starting at 9:45am, to the last marching participants at 12:25pm. Current information is as follows:

- RAQ are in Group 4, Serial 51.
- FUP – to be confirmed, but it appears the RAQ will be at **George St** (between Mary and Margaret St, look for the Corps Banner.
- Scheduled to march off at **approx 1025hrs/**
- Make sure you are in place **at least 30 minutes** before this time.
- Latest information is at the [RSL parade Committee Website](#)

Any veteran that can no longer march is invited to take advantage of the jeeps driven by the owner members of the Military Jeep Club of Queensland or golf buggies. Vehicles are inserted behind the relevant Ex-Service organisations listed on the Order of March to remain close to their peers.

Email ANZAC@qld.raeme.org.au if you require assistance or have any questions.

This event may still face restrictions to comply with the event planning requirements, however it will be conducted on the traditional route unless otherwise notified. Those veterans and citizens unable to attend are invited to watch the event on ABC TV and be assured that parade participation and spectator opportunities will be reviewed as we approach the event and advised in RAQ Friday Files.

Post March Function. The RAQ will again be hosted by the Port Office Hotel, which opens on ANZAC Day specifically to cater for us. Information is on the RAQ Website, and tickets to the event will be available soon.



Please note: This is a private RAEME function and a ticket is required for entry. To comply with the licencing requirements, alcohol can only be purchased with a meal. The meal must be prepared, served and eaten on the premises. The Port Office Hotel will be open from approx 1000 hrs and the Buffet Meal will be served from approximately 1200-1400hrs on the day.

BOOK NOW

ANZAC Day 2025 commemorations - Early warning order – Townsville. An invitation is extended to all current and past members of the Corps and friends of RAEME to attend our Annual ANZAC Day March & Function.



Flynn's Irish Bar will open from 0630h on 25 Apr 25 and will remain open during and after the march. Flynn's is a privately booked RAEME Function so please bring some form of RAEME Insignia/memorabilia (Cap, tie, tie bar, hat badge, collar dog, lapel pin, badge, patch, cufflinks etc to gain entry to Flynn's). If you do not have any of these items, please have someone wearing RAEME memorabilia vouch for you via security at the door.

- **Where** – Flynn's Hotel
- **When** – from 0630-1330h

Townsville City March – The RAEME Form Up Point for the Strand March is Strand Park at 0830h with the March stepping off at 0900h, don't be late. Look out for our Tricolour Banner! We're looking forward to seeing you there.

Spanner News

RAQ Sunshine Coast All Ranks Annual Luncheon – Saturday 13 Sep 25. Readers are advised that the 2025 RAQ Sunshine Coast Chapter Annual Luncheon is to be held at the Maroochy RSL on Saturday 13 September.

It is anticipated that the past Colonel Commandant, Queensland, Colonel Steve Evans (Retd) will introduce his successor, COL Piers Cambridge CSM, who will talk about his recent career in AHQ, and his plans for engaging with soldiers in Queensland.

The RSL will offset the cost of the lunch to the sum of \$10.00 per head for the first 80 attendees. At this time the RAQ has also agreed to sponsor RAQ members and 1 guest at \$20.00 per member attending and a request for Maroochy RSL to sponsor has been submitted. Subject to Maroochy RSL sponsorship being approved we anticipate a cost of \$32 per member and 1 guest at \$32.

Details confirming the menu, format and timings will be promulgated later in the year. **Please note Saturday 13 September 2025, in your diary** and we look forward to seeing you once again on the Sunny Coast.

This year, the convenors are looking at some more casual events in differing venues. The proposed dates for these “pay-as-you-go-luncheons” are as follows:

- 6 Apr 25 – Alex Surf Club
- 27 Jul 25 – Maroochy or Alex Surf Club
- 23 Nov 25 – Maroochy or Alex Surf Club

Look out for further detail on these events.

Arte et Marte

Terry Johnson CSC & Tom Regener CSM



**Co-convenors
Sunshine Cost Lunch**

Annual All Ranks Gold Coast Lunch – Mermaid Beach AEME Surf Club 23 Aug 25. This year the annual lunch at the Gold Coast is being held on the **Saturday the 23 Aug 25** and will be at the Mermaid Beach (AEME) Surf Life Saving Club located on Hedges Avenue Mermaid Beach.

The lunch will be from 1200 hrs to approximately 1600 hrs in the usual format, with the club dedicating an area on the veranda overlooking the ocean for RAQ attendees. Guests are invited to purchase their own lunch and drinks with the RAQ subsidising some drinks.

As normal, and befitting the Gold Coast, the lunch is a laid-back affair with casual dress and is designed for a good catch up to all. Everyone is welcome wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc.

Just a reminder that the **Surf Club offers free Life Membership for financial members of the RAQ.** This is a fantastic offer and if you have not taken advantage of this offer to date, go to the RAQ website and all will be revealed.

In June, July and August, you will start getting reminder emails from me advising the lunch details and asking for returns from those coming for the afternoon.

Regards,

Eddie “Beans” Bevans
Convenor
Gold Coast Lunch



The following are the key social events happening in and around Queensland in 2025.

Event	Date
RAQ Sunshine Coast get together - Alex Surf Club	Sun 6 Apr 25
ANZAC Day Parade & Function - Brisbane	Fri 25 Apr 25
ANZAC Day Parade & Function - Townsville	Fri 25 Apr 25
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 18 May 25
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 17 Aug 25
Reserve/CMF Reunion - Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL	Sun 17 Aug 25
RAQ Gold Coast Luncheon - Mermaid Beach AEME SLSC	Sat 23 Aug 25
RAQ Sunshine Coast Luncheon - Maroochydore RSL	Sat 13 Sep 25
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 16 Nov 25
RAEME 83rd Birthday	Mon 1 Dec 25

For further details on any Events please contact the Functions Officer and 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.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new coordinator for the on-going management and delivery of Spanner Packs to RAEME officers and soldiers deployed on operations, and other training activities, around the globe.

I recently retired from the Army having served over 30 years and wanted to contribute to those still serving. I had the good fortune of having known the former Spanner Pack Coordinator, the late MAJ (Rtd) Ray Norman OAM, with whom I met numerous times, throughout my career, but most recently at the regional Spanner Club meetings, when posted in the Brisbane.

Sadly, Ray passed away late last year. I want to acknowledge the great work he undertook, including support from his wife Karen, coordinating Spanner Packs for many years; and the faithful service he has dedicated to the RAQ and the RAEME National Network (RNN).

Most RAEME folks are aware the purpose of the Operation Spanner Pack. You may not know it was initially intended to provide care packages for those personnel deployed on declared Operations. However, with the increased pace of ADF operations and many current activities in the Southeast Pacific, the RNN through the RAQ, now also provides Spanner Packs for RAEME maintenance or training/mentoring detachments, or individual embedded soldiers. serving throughout our region.

Generally, if the training mission is longer than a couple of months, we would like to provide soldiers with a care package, just to let them know we are thinking of them, and we care about their dedication to service whether it is warlike, non-warlike or overseas training activity. Ultimately, we want to see their safe return to their families and friends and the Corps.



Left: Sample Spanner Pack. Right: RAEME Detachment Task Group TAJI with their packs

For those who may not be aware, the original concept was conceived in 2005 by a couple of NSW RAEME Association members. Eventually, in 2008, the Spanner Pack project was supported by all state and territory RAEME Associations with RAEME Association Queensland, as the largest Association, taking the lead in the administration and coordination of the program.

To February 2025, Operation Spanner Pack has delivered approximately 4860 Spanner Packs weighing around 10,000Kg. Spanner Packs have been dispatched to RAEME soldiers on operations in the Middle East Area of Operations, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sinai, South Sudan, Solomon Islands, East Timor Fiji and PNG.

If you would like to request a Spanner Pack, please go to RAEME Association Queensland website, to the "Contact Us" page, and email the Spanner Pack Co-ordinator: spannerpack@qld.raeme.org.au or qld.raeme.org.au with your request.

For more information about Operation Spanner Pack **or donation details**, to support this great cause, go to RAEME Association Queensland website, select "About Us" page and select the Operation Spanner Pack link. The more we receive the more our soldiers will benefit.

Arte et Marte

Major (Rtd) Tom Cross
RNN Spanner Pack Co Coordinator
spannerpack@qld.raeme.org.au



VALE

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

- **Wright**, Jason "Joey" passed away on 4 Nov 24. He was a proud member of RAEME, who served from 1993 until 2000, mostly in Darwin with 161 Reconnaissance Sqn. He was a Life subscriber of the RAEME Association Queensland, Member No 641.. Jason changed his name to Jason Kennedy, and then on his second marriage, changed it to Jason Kennedy Radford. Some may have known him post service by one of those names.
- **Gostelow**, MAJ (Rtd) Alan Keith "Lou" (14 VM, OCS June 67} passed away 22 Nov 24 in the RBWH after sustaining a neck injury following a fall. He had operational service twice, firstly in 1965, as a CFN, with HQ 28 COM INF BDE Malaysia; and later in 1970, as a LT in SVN with 2 AOD. Alan discharged in 1984 after more than 26 years' service. Alan was a life subscriber of the RAQ, Member No 841. As per Alan's wishes, there was no funeral, and he was cremated with his ashes to be interred, and at a later date, in the waters off Hervey Bay.
- **Kranen**, Judith Ann (nee Mohy) OAM, passed away on 1 Dec 24. In the weeks leading up to her death, Judith had been receiving treatment in St Vincents Hospital for long-standing liver issues. Her family asked that the following note be sent: "To all in the Corps, thank you on her behalf for the fun the friendship and companionship. Her time at Bulimba was one of her very happy times."
- **Hancock**, Laurie CAPT (Rtd), (7th F&T passed away on 31 Jan 25, surrounded by his family. He was a valued member of the RAQ, membership No 472..

Spanner News

- **Rack**, Ulrich Karl Josef "Rick" Rack, passed away in Feb 25. He was a respected member of the RAEME community and the RAQ, Member No. 127. He was aged 67. Rick was a 30th Intake Army Apprentice Fitter and Turner, graduating in 1976. His dedication to his trade and service to the Corps of RAEME exemplified the values of skill, professionalism, and camaraderie.
- **Forde**, Terry John MAJ (Rtd), passed away on, 6 Mar 25 aged 91. The RAQ as yet, doesn't have a great deal of detail regarding Terry's service other than his deployment to South Vietnam with 102 Fd Wksp from 21 May 1970 to 19 May 1971. His commitment to service and leadership was well respected by those who had the privilege of serving alongside him.

WELFARE

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

- **Reardon**, WO2 (Rtd) Brian underwent surgery to have a valve placed in an artificial voice box in Dec 24. He had a scan in March 25 and all looks good. He's doing much better learning to talk again and remembering to release the button to breathe. Talking does wear him out.
- **Draper**, MAJ (Rtd) Robert "Bob" advises he is in hospital with a dislocated hip, (split socket), and a broken pelvis in two places. He also has a cracked upper spine, putting pressure on his neck, and all giving excruciating pain. Injuries were sustained in a car accident, and later, while unloading hay bales. He is on high strength morphine patches to control pain.
- **White**, Ian, John Parfitt advises Ian has been in hospital for an operation on a blocked bowel. He is recovering at home but not very well. We wish him all the best

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

Australian Peacekeepers in Rwanda with UNAMIR from 1993 to 1996. In 1990 a civil war erupted between two Rwandan ethnic groups, the Tutsi and the Hutu and continued for three years until, in August 1993, the warring groups agreed to a power-sharing arrangement and a joint government was formed.

To assist in the peace process, the UN deployed a small military observer (UNMO) group that late in 1993 was replaced with a larger organization, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). However, during the early months of 1994 the peace process began to break down, despite the presence of UNAMIR. On 06 April the Rwandan president was killed, and 48 hours later Hutu extremists seized control of the Rwandan government and initiated the genocide against the Tutsi.

In the next three months up to 800,000 people, almost 10% of the Rwandan population, were brutally murdered; and almost two million people became refugees. UNAMIR was unable to stop the genocide. During May, the UN Security Council decided to expand UNAMIR's strength to approximately 7,500 troops. Known as UNAMIR II, this force was tasked to "contribute to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in Rwanda", including, where possible, the establishment of "secure humanitarian areas". Perhaps encouraged by the Somalia experience, the Australian Government agreed to contribute a medical team to provide support for UNAMIR II personnel and as a secondary role, to provide humanitarian relief to the Rwandans. Supporting the medical team was an Infantry Company group, four Armoured Personnel Carriers and a Logistic Support Company. The contingent was based at the Kigali Central hospital but also provided small teams to assist in provincial regions.

During the UNAMIR II deployments, RAEME soldiers served in a variety of roles in support of the main mission. CFN Wesley Lynch deployed to Rwanda on Australia's first rotation, and on arrival in-country, he and other RAEME members immediately began providing a meaningful contribution to the operation.

"I deployed in the advance party of Rotation as a Craftsman Vehicle Mechanic/driver. On the second day, the advance party took control of the Kigali hospital in the capital city. It was surrounded by RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army) bases and not defensible if attacked. The dreadful destruction and slaughter was evident and the next week was spent cleaning and repairing the hospital. CPL Geoff Condon, our electrician, and I worked as a team to get two old, disused generators running to provide safe power to the hospital buildings and operating theatre.

"At the Médecins Sans Frontières hospital we were scoping their old generator, a vintage Mercedes air-cooled 2-stroke, for parts to keep our generator going. We cleared the fuel lines of moths that had dropped into the tank, scrubbed the filters and with some jumper leads managed to get it started. Geoff checked the power board, threw the mains switch and the generator after coughing and spluttering a bit, found its running rhythm and began generating nicely. During this process, a couple of doctors in full scrubs came running over to us and said, 'Whatever you did, just keep doing it, our whole theatre has got power for the first time, you are saving lives!'"

The main RAEME contingent comprising eleven personnel arrived and began setting up the workshop on the central parade ground of the officer training school which would be home for the next six months. The vehicle / GE shop was in a 20 x 40 tent with power provided by the Lincoln generator/welder. RPS and EME Ops were situated in adjacent buildings.



Fitters track, Call Sign 28A, a veteran of Somali operations. CPL Condon is under the hood and CFN Lynch checking batteries of the Land Rover in the background. (Photo by CPL Condon)

"FRTs, with infantry support in Land Rover 6 x 6 or Unimog trucks, often deployed to outlying areas in support of the medical teams. The danger and uncertainty were magnified by an absence of communications, fire support, air-medical evacuation and Vietnam era body armour. Further concerns arose when we were only issued 60 rounds of ammunition. However, I do not recall ever receiving orders for 'actions on' for FRTs, or if the base we lived in or the hospital was attacked. Our main muscle was with the three APC gun cars and Fitters Track, which were quickly banned from public roads because of the damage they caused."

After experiencing a delay due to an unserviceable aircraft, troops of the second contingent finally arrived in the early hours of the morning of 19 February 1995 at Kigali, Rwanda. The delay was a significant factor in the relief in place schedule for the change-over in rotations, as the aircraft used to bring the second rotation to Rwanda was to be used to take the first rotation troops back to Australia. The aircraft schedule could not be altered, and as a result the normal handover/takeover briefings were necessarily fleeting. After a quick indication as to where equipment was kept and key facilities located, the first contingent departed and the second was left to get on with the job.

The lack of briefing for the second contingent was in some degree alleviated by the presence of soldiers and tradesmen, like CFN Dean Goninan, who had served

previously in Africa during the Somalia operations. These tradesmen provided valuable experience to the Group as it settled in to its core tasks.

The contingent's weapons, vehicles and equipment had first priority of their efforts, but in addition as time permitted, they applied their skills in support of Non-Government Organisations (NGO) and the local population.



Members of ASC 2 UNAMIR 2 Tech Support.

L-R standing: CPL Ian Drewitt (Boffin), CPL Dave Sterrett (VM), LCPL Christopher Pederick (VM), CFN Richard Hayes (VM), WO2 Paul Dodge (ASM, VM), CPL Jordie Burgess (Tech Elec), CPL William Green (RAAOC, RPS), CPL William O'Meara (Armourer), CFN C Blasich (VM), SGT N. Dodson (VM).

L-R kneeling: CPL Gus Garsheen (Tech Elec) and CFN Dean "Nino" Goninan (43rd Class Fitter Armourer).

Missing: SGT Tony Dare and CPL John Connelly who were attached to the hospital.



For some weeks, the second Australian contingent shared accommodation with troops from an Indian Engineering Company. (Photo by Richard Hayes.)



Looking out the entrance gate of the Australian compound in Kigali



A section of the Australian compound.

"The Australian compound was part of a military barracks complex, and Kigali Hospital was just a two minute walk around the corner. The hospital was home to the medics, their support staff and a security detachment. The compound included a four storey brick building, tented workshop areas and a vehicle park. The three top floors of the brick building provided living quarters, while the ground floor combined office space for TSP, a room for the RPS, a transport office and a make shift gym area. Vehicle maintenance was carried out in a 40 x 20 tent, while the GE work areas consisted of a GMV and a third of the 20 x 40 tent.

"Work came in many forms and locations. On one occasion the Tech Support Group was asked by the hospital physiotherapist, a Captain, to make a set of parallel bars for use in the rehabilitation of amputees in particular. Steel was hard to come by, but some scrounged pipe, box section and an old bed frame were used to manufacture the parallel bars and other required items.

"We were also frequently tasked to complete jobs outside the wire. For these tasks we would be escorted out with security front and rear provided by the 2 RAR B Coy boys. Almost invariably due to the very mountainous countryside, it would take hours to get anywhere (average speed 30-40 kph). One particular organisation we supported was the Butare Orphanage to the South of Kigali, managed by CARE Australia.

"Gus (CPL Garsheen) and I were called out on an FRT at Butare orphanage to look at a water pump that wasn't working. The pump had recently been repaired by a local and hadn't worked since. I pulled it apart and on inspection

everything looked fine until we diagnosed it as running backwards. Gus changed the wiring around and away it went. A great feeling when over one hundred kids start screaming and laughing, jumping up and down and coming over to shake your hand to thank you.

“Another NGO support task involved a callout of the GMV and crew to the site of a water purification unit that has been donated to UNHCR. One of the support legs was damaged during its travel to the site (North West of Kigali) and we were tasked to repair it. It was a simple welding job, but took us quite a while to get to the location and back to base.”

Ed Note. Extract from contribution to the RAEME Corps History Project 2014 by Dean Goninan.



The core function of the Tech Support Group was the repair, maintenance and recovery of deployed Australian weapons and equipment. In the photograph above **CPL Sterritt, VM** is shown in his element, working on an Australian Land Rover. **(Photo courtesy of Richard Hayes).**



CFN Goninan repairing a Minimi at the GE section. **(Photo courtesy of Richard Hayes)**



Recovery was an important task for Tech Support in Rwanda. Here a Land Rover has been recovered after plunging over a cliff **(a more detailed description of this incident is provided later in this section by CFN Terry Jones).** **(Photos courtesy of Richard Hayes)**

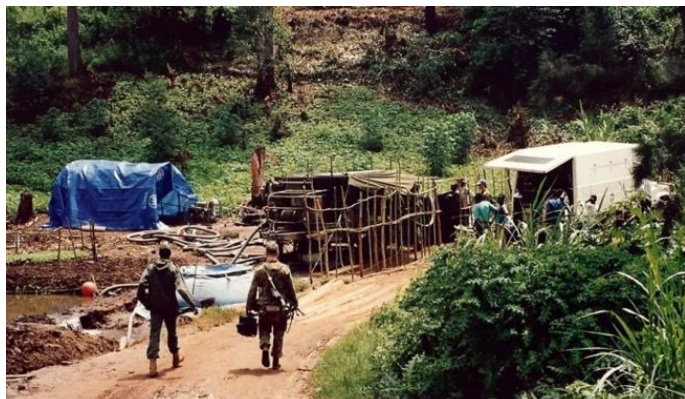


Far from the national support base, improvisation, an essential RAEME skill, was routinely practised by Tech Support in Rwanda. In the photograph above SGT Dodgson and LCPL Pederick search for a suitable item at the GE section's steel rack. **(Photo courtesy of Richard Hayes).**



“RAEME know-how allowed us to use discarded items such as old bed frames which were converted to useful essential

items of medical equipment and aids for use in the rehabilitation of badly injured local people. In the photograph above, a young boy who has been severely injured in the fighting makes good use of Tech Support built parallel bars.” (Photo by Dean Goninan).



Another NGO task at a water purification unit.
(Photo Dean Goninan)

Not all RAEME members who deployed did so as RAEME tradesman. 2 Cavalry Regiment (2 Cav Regt) in Darwin was to provide a Technician Electrical and two Combat First Aiders licensed to drive 6 x 6 Land Rovers.

CFN Terry Jones, a Recovery Mechanic at 2 Cav Regt was well qualified for one of the positions. Called before his OC, he was asked if he wished to deploy, to which his immediate answer was “yes”. It was to be his first overseas deployment and a life changing experience.

“Our primary role was to provide medical and health support to the deployed force. However, our secondary role was to provide medical and health support to the local population. In this role we treated people from both sides of the conflict. Our rationale was: if they were hurt, we would look after them. The Australian hospital was next door to the Rwandan Hospital. Entering the Rwandan Hospital was like stepping back in time, into the 1800s. In contrast, when you walked into the deployed Australian hospital it was much the same as entering a hospital in Australia.

“The equipment was modern, the wards clean and staff presented an air of busy professionalism. Whenever possible we helped out in the Rwandan Hospital where most injuries treated were traumatic, including a lot of missing limbs consequent to mine-related blasts.

“Gunshot wounds were also common and there were a lot of automobile accidents. I recall one patient presenting with a lacerated neck after he had punched out through a windscreen. We also treated Australian casualties. One accident involved a Land Rover 4 x 4 with a couple of blokes in the back which went straight over a cliff, luckily they all lived but not without injury. The most seriously injured was the Medic who had been riding in the back. A rifle barrel punctured his thigh and pushed up to the bayonet attachment. Other injuries included head wounds and a dislocated shoulder. I was on resuscitation that day and it was a pretty intense.

Spanner News



A Rwandan casualty in the Australian Hospital

“During our tour, the RPA murdered at least 4,000 people and a further 600 were injured at Kibeho Refugee Camp. The RPA knew all about our rules of engagement, and while killing refugees, they also taunted the UN Forces, which included Australians. In addition the RPA forces had heavy weapons while the UN Forces only had small arms. There can be no doubt that had the UN troops tried to intervene in the slaughter they would have all died.

Editor’s Note: Rules of Engagement for UN forces required a direct threat before the force could take an aggressive stance, let alone actually open fire. The definition of “threat” applied only to activities directed against the UN force and did not extend to other people, making it illegal for the UN force to intervene in local incidents.

“I went out to Kibeho about five days after the killing to help move about 500 survivors away to a safer area. The RPA were still there putting the pressure on to shift the people or they would finish the job. We managed to get them all out before they had a chance to do that”.



Aftermath of the massacre at Kibeho.

Away from the horror of massacre sights and the grease and grime of busy workshops, the task of organizing the maintenance of the UN force in Rwanda was a logistical problem of massive proportion. RAEME personnel played an important role in addressing this issue, serving on the UNAMIR HQ staff in logistic appointments. One of those to receive such a posting was Major Mike Barry.

“HQ UNAMIR operated much like the headquarters of a small infantry division. The force consisted of six infantry battalions, and several independent infantry companies mostly from African nations, a Canadian logistics unit, an Indian signals unit, an Indian construction engineer unit, an Australian field hospital and a number of civilian UN employees. In addition, a large number of non-government aid agencies (NGOs) and other UN agencies had elements and personnel in the country. One of my first tasks was to get an idea of the capabilities and limitations of the UN force and of the larger NGOs operating within the country. This meant visiting each contingent and displaced persons’ camp; liaising with UN and NGOs; and gaining an understanding of the needs of the agencies and units operating in each part of the country.

“I then fed this information back to the UN HQ. Once the information-gathering operation was stable and routine, I redeployed to Kigali, where I worked at the UN HQ Logistics (or G4) cell. I was responsible for establishing contracts through the UN for repair parts; for the inspection, repatriation and replacement of equipment; and for coordination between second and third-line repair facilities. During my tenure as G4 Maintenance, I worked closely with the Canadian logistic unit based in Kigali, which provided the second-line logistic and maintenance support to the force. A wide range of nations comprised UNAMIR many with their own equipment with limited logistic capability leaving the UN responsible to source and provide repair parts and maintenance support via third-party nations. For example, the Ethiopian infantry battalion had aging Soviet and East German equipment, such as BMPs and BDRMs, with manuals in Russian or German, but no means of providing repair parts.”

It seems that Craftsmen of any nationality never ignore the opportunity to celebrate the birthday of their Corps. During ASC 2’s deployment the Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers celebrated their Corps’ 51st birthday and available RAEME members, including CFN Dean Goninan, were only too pleased to assist them.



Canadian EME and RAEME contingents at the 51st Birthday Celebrations.

“While helping the Canadians celebrate their 51st birthday, we managed to sample some Canadian beers and a nip or two of their finest whiskey. The celebrations also included a ‘mess game’ with a RAEME difference. The aim was to lower a large nail tied by string to their recovery vehicle crane into a soft drink can on the ground. Fastest wins, but it was not as easy as first thought.”



The Canadian crane nail game in action.

From an Australian perspective, the UNAMIR operation was highly successful. There were no Australians killed and only three wounded. The RAEME elements had performed extremely well in every capacity in which they were employed. However, Rwanda was a most harrowing experience with none of us sorry to leave. Terry Jones sums up the general feeling:

“There was general jubilation when we ended our tour. I can remember watching the aircraft coming in to land and as soon as its wheels touched the ground, we all cheered. There was another cheer when we took off. My one enduring lesson from Rwanda is that given the right circumstances people are capable of the most terrible crimes against each other. It has made me appreciate all we have here in Australia.”

The Corps participation in UN operations provided operational experience in the field. Even though this experience was smaller in scale than World War Two or Vietnam, **(or more recent deployments – Ed Note)**, it was nonetheless significant for the individuals and the Corps. These experiences in combination with the experiences of other RAEME personnel who served on exchange with other military forces in a variety of conflicts, meant RAEME was able to ensure its policies and procedures remained relevant. This was to prove an important factor in the next overseas operation Australians participated in, closer to home, East Timor.

Ed Note: This story of this significant deployment to Rwandan is an extract from “With Skill and Fighting – Craftsmen of the Australian Army 1942-2014”, published in 2016.

Ross Grant
Editor SN



DO YOU HAVE A HOBBY IN RETIREMENT – HERE IS ONE TO CONTEMPLATE?

Ex CFN Steve Jones wants to encourage interesting hobbies for retirees – here is his restoration hobby. On the closing of Aviation Support Group Workshop (ASGW) at Oakey in 2007, several items were put up for auction including a grinder which may have been from the welding bay. I did not win the bid, however the person who did, stripped the 3 phase motor for its copper content, and as the main head shaft was seized, he did not think it was repairable. I saw it sitting in the rain and asked about it – I was told I could have it as “yard art”. It was quickly loaded up and brought home. It was a mess.



Before and After

I stripped it and unseized the head shaft and removed the nuts using a big air powered “ugga-dugga” hammer tool. I bought a grinding wheel and wire brush to suit. I built the wheel end plate guards, fabricated a new motor hinge, acquired a new 240 volt motor and had it wired to a lead and plug. I then found the right size fan belts x 2, and fitted them. To fit them, I had to disassemble the head stock shaft and bearings, which all needed repairing anyway. I ordered a safety on/off switch and had it electrically installed. I fabricated new brackets for the eye shields (which were donated from an un-named source to protect the innocent). I made a new set of covers as they had all gone missing. This left me with a nearly finished heavy grinder but the tool rest was cast iron and snapped in two. 50 years have passed since I last saw cast iron welding done, but enough memory remained to be able to glue it back together without it cracking, thanks to my shed oven for temperature control.

Spanner News

The Grinder is a HAFCO, which was made in Melbourne in 1956, according to the HAFCO company, which still exists today.

Arte et Marte

Steve Jones

Fitter and Turner turned Aircraft Tradie

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The RAQ prides itself on supporting our membership, and now in our goals, it has a wider remit for community welfare. On a recent road trip, I was reminded of the value of our association in Queensland and its concern for our members' welfare, and the goals we've set for ourselves to look after our own folks.

I caught up with several old friends from my service days and while I thoroughly enjoyed their company, I was saddened to see they had numerous health issues; appeared to be disconnected from their old service friends and colleagues; and generally weren't travelling well. None were members of a local RAEME association. When I think of their rich service lives, and the contribution they made in war and peace to our nation, I felt very sorry from their situation and wondered if their associations could do more – the answer is yes!

A good start is to simply provide opportunities to reconnect with old friends, or equally important, connect to today's generation of serving RAEME folks – they are an inspiration. I am pleased and proud to observe the RAQ does its level best to maintain contact, but more importantly, to re-connect with our members encouraging them to become an active part of an enthusiastic and engaging group of like-minded people.

However, as we know, many of our friends aren't members, nor do they stay up to date with their old Corps and its activities. So here is a challenge for all of us in the RAQ – bring a colleague to a meeting, social function, Spanner Club or causal drinks as often as you can – being connected helps alleviate many issues associated with loneliness and isolation, especially as one grows old. It behoves us to keep an eye on our colleagues, especially ones who are experiencing stress and poor health.

Arte et Marte

Ross Grant

Chairman Comms Committee

commschair@qld.raeme.org.au



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2025 REUNION FOR ALL APPRENTICES

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

This is a call out to all Apprentices who have not already indicated they wish to attend the above Reunion to please do so. Your expression of interest in attending this event will greatly assist our organisers in finalising the venue and costings.

We are seeking your expressions of interest by 30th April 2025. Further current information is available here: <https://austarmyapprentice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-Reunion-Flyer.jpeg>

This event will be discounted for Association members and their partner.

It is anticipated the finalised reunion details will be circulated and promoted on our Association website late May early June.

To record your interest in attending can you please provide the following information to: events@austarmyapprentice.org

Name:

Regimental number:

Association Membership number:

Intake:

Total number of personnel attending, i.e., self and how many others?

Friday night get together YES/NO, number

Saturday morning AGM YES/NO (Only Association financial members)

Saturday evening Dinner YES/NO, number

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