

EDITION 1-23

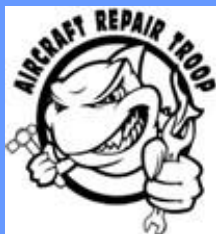
# SPANNER NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAEME ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND INC

MARCH 2023



5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment 'Bold'  
Deliver - Sustain - Protect



# Edition 1-23

31 Mar 23



## Spanner News

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

Front Cover: An Australian Army CH-47F Chinook helicopter conducts an external lift of aviation fuel to be transported to Nerrima Station in the Kimberley Region



### Disclaimer

The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this newsletter belong solely to the author, and not necessarily to the author's employer, association, organisation, committee, or other group or individual.

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome Spanners to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Spanner News for 2023. After what looked like a slow start to the year, we have already held functions in Townville and the Darling Downs, with more planned. We've seen again how these events are very well supported by members and guests in all the regions.

As an organisation we are truly blessed with an engaged and growing membership base, and we continue to expand our regions and offerings. The Executive team met for the first time in January to do some strategic planning. One of the items discussed was to review the results of our first ever Member survey sent out in December 2022. Thank you to the 158 members who responded from across the state and those now living interstate. The results were intriguing and have given us a lot of food for thought on what membership means. The findings from our current member demographics and their needs are reasonably clear. We all know our veteran community is ageing, however there are also large numbers of younger serving RAEME soldiers and veterans. Understanding and refining our member value proposition to engage a broad cross section of the veteran community needs to be a focus for our Association, so we are going to try some different approaches. At time of publication, we would have held our first RAQ SE Qld Spanner Club in Brisbane. This is just one suggestion that came directly from discussions on the member survey results. More will be detailed in Friday Files.

COL Comdt QLD COL Steve Evans is leading a committee to establish a RAEME Recovery Mechanics Memorial at Dotswood North Queensland. This permanent memorial will honour two fallen comrades WO2 Ryan Leslie and CFN Brendon Payne who sadly passed as the result of a vehicle accident on exercise on 30 August 2021. All the details are in this edition and how you can support this very worthy cause.

I would encourage all Corps members to attend an ANZAC Day march and function no matter where you are. In Queensland we will have the traditional parade in Brisbane forming up at George/Mary Streets, followed by the Port Office Hotel function afterwards. If you are attending our most popular event of the year at the Port Office, please ensure you've pre-purchased a discounted ticket. They are available on the events page of the website.

In Townville, the pre-march function will kick off at Flynn's Hotel around 0600-0900. The march starts at 0900, please keep an eye out for the RAQ Tricolour banner. Then back to Flynn's Hotel afterwards. No matter where you are, we remember those who have served our country in war and peace and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Lest We Forget.

Arte et Marte

**Peter Matthews**  
Chairman RAQ

[chairman@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:chairman@qld.raeme.org.au)



## RAEME Association Queensland – What we are about?

The RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) promotes and reinforces the spirit, reputation and image of the Corps through its past, present and future members. Our goals are to:

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

Joining online is easy, membership starts from just \$10/year, or Life Subscription for a once off \$100. 100% of all proceeds support and promote the goals of the Association.

## **NEW HEAD OF CORPS RAEME (HOC) – BRIG BEN SLAUGHTER, COMMANDER AUSTRALIAN ARMY CADETS**



Ben Slaughter was born in Brisbane where he attended Brisbane Grammar School and studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Queensland. He started his military career as a Reserve Officer Cadet while a full time university student. In 1992 he transferred to the Regular Army as a Second Lieutenant into the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME).

Brigadier Slaughter's early career included a variety of corps, regimental, and capability development roles in Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth. More recently he has worked in maintenance engineering, incident management, and force structure plans. In 2019 he was posted to London and embedded in the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters as the J5 planning lead for UK joint operations in Indo-Pacific region and Africa.

Brigadier Slaughter has been privileged to have had command appointments as the Officer Commanding Support Squadron 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the Commanding Officer 7 Combat Service Support Battalion and Commander Joint Logistic Unit (Victoria).

He has deployed as the lead for the first Maintenance Advisory Team into Iraq in 2003, the lead for the first Logistic Assurance Team into the Special Operation Task Group in 2004 and with 2nd Cavalry Regiment in 2006/07 as part of the Overwatch Battlegroup in Iraq.

He has a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Queensland, a Bachelor of Laws from the Queensland University of Technology and a Masters in Strategy and Management from the University of NSW. He is a Fellow of the Defence and Strategic Studies Course and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Brigadier Slaughter is married to Maria who is a workforce planning consultant in the Defence sector. Like many working couples they share the parenting of two active boys and when they can find time around the boy's sporting commitments, the family enjoy the outdoors and travelling.

The RAQ welcomes BRIG Slaughter's appointment as HOC and looks forward to welcoming him to our events in Queensland as he fulfills his two demanding roles. For more information on BRIG Slaughter and the Australian Army Cadet Corps, please click on this link:

<https://www.armycadets.gov.au/about/our-leaders/brigadier-ben-slaughter/>

## **MESSAGE FROM COL COMDT QLD COL STEVE EVANS**

G'day Spanners, since I last wrote, we held a Corps Conference at the end of 2022 in Brisbane, and experienced a Xmas posting cycle, which amongst many other things, resulted in a new Head of Corps (HOC), two new Deputy HOC and a new Corps RSM. We are also expecting an imminent announcement on a new Representative Colonel Commandant, but I'll elaborate on these appointments later.

Foremost I must publicly thank BRIG James Allen for his time as HOC. James was handed the job with not much notice, not long after he was promoted to BRIG and just as he was getting his feet under the desk in one of the busiest Director General (DG) jobs in Defence. He also assumed the mantle during the pandemic and had to make many personal and professional adjustments to suit. Being unable to travel meant he was reliant on technology to keep up to date on Corps matters and to enact his responsibilities as HOC. For the first time ever, in 2021, we ran a pseudo Corps Conference using Video Telephone Communications (improvise, adapt and overcome.) Not only did James do a sterling job of overseeing the Corps, but in his day job, he was also the key DG responsible for the recent announcements to procure Apache and Black Hawk helicopters, as well as sustaining the entire Army helicopter and UAS fleets. James has now been transferred to the Reserves and has retired to the Gold Coast. I'm sure we will see him at various functions for the RAEME Association Qld.

By now, most of you will be aware BRIG Ben Slaughter has been appointed as our new HOC – see his biography opposite and learn about his broad background in the Corps and beyond. I also congratulate the following new appointees: LTCOL Rick Watling as Deputy HOC(Aero), LTCOL Tim Soper Deputy HOC(Ground) and WO1 Jonathon Tynan as Corps RSM. I feel I am also safe in stating one of the worst kept secrets in the Corps in that we anticipate an imminent announcement for BRIG Ed Smeaton to take over from BRIG Dave Creagh as our Representative Colonel Commandant. I am looking forward to working with all these gentlemen as your Corps Committee representative.

I am delighted to see how busy the various sub-associations are in the first three months of 2023. May I wish everyone the best for the forthcoming year and, most importantly, I look forward to catching up with many of you at our ANZAC Day activities.

Arte et Marte

**Steve Evans**  
**COL COMDT – QLD**  
[steve.evans@defence.gov.au](mailto:steve.evans@defence.gov.au)



## AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD 2023

### Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM). Corporal Gavin Thomas WATSON.



For meritorious devotion to duty as a Technician Electrical Section Commander within Technical Support Troop, 1st Signal Regiment, during period January 2019 to September 2021. Corporal Watson's pursuit of excellence and selfless dedication to duty have directly resulted in substantial improvements in 1st Signal Regiment's field power distribution capability ensuring the preparedness of the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters and that it is Ready Now and Future Ready.

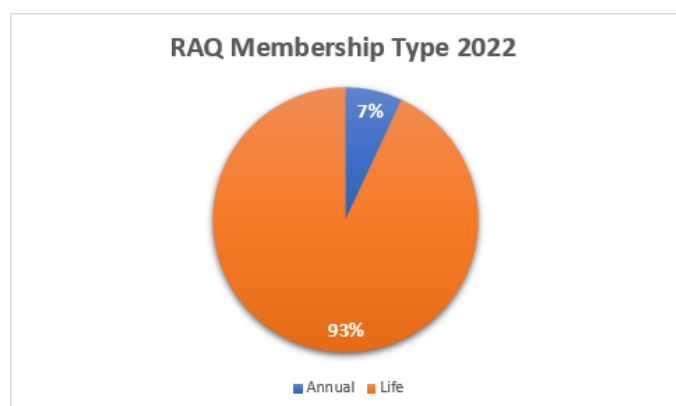
His outstanding foresight, technical acumen, drive and initiative has had a profound impact on the development and provision of deployed field power. His actions epitomise the Defence values and are in the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

On behalf of the RAQ, we congratulate CPL Watson on the awarding of his CSM.

### MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS FOR 2023

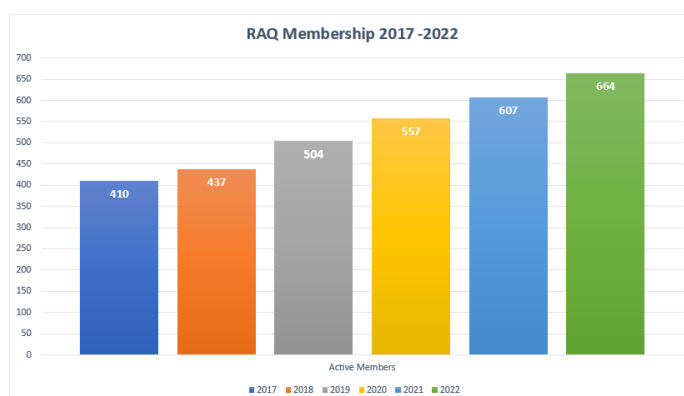
By all measures the Association did well in 2022. In regard to membership, the RAQ strategic plan sets out targets, so it is timely to look at how well the Association fared in recent years. In summary, 2022 membership results are shown below:

- Active Subscriptions at years end = 664 (2021 = 607).
- Life Subscribers = 618 (93%) – 2021 = 551 (91%)
- Annual Subscribers = 47 (7%) – 2021 = 55 (9%)
- Annual Growth of 57 members (2021 = 50)



- The annual membership growth amounts to a rate of 9.33%, which is the highest number of new members in a year since 2019. The rate sits within our medium growth projection of 5%-10% in our Strategic Plan.

- Life Subscription continues to be the preferred option for our members, with 93% of total subscriptions.
- Over the past five years our Association has grown by 254 Members (61.95%).



### MEMBERSHIP OF RAQ IS VALUABLE

In his message in this edition, the Chair mentions the survey conducted by the RAQ late last year. It has provided much useful data, but one area the Executive is now focussed on is how do we attract younger members, more members from the ARES and improve diversity. All three issues are more critical when one understands the ageing demographic of our current membership.

We are an inclusive association, so we must project our association not as an exclusive club for ex-officers and ex-SNCOs, nor simply for regular army tradesmen, but one that also exists for our Reserve colleagues, including those transitioning from the ARA to the ARES, as well as those civilian tradies who saw fit to enlist in the ARES. It also exists for the many women in our Corps' (ARA and ARES) and encourages those from diverse ethnic backgrounds to join also. So, if you serve in ARA or ARES units, please come to our gatherings and enjoy the company of the broader RAEME family in Queensland.

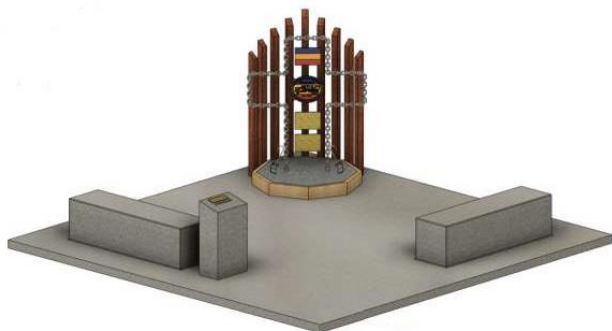
Material benefits of membership of the RAEME Association Queensland include the following:

- Discounts to functions such as ANZAC Day and RAEME Birthday celebrations
- Discounts on merchandise from our store
- Promotions that are exclusively for members
- Receipt of "Friday Files" our weekly newsletter
- Receipt of "Spanner News" three times a year
- Life membership, on application, of Mermaid Beach (AEME) Surf Life Saving Club

**Kingsley Pocock**  
**Membership RAQ**  
[membership@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:membership@qld.raeme.org.au)



## RAEME MEMORIAL - DOTSWOOD NORTH QUEENSLAND



### Proposed Design of Memorial for WO2 Ryan Leslie and Craftsman Brendon Payne

WO2 Ryan Leslie and Craftsman Brendon Payne, two superb soldiers tragically died while serving their country on a military exercise in the Townsville Field Training Area on 30 August 2021.

Commemorations held at the accident site on the first anniversary of their passing have shown us just how important it is that we have a place to remember them: to reflect on their lives, and who they were.

The plan is to build a permanent memorial rest-stop at the accident site, set off to the side of the Dotswood / Mingela Road in a safe location to allow people to stop and reflect. The memorial will consist of a bespoke designed wooden memorial facade, designed and built by RAEME personnel, carrying plaques for Ryan and Brendon. This will be placed into a concrete foundation. A hard-wearing, concrete seat will then be provided for people to sit on when they visit, and a weather-proof box will be included for people to leave notes and messages for the soldiers and their families.

The designs have been developed in very close conjunction with Ryan and Brendon's wives, and with their close family. Both the concept and the design come with their strong support.

In terms of cost, we are seeking quotes from Townsville-based construction companies for the work. We estimate the construction will cost in the region of \$40,000, given the remote location of the site. In terms of time, we are hoping to have the work done in the dry season of 2023, to have the memorial constructed and opened by the second anniversary of Ryan and Brendon's passing on 30 August 2023.

The next step now is fundraising. I am therefore reaching out far and wide to both serving military, veteran and Veteran Associations to seek support and contributions to raise the funds of \$40,000 for the memorial construction to take place. We are looking for individuals and units to organise fundraising events in the next four months (January to April 2023), or to provide donations from standing, or Association funds. In conjunction with the RAEME Associations, we are also seeking donations

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from major veterans' organisations like the DVA and Legacy.

So, if you would like to help, please contact me, Tom McDermott, former CO 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (QMI), 2020 – 2021

via email: [thomas.mcdermott@defence.gov.au](mailto:thomas.mcdermott@defence.gov.au)

**EDITOR'S NOTES:** The above text is an edited version of a letter sent out on a broad distribution and fundraising progress will be [reported regularly in Friday Files](#).

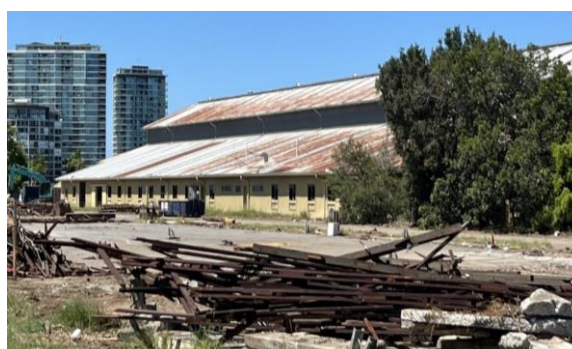
## UPDATE ON BULIMBA BARRACKS REDEVELOPMENT

Twenty hectares of riverfront land in Brisbane's east (formerly the site of Bulimba Barracks) will soon be transformed into a suburban precinct of more than 850 new homes. Key points include:

- Plans for development on the Bulimba Barracks site is the latest to be approved on flood-prone land.
- A motion by Jonathan Sriranganathan to stop building on flood plains was defeated in Brisbane City Council.
- The proposed development will include private dwellings, parks, and sports fields.



**Former SGT Mess and Tree of Knowledge Jan 2022 - Photos courtesy of Facebook**



### Newly cleared site with the main workshop shed looking towards the Brisbane River

Sold off by the Department of Defence in 2020 to private developers, Shayher Group, for \$63 million, plans for Bulimba Barracks include new riverfront parks, sports fields and the remediation of Tugulawa Park.

It will also offer two to three-storey townhouses, five-storey apartment buildings and detached homes.



**Concept image lodged with Brisbane City Council by Shayher Group for the riverside Bulimba Barracks development. (Supplied: Shayher Group)**

Last year, [developers requested an amendment to the existing planning regulations](#) to fill in the entire site with earth to raise it above flood levels. Brisbane City Council approved the plans.

Morningside Ward's, Kara Cook, said the only work residents could expect to see immediately would be the removal of the former military buildings on the site.

**Article courtesy of ABC News**

### **FEATURING 5 AVN REGT LSS/TSS AND THEIR SUB-UNITS**

The 5th Aviation Regiment is Army's Combat Air Assault Regiment. With 440 personnel in the Regiment, it is one of Army's biggest Units, and 155 of those proud men and women are RAEME. The majority of our RAEME team are aircraft and avionics technicians working in either the Technical Support Troops within the flying squadrons, or in Technical Support Squadron. There is also a small but dedicated team of vehicle mechanics, recovery mechanics and fitter armourers within Logistic Support Squadron (LSS).

2023 is a year of significant change for the Regiment following the announcement by Government that the MRH90 will be retired from service and replaced by UH60M. The MRH90 will cease Townsville operations in the second half of this year but continue to operate at the Army Aviation Training Centre in Oakey and at 6th Aviation Regiment in Holsworthy for a short time further until the UH60M is established in those locations. This change will see the current MRH90 technicians at the Regiment transitioned over to support the recently expanded fleet of CH-47Fs, or, where willing, posted to support the Aviation capability elsewhere.

The MRH90 has been in service since 2008, been deployed on numerous domestic and international Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations, and throughout its service life has been a large part of the lives and careers of many our RAEME brethren. Despite the aircraft's well-documented trials and tribulations, it will remain an important part of the story and fabric of the Regiment. The labour and toil of all current and past RAEME technicians is gratefully recognised.

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The last twelve months has also brought many changes for the CH-47F capability with the rapid expansion of the fleet from 10 to 14 aircraft, the introduction of new maintenance policy and the continued increase in the capability's flying hours. This has meant a shift in the Regiment's focus and a major shift in the focus of Technical Support Squadron (TSS). Previously centering its support on MRH90, 2023 saw the first ever CH-47F Aircraft Repair Troop (ART) being established within TSS. This allows TSS to provide deeper maintenance support to the flying capability and allows the Technical Support Troop (TST) within C SQN to focus solely on maintenance and operations.

Despite being a period of change, the Regiment continues to remain busy, supporting two HADR tasks already this year, on the back of a long deployment on Indo Pacific Explorer in the last half of 2022. Some of these experiences are expanded on in the articles below. We are also preparing for 16th Aviation Brigade's annual war fighter activity, Exercise Vigilant Scimitar, as well as getting ready to host a large contingent of international rotary wing assets on Exercise Talisman Sabre in the middle of the year. Throughout all this activity and change, the RAEME personnel at the Regiment continue to provide exemplary service, working hard at the job at hand, adapting to change, and as always, doing their Corps proud.

**Feature article, including sub-unit articles provided by OC LSS, MAJ Harry More and OC TSS, MAJ Amy Power.**



**A SQN Technical Support Troop (TST) – Experiences on OP Flood Assist 23-I.** In January 2023, the 5th Aviation Regiment recalled and deployed Task Unit (TU) Destrier to Broome, Western Australia, in under 48 hours in response to the devastating floods following Tropical Cyclone Ellie. Three MRH90 and two CH-47F air self-deployed to Broome over three days, stopping overnight in Mt Isa and Tindal before arriving and establishing an operating base from Broome International Airport.

Over the course of the operation, TU Destrier facilitated critical transportation for authorities and emergency services to access the flood-affected areas to assess the damage and subsequently coordinate recovery efforts. TU Destrier played a critical role in delivering essential resupplies including food, fuel, medical supplies and fodder to cut-off towns and remote communities within the Kimberley region. Upon the receding of floodwaters, the TU provided repatriation flights to over 200 evacuated and displaced locals back to the homes. These repatriation flights were critical in enabling the local

communities to resume normalcy of daily life even though the Fitzroy Crossing bridge damage was still prevented vehicle movement.

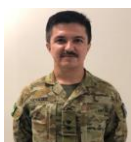
The success of the operation was due in large part to the unwavering dedication and hard work of the deployed Technical Support Troops (TSTs), providing integral maintenance support around the clock to ensure maximum aircraft availability, thereby enabling safe and efficient execution of missions. The TSTs demonstrated perseverance amidst challenging conditions, which included overcoming logistical hurdles for delivery of aircraft parts and supplies due to the remoteness of the operating base, the release of unexpected maintenance instructions as well as the day-to-day maintenance burden of the five helicopters.



#### **TU Destrier personnel loading supplies onto an MRH90 during OP FLOOD ASSIST 23-1**

Being peak-wet season in northern Australia, and not having access to hangar facilities to conduct maintenance, meant the troops were exposed daily to harsh weather conditions. As true RAEME soldiers, these challenges did not deter the troops who worked tirelessly throughout the five weeks and never wavered in their technical and professional standards.

**Mehdi Reyazee**  
LT  
A SQN TST



**C SQN Technical Support Troop (TST).** As discussed above, the C SQN TST started 2023 by deploying at short notice to support Operation Flood Assist 23-1 (OP FA 23-1) in Broome, Western Australia.



#### **TU Destrier personnel conducting evacuations on OP FLOOD ASSIST 23-1**

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A mix of members from C Sqn TST and Aircraft Repair Troop (ART) air-self deployed in CH-47F Chinook helicopters, followed closely by the remainder of personnel and stores transported in a combination of civilian and RAAF aircraft. CH-47F deployed under the command of Task Unit (TU) Destrier with three MRH90s in support of the Department of Fire and Emergency led operation. The operation lasted one month and included tasks such as movement of displaced personnel, critical personnel and VIPs, air reconnaissance and vital cargo delivery via both internal and external loading.

On return from OP FA 23-1, C Sqn TST deployed two aircraft from RAAF Townsville to RAAF Amberley in support of Deck Landing Qualifications and Proficiencies in the vicinity of Brisbane with HMAS Canberra. The next activity on the cards was two aircraft to support the CH-47F static display at the Avalon International Air Show in Victoria.



#### **CH-47F display during Avalon Air show 2023**

During the Avalon Air Show, C SQN was enacted in support of the High-Risk Weather Season for the second time in 2023. This operationally important task meant a majority of the RAEME members supporting the activities in Victoria needed to switch focus and join the embarkation efforts. Concurrently, the remainder of the personnel prepared a significant amount of stores to support a long embarked operation in an impressively short time frame. This was followed by significant work required to move people, stores and aircraft from Townsville and Victoria to Sydney to embark three aircraft on HMAS Canberra in the Sydney Harbour to begin the support to Operation Vanuatu Assist 23 (OP VA 23).



#### **CH-47F deployed on Operation Vanuatu Assist**

RAEME Association Queensland Inc

To date OP VA 23 (which is ongoing) has assisted with air reconnaissance, cargo delivery and personnel transport in the littoral environment that is Vanuatu. The sustained high tempo operations supported by the maintainers and supporting elements of the CH-47F capability comes at a complex time for the platform as the capability grows and really solidifies the Squadron's Motto, 'Proven'.

Looking forward to the remainder of 2023, CH-47F will form the foundation of Army Aviation and will remain running for the duration of the exercise season as the Regiment's counterpart aircraft, the MRH90, begins its transition out of service. As the support to MRH90 begins to scale down across the 2023 calendar year, the amount of rotary wing support previously provided by this capability is anticipated to respectively increase the support requirements of the CH-47F capability.

**Jonathon Mackenzie**  
CAPT  
C SQN TST



**TSS Aircraft Repair Troop (ART).** Aircraft Repair Troop (ART) has a long history at 5 Aviation Regiment, supporting aircraft operation through the conduct of deeper level maintenance (DM). ART has supported the Regiment's operation of the S-70A-9 Blackhawk between 1987 and 2014 and the MRH90 Taipan from 2008 until the troop was disbanded in 2020. This year, ART was re-raised and tasked to support CH-47F Chinook to enable the continued high tempo of Chinook support to ADF exercises and operations.

ART is comprised of approximately 65 people, a combination of military and contracted maintenance personnel from Boeing Defence Australia. Most of these personnel have moved across from C Squadron Technical Support Troop (C Sqn TST) and brought with them broad CH-47F system knowledge and experience which has been indispensable to the troop's foundation. Several others have moved across from MRH90 Taipan, following the withdrawal from service announcement earlier this year, and bringing with them valued lessons learnt whilst maintaining MRH90 over the past decade. These highly skilled maintenance personnel have come together to carry out Chinook DM so that aircraft are available to respond.

Using some of the lessons learnt from MRH90, and looking across to the ways the RAAF do business, ART is implementing improved maintenance planning strategies on Chinook DM. The intent being to improve efficiency so that aircraft spend less time in maintenance and more time conducting mission essential tasks. Efficiencies gained will also enable military personnel to dedicate more time to military training to improve individual and team all corps soldier skills.

Whilst other airframes have operated very similarly in the past, the divide between base and line maintenance responsibilities is a new concept for the Chinook maintenance capability. Historically C SQN TST has been responsible for all levels of Chinook maintenance support and whilst this is a step forward for the Chinook maintenance capability, the restructure is not without its challenges. Challenges that the RAEME members of ART are looking forward to tackling as we progress through 2023.

**James Beer**  
CAPT  
TSS ART



**Ground Equipment Repair (GER) Troop.** With the support requirements that come from a unit the size of 5 AVN Regt, there is a need for a large fleet of robust ground equipment. As part of the Logistic Support Squadron (LSS), the Ground Equipment Repair (GER) Troop maintains all Land 121 and Legacy fleet ground vehicles. GER consists of 15 RAEME personnel including Vehicle Mechanics, Fitter Armourers, Electrical Technicians, and Recovery Mechanics.

One of the unique tasks that GER undergoes in support to Aviation specific capabilities is the maintenance of the M134D Miniguns, which are window mounted to the CH-47F. New personnel into the unit, as well as the growth of the CH-47F fleet, has necessitated extra training on this key capability. Exercise Pegasus Strafer, which encompasses multiple gunnery shoots, is largely made possible due to the direct support provided by a qualified armourer on site at Townsville Field Training Area.

The Regiment has currently implemented "no flying, no maintenance" Fridays to allow time and focus for Professional Military Education and Troop level training. LSS has used this opportunity to explore the lessons learnt from the war in Ukraine and improve how GER use Field Repair Teams (FRT) in support of an aviation battle group. These improved concepts will be practised and tested on the upcoming Exercise Vigilant Scimitar.

This year the Regiment has also been running a fortnightly sporting and skills competition with points going towards the Pegasus Cup. These activities have encouraged teamwork, squadron pride and enabled engagement across trades and positions, contributing to increased moral in the Regiment. GER prides itself on our sporting excellence and we have taken on the challenge of dominating the volleyball and giving LSS the best chance possible to bring home the Cup.

**Jeffrey Sios**  
LT  
GSE LSS



Images used in this story came from the [Defence Image Gallery](#):



## NEWS FROM UNITS IN QUEENSLAND AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

**North Queensland News – 102 Fd Wksp Coy, 3 CSSB.** In 2022, a small RAEME-led element was deployed to Lae, Papua New Guinea as part of the Mobile Training Team -Charlie (MTT-C). The 3 Bde contingent deployed to Lae to maintain a habitual relationship with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) by supporting the Defence Cooperation Program – Papua New Guinea (DCP-PNG). The 2022 focus of the PNGDF and DCP-PNG was to re-establish courses with the PNGDF, some of which have not been run for many years. Ex OLGETA WARRIOR (OW) is an example of the Australian Army's commitment to achieving positive and enduring change in the PNGDF.



**PNGDF Students of Merit receiving their awards from SGT Mick Beattie**

The 3 Bde contingent originally conducted a Small Engines Maintainer Course with the PNGDF Engineer Battalion at Igam Barracks, as part of MTT-C. This later developed into two Small Engines courses as well as two additional Outboard Motors Maintenance Courses. As a result, the 3 Bde team successfully trained 40 PNGDF Engineers in these skill sets. The initiative was spearheaded by RAEME GSO Lieutenant Brett Pulsford, Vehicle Mechanic Sergeant Mick Beattie, and Fitter Armourer Corporal Mitch Gossow.



**PTE Kimberly Howe Christiansen, LT Brett Pulsford and 2LT Jake Bobone (PNGDF) delivering training to the Igam Barracks Elementary School**

These results were achieved through the adaptation of traditional training methods and the utilisation of practical training aides to adopt a hands-on approach. Additionally, the 3 Bde contingent took the time to learn phrases in Tok Pisin and shared a beer with them at the end of

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course function which enabled a better connection with the PNGDF trainees.



**PNGDF Course graduates in Lae. Aus Pers left to right: CPL Mitch Gossow, LT Brett Pulsford, SGT Mick Beattie, PTE Howe Christiansen**

For this the PNGDF were incredibly grateful, remaining engaged and enthusiastic throughout the courses. During their spare time, the team also delivered lessons on basic hygiene and healthy eating habits to the local schools. Time was also spent working with the Joint Forces Academy to develop their doctrine and TTP's.

**Arte et Marte**

**MAJ Wil Woods**  
**NQ Regional RAEME Rep**  
**OC 102 Fd Wksp Coy - 3 CSSB**

**Northern Territory News – 101 Fd Wksp Coy, 1 CSSB.** Here is a new segment to give our friends and colleagues in the NT some coverage as they develop their local association. From the ASM 101 Fd Wksp Coy, WO1 Marcellin Chee, is a short article for your enjoyment.

Greetings from the 101st Field Workshop Company (101 FD WKSP), 1st Combat Service Support Battalion (1 CSSB). It has been a while hearing from us so we'd just like to remind everyone that the Army's premier workshop is still here with 2023 seeing us, continue to evolve along with the 1st Brigade into the adventure that will be 'littoral' focussed (relating to or situated on the shore of the sea or a lake).



**The "Head Shed" in front of the WKSP after PT Left to Right CAPT Higgins (ADJT-RAEME), WO1 Edwards (RSM-RACT), LTCOL Huggins (CO-RAEME), MAJ Court (OPSO-RAEME), WO2 Reid (CSM-RAEME), WO1 Chee (ASM-RAEME) – bit overpoweringly RAEME!**

Starting the year, all members old and new must go through the acclimatisation training program. When it's not raining, the average temp for Jan and Feb so far is 28 degrees with night-time lows of 24 and day-time highs of 33. This coupled with an average humidity of 72% sees every PT session as a sweat session. CO I CSSB and her command team joined the workshop multiple times to 'acclimatise'.

The workshop is cracking into production and directed tasking which includes support to the community. In Feb 101 Fd Wksp had the opportunity to represent RAEME at the Top End Expo hosted by Defence Member and Family Services (DMFS) (formerly DCO) at the Darwin Convention Centre. DMFS organised a range of community groups and organisations to provide information about a variety of local community and government services. Three CFN from the Company spent the morning showing kids and interested parents alike through the GM-PMV set as a part of the Defence stands at the event. They answered questions from young children through to the Commander of the 1st Brigade, about all aspects of their trades and Defence life. In a very professional way, they represented the unit and hopefully influenced the young and upcoming generation to join the greatest Corps of all. Following that, other workshop members provided a well appreciated display with an additive manufacturing flavour during a visit from COMD FORCOMD.

Stay tuned as we share more information about the famous 101<sup>st</sup> Fd Wksp Coy as the year progresses.

Arte et Marte

**WOI Marcellin 'Cheetah' Chee**  
**ASM 101 Fd Wksp Coy**  
**ICSSB Darwin**



## RAQ REGIONAL EVENT REPORTS

**Report on RAQ-DD Lunch.** RAQ-DD held its 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday event at Club Toowoomba (Bowls) on Sunday 27 Nov 22. It was great day, and the highlights are outlined below.



38 RAQ members and their guests attended the function. The guest speaker was BRIG Ed Smeaton, who reflected on the birth of AEME/RAEME, and notable achievements

Spanner News

since. He also spoke about the significant changes underway in Army and the ADF, and the exciting opportunities that they represent to RAEME.



### BRIG (Rtd) Smeaton and BRIG Barker (Rtd) cutting the Birthday Cake

BRIG (Retd) Bert Barker (one of the Corps' founding members and now 101 years old) was the Special Guest. Bert cut the birthday cake with BRIG Smeaton, then gave a short speech, in which he commented how much he enjoyed attending these functions. Many of the attendees took the opportunity to sit and chat with Bert afterwards. Big shout out to first time attendees Des and Linda Hussey, and Ken and Vikki Smith.

RAQ-DD would like to acknowledge the support given by the RAQ Executive and Committee, without which the function would not have been such a success. Once again, thank you for your attendance, and I look to catching up again in the next few months.

**Pete Pile**  
**RAQ-DD Representative**  
[southwest@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:southwest@qld.raeme.org.au)



**RAEME Get Together Bjelke-Petersen Dam.** The 2023 Annual RAEME Get Together was held at the Bjelke-Petersen Dam Caravan Park last weekend. What a fantastic event catching up with mates from over 30 years ago and meeting new friends. It has grown from 20 people 6 years ago to 170 people (including partners) this year.



To all the RAEME contacts, please put in your calendar for 2024. Just search for RAEME Annual Get Together.

**Article courtesy of Facebook**

**NQ Gathering.** RAQ-NQ had their first gathering for 2023 on Sat 25 Feb at the Bellevue Hotel in South Townsville. Apparently, Santa was very generous over the Xmas break giving out tall stories and good deeds to all members as presents from the amount of banter and gentle ribbing that people were reminiscing about over a few quiet refreshments and the odd bar snack. Around 60 members attended the event with the 3 CER Workshop Head Shed winning the ARA contingent attendance with a MAJ, LT, WO1, WO2 and CPL representing, well done gents.



**3 CER Wksp Headshed - CPL Thomas Couper, MAJ Kev Moran, WO2 Jason Ballard, LT Rory Whitton, WO1 Paul Vonow**



**Tank Pontifex**

**RAQ NQ - [north@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:north@qld.raeme.org.au)**

### RAQ EVENTS AND SOCIAL CALENDAR – 2023

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

The following are the key social events happening in and around Queensland in 2023:

Event	Date
<b>ANZAC Day March &amp; Function - Brisbane</b>	<b>Tue 25 Apr 23</b>
<b>ANZAC Day March &amp; Function - Townsville</b>	<b>Tue 25 Apr 23</b>
<b>SE QLD Apprentice Reunion - Bulimba</b>	<b>Sat 10 Jun 23</b>
<b>RAEME Reserve/CMF Reunion - Brisbane</b>	<b>Sun 20 Aug 23</b>
<b>RAQ Gold Coast Function - AEME SLSC Mermaid Beach</b>	<b>Sat 26 Aug 23</b>
<b>RAQ Sunshine Coast Lunch - Maroochydore RSL</b>	<b>Sat 30 Sep 23</b>
<b>RAEME 81st Birthday</b>	<b>Fri 1 Dec 23</b>

<b>RAEME Birthday - Brisbane</b>	<b>Fri 1 Dec 23</b>
<b>RAEME Birthday - Townsville</b>	<b>Fri 1 Dec 23</b>
<b>RAQ All Ranks Luncheon - Port Office Hotel</b>	<b>TBA Dec 23</b>

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

### DETAIL FOR BRISBANE ANZAC DAY MARCH AND POST MARCH LUNCH - 2023

ANZAC Day is now only just over four weeks away. Our COL COMD QLD - COL STEVE EVANS will be leading the parade and we have RAQ TREASURER, MICK PATMAN, calling the march on ABC TV. Important details are as follows:

- Order of March: RAQ is Group 4 (Section F).
- Time: RAQ Members are asked to be in location at the Form Up Point at 1000 hrs
- Step Off: 1015 hrs
- FUP: The Form Up Point is EXACTLY the same spot as last year (Corner Mary and George Streets). The map below details the Form Up Point
- Buggies: Buggies are available for those who require assistance. The meeting point for the buggies is vicinity Edward and Queen Streets (At Post Office Square). The map below details the meeting location. The buggies need to be pre-booked and will join the RAQ and follow the marching body. To book a buggy please contact Max Walker by any of the following means by 1 April:
  - Email: [anzac@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:anzac@qld.raeme.org.au)



**Max Walker**  
**M 0411 102 242**

**Post March Function.** The good news is we have confirmed the post March Brisbane function will be held at the Port Office Hotel. The private RAEME function at the Port Office will commence at 1100 hrs and the Buffet Meal will be served at approximately 1200-1400 hrs.

This is our most popular event of the year, and we encourage you to pre-purchase a ticket as the simplest

and cheapest way to attend. Pre-purchasing gets you into the event. Ticket sales on the day will be full price.

Ticket Type (Per Person)	Discount Tickets COB 18 April 2023	From 19 April & @ the Door on ANZAC Day
- Financial RAQ Member, or - Serving Soldier, or - One guest of a member or Soldier	\$35.00	\$50.00
Non-Members, Email Affiliates & extra guests	\$45.00	

**Exchanging tickets for Entry/Drink/Meal Vouchers.** If you have pre-purchased tickets, the best option is to print out your E-ticket and bring it along on the day. It will be exchanged for:

- 1 x Priority Entry
- 1 x Meal voucher for a hot Meal
- 2 x Drink vouchers.

If you cannot print your ticket or forget to bring it, we will have attendee lists available to check, however this may delay entry to the venue.

**Timings – Entry – Drinks – Meal.** The Port Office Hotel will be open from around 1100 hrs. Drinks will be available for purchase using either a drink voucher, or by purchasing them across the bar.

**Important note:** This is a private event. Entry is restricted to ticket holders only until 1400hrs.

**BOOK NOW**

When purchasing tickets or before the day, please let us know if you have specific dietary requirements.

**Paul Gibbs**

**Deputy Chairman**

[Deputychairman@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:Deputychairman@qld.raeme.org.au)

### DETAIL FOR TOWNSVILLE ANZAC DAY MARCH AND POST MARCH LUNCH - 2023

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.

Parade behind our RAQ Tri-Colour Banner and see it flying proudly!

Spanner News

- Where - Flynn's Hotel
- What - from 0600-0830h & after the March 0930-1330h
- Townsville City March - RAEME FUP for ANZAC DAY North Ward, Strand Park, approx 0900h step off

We're looking forward to seeing you there.



**Tank Pontifex**

**RAQ NQ** - [north@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:north@qld.raeme.org.au)

### Toowoomba March - Army Apprentices.

This year is the 75th Anniversary of the Army Apprentice's Scheme. Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th ET, invites all Army Apprentices to March in Toowoomba on ANZAC Day and to continue at The Goods Shed afterwards. Information can be found in the events section on the following Apprentice Facebook pages:

- Australian Army Apprentices Association (Official)
- Army Apprentices are the cream of Australian youth.

Form up points and other detail will be posted on these pages in due course. It is not an official function but a chance to get together and enjoy a catch up.

Quick reminder that the Official AAAA celebrations are in late October in Albury/Wodonga.



**Liz Fitzgibbon**

**M: 0481 188 003**

[lizfitzgibbon@hotmail.com](mailto:lizfitzgibbon@hotmail.com)

### MERMAID BEACH (AEME) SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB ANNUAL LUNCH

Just a short note to advise that the RAQ Gold Coast lunch is scheduled for Saturday 26th August 2023, to be held at the Mermaid Beach (AEME) Surf Life Saving Club (MBSLSC) commencing at 1200 hrs.

The format will be as per previous years with an informal get together with wives /girlfriends (probably wise not to have both at the same time at the lunch) / boyfriends / family members all welcome. For those attending, we purchase our meals off the club menu and our drinks over the bar. It has always been a very pleasant afternoon, and Surf Club management has always been accommodating, dedicating an area on the veranda overlooking the ocean, for our group. This is our 7th or 8th year for the lunch, and we have cracked it every year with a great sunny winters' day, and touch wood, the same will happen this year.

It is also worthwhile just reminding people that the MBSLSC offers free Life Membership to financial members of the RAQ. It is a very easy process to take advantage of this program and all the application process is detailed in the RAQ webpage. **If you are thinking of taking up this offer you could make application for the Life**

**Membership in advance of the lunch date, come down to the lunch and pick up your card on the day.** The Club does not post the cards out, they must be collected in person.

You will start to receive emails from me requesting names/numbers from those who will be attending about mid-June 2023.

**Eddie “Beans” Bevans**  
**Lunch Convenor**  
[beans55289@iprimus.com.au](mailto:beans55289@iprimus.com.au)



## ARMY APPRENTICES NOTICES

**2023 Army Apprentice Annual Reunion, Southeast QLD**, will be held on Saturday 10th June (which is the second Saturday in June) at the Bulimba Bowls Club, Quinn St Balmoral, (not as in the past on the 1st Saturday in June). This will be the 24th Reunion.

The reason for this change is that I will be turning 80 on the 4th of June. I have organised this Reunion since 1999 with the support of my wife Barbara, and as I announced at last year’s reunion, the time has come for me to retire, and hand over the conducting of the Reunion to other strong hands. Over the years, I have enjoyed every one of these reunions, and met many Apprentices I would otherwise never have had the opportunity to meet, but I have found age does weary you. Therefore, I am calling for members to rally and take over the running of the event please, otherwise these reunions will cease after this reunion.

Perhaps some of the strong support groups such as the 30th or 40th could get together and take over the reins, or any other interested Apprentices would be more than welcome. I am more than happy to assist and be involved in a minor way, if requested by those who might take on the role after this year.

I have proposed an informal gathering for Saturday 15th April at Bulimba Bowls Club at 10am and I invite interested parties to contact me on mobile or via email prior to this gathering, then meet and discuss “where to from her”. It would be such a shame to see the annual reunion cease!

Please note the following detail on the AAAA national reunion in Albury in Oct 2023. It will celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the commencement of Army Apprenticeships, in 1948. To be held in the Albury Wodonga Area 20-23 Oct 2023. Go to: [events@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:events@austarmyapprentice.org) for all details and registration forms.

**Brian Daley OAM**  
**Reunion Convenor**  
**M 0412 721 761**  
[bjdaley14@gmail.com](mailto:bjdaley14@gmail.com)



## SUNSHINE COAST ANNUAL LUNCH – 30 SEP 23.

Members are advised that this year's RAQ Sunshine Coast Chapter Annual Luncheon will be held at the Maroochy RSL on Saturday 30 September 2023. It is early days of planning; however, we have already secured Brigadier Gabriel Follett AM, Director General Fuel Services | Joint Logistics Command as our guest speaker.



BRIG Follett has an impeccable background as a RAEME officer and a senior logistician, having in recent years commanded a CSSB, and most recently completed the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Australian War College.

The RSL will waive the cost of room and projector/screen hire and again will offset the cost of the lunch to the sum of \$10.00 per head for the first 100 attendees. It is anticipated that the RAQ will match the RSL and will subsidize the lunch a further \$10.00 per member and one guest, again for the first 100 attendees. This will reduce the cost per head for members and that one guest to \$38.00.

Details confirming the menu, format and timings will be promulgated later in the year.

Note the date, **Saturday 30 September 2023**, in your diary and we look forward to seeing you once again on the Sunny Coast.

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



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

In the last few months several folks have stood up and taken on the job of running two of our associations as long-serving members step down or move on – the RA ACT and RANT. In the case of RA ACT, Andy Adams has taken over the Chairmanship and Ian Cook has become the secretary. At this time, the RA ACT has published three newsletters and reported on its last event for 2022 and advised detail of upcoming events for their 2023 program. More can be found online at: <https://act.raeme.org.au/index.php/notices/events>

Ian also advises of the compilation of Edition 2 of the RAEME Humour Book, “**Straight from the Horse’s Mouth**”, and that it is well underway, but more stories are needed. If you have any funny stories or pictures from your time in the Corps, please send them to the editorial team at [FunnyStories@raeme.com](mailto:FunnyStories@raeme.com). Remember, your stories don't have to be true, just believable.

The RANT Chair, Alan Dorahy, advises he will be organising some events probably starting with ANZAC Day in April. To assist the RANT, the RAQ has offered to publish important information until they have their own newsletter, and I have already contacted the CO 1 CSSB and OC 101 Fd Wksp Coy, to elicit their support and for any NT stories for this edition of Spanner News – see page 10. By their actions, both associations have made my life easy reducing my burden as COORD RNN to communicate to and connect with all associations in various localities – thank you very much guys, and well done.

On the wider RNN activities, I look forward to hearing your reports on ANZAC Day activities across Australia now we are well and truly post-Covid.

Most pleasing of all, is the significant work undertaken by the RNN IT Support Team in recent months which is now nearing completion. The National Webmaster, Alex Smithers, based in WA, advises that the “latest rounds of updates have progressed well with some initial teething problems. Any niggly problems found by RAQ (and others) have been sorted.” To date he hasn’t had any contact with RANT or RA ACT but is working with RANSW to progress a “Membership module”. Alex has also done some work for HOC Cell on the Corps Shop which is slated to be turned on shortly on the National Website.

On your behalf, may I congratulate the incoming Head of Corps, BRIG Ben Slaughter, on assuming his appointment. BRIG Slaughter’s day job as COMD Australian Army Cadets keeps him very busy, but I encourage you to invite him to your functions, so he can get to know what a wonderful association backs up the work of the many service men and women in the Corps.

I trust all your plans for 2023 come to fruition progressively throughout the year.

**Ross L G Grant AM**  
**BRIG (RTD)**  
**CHAIR RNN**  
[rnn.chair@raeme.org.au](mailto:rnn.chair@raeme.org.au)



## VALE

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

- **Ford, Peter “FJ”** (35th VM) late of Tolga, passed away unexpectedly on 18 Oct 22, aged 59 years. Peter’s funeral was held at the Mountain View Chapel, Guilfoyle’s Tablelands Crematorium, NQ.

- **Soden, Roy Claude “Raymond”** (10th VM) passed away on 21 Oct 22 aged 83 years. Ray was laid to rest on 3 Nov 22 at John Hossack Funeral Services, The Hume Chapel Albury, NSW.
- **Garrett, Ivan**, late of Yamba NSW passed away at age 101. Ivan joined the army during WWII serving in the Australian Armoured Division (3 Tank Wksp (AEME) for three years, including 10 months spent in Borneo. A funeral service was held at the Riverview Chapel, Yamba, NSW.
- **Tucker, WO1 (Rtd) Dennis “Danny”** (13th VM) passed away 26 Nov 22 at St Helens Hospital Tasmania, aged 82. Dennis served SVN with 102 Fd Wksp from 2 Jun 67 to 23 Apr 68.
- **Court, Robert “Bob” Wesley** passed away on 28 Nov 22 aged 79. Bob was a Recovery Mechanic and served in SVN with 1Fd Regt LAD 24 May 66 to 6 May 67.
- **Weaver, Paul** (21st VM) passed away at Caboolture on the 28 Nov 22. He served in 102 Fd Wksp in SVN from 26 May 71 to 22 Jan 72.
- **McPherson, WO1 (Ret) (21<sup>st</sup> F&T) Geoffrey Neville** passed away 16 Dec 22. Our sympathy's go to Jo, his wife of 51 years, children and respective families.
- **Tubbs, WO1 (Rtd) Thomas William Tubbs** passed away on 16 Dec 22 aged 76. Tom served for 37 years in a variety of postings in Australia, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea. He served with 17 Const Sqn Wksp in SVN from 29 Mar 69 to 25 Mar 70.
- **Engleby, SGT (Rtd) Geoffrey John**, passed away 1 Jan 23, aged 80. Geoff served with 161 (Indep) Recce Flt from 17 Apr 67 to 2 Apr 68 as the Electrical Section Sergeant. He had recently been in palliative care at St Vincent’s Hospital, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, suffering from liver cancer.
- **Potter, Merv**, passed away on 2 Jan 23. He served at NQ Wksp Coy and 3 EME Services Unit, amongst many other postings. Merv was an active member of the RAQ NQ and lived near Ingham North Queensland. He was a board member of Herbert River RSL Sub Branch.
- **Powell, WO1 (Rtd) John Powell Art Tels**, passed away on 3 Jan 23 while visiting his daughter in Melbourne. John served in the 70's and 80's predominantly at Puckapunyal and RTC Bandiana, and more recently, lived in Cobram, Victoria.
- **Hall, Michael John LTCOL (Rtd) (OCS Dec 84)**, passed away 20 Jan 23 at Sunshine Hospital Melbourne. Michael was diagnosed with early onset dementia in 2021 and recently went into rapid decline.
- **Hawker, Geoffrey John, MAJ (Rtd) (1<sup>st</sup> F&T)** passed away on 24 Jan 23 aged 91. Geoff had numerous postings during his long career, including ASM of Metal

Trades Wing at AAS, and later 17<sup>th</sup> Const Sqn Wksp in SVN between 19 May 67 to 09 Apr 68. Geoff's wife, Margaret, advises he passed away at Epworth Eastern Hospital, Melbourne, where he had been fighting a combination of leukaemia, pneumonia and Covid.

- **Meacle**, Laurence Paul aged 30 passed away on 12 Feb 23. Laurence served in RAInf (2RAR) and RAEME. Late of Alligator Creek and formerly of Meandarra. Laurence passed away surrounded by his loving Family. Good mate to many others.
- **Pilling**, WO2 (Rtd) Alan Bennett (9th F&T) passed away on 20 Feb 23 aged 85 in the palliative care ward Logan Hospital. Alan served in SVN with 102 Field Workshop from 6 Jun 67 to 20 Feb 68.
- **Menzies** (WO2 Rtd) Max, passed away on 21 Feb 23 in Ulverstone Tasmania. Max died from complications due to a stroke. He served as a Fitter SGT at 3 Base in 77, and 106 Fd Wksp Coopers Plains early 80's and SVN with 7 RAR from 8 Apr 1967 to 26 Apr 1968.
- **Wolters**, MAJ (Rtd) Laurie Walters passed away on 6 Mar 23 age 90 at St Vincents Hospital Brisbane. Laurie served in SVN with 101 Fd Wksp from 28 May 1966 to 7 May 1967.
- **Wilkinson**, Laurance "Rusty" passed peacefully 15 Mar 23 after a long fight with cancer. A Celebration of Life Service was held on 25 Mar 23 at Riverlife Baptist Church, Brisbane.

### Rest in Peace

### WELFARE

- **Grant**, 18721 MAJ (Rtd) Ross Leonard, 16<sup>th</sup> VM, Manoora, NQ, has notified the RAQ of his declining health. He advises he has been diagnosed with Metastatic Prostate Cancer and cancer of the liver with multiple lesions. The prognosis is that he has six months to live, with palliative treatment, as the condition is inoperable. Ross would be pleased to hear from friends and can be contacted on Ph: 07 4053 6775, or email: [rossross@westnet.com.au](mailto:rossross@westnet.com.au)
- **Powell**, Arthur Douglas MAJGEN (Rtd) suffered two strokes in December 2022 and is now a resident of Conder House, Uniting Age Well facility, Box Hill Vic. He has lost mobility, but he is taking phone calls from friends and converses comfortably.

**As a reminder**, please advise me of brethren and sisters in distress, or who have passed, with **pertinent and accurate detail of their situation**. Email details to the address below of welfare matters in Queensland.

**Barry Shipway**  
Welfare Officer  
[welfare@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:welfare@qld.raeme.org.au)

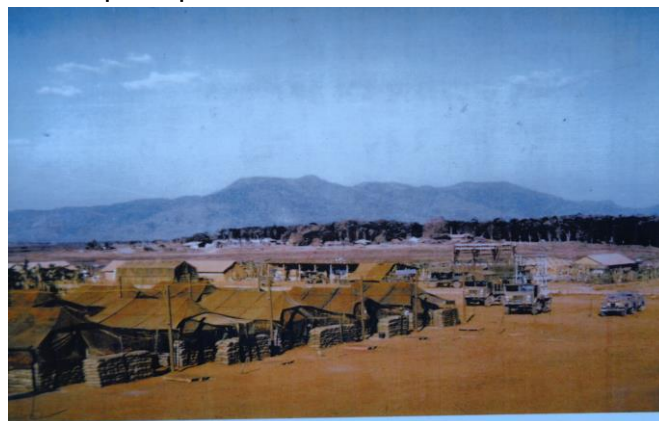


## RAEME HISTORY SEGMENT. SPECIAL 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION TO END AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR.



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

**19956 Craftsman Desmond James Kearton's story from Jan 68 to Nov 68.** 2023 is not only the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Australian commitment to Vietnam, but also the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of RAEME and RAAOC units sent to SVN to repair and recover the first Centurion tanks deployed to Vietnam. I was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> (Independent) Armd Sqn Wksp, as a vehicle mechanic when it was raised on 29 Oct 67 at Puckapunyal, Victoria. I deployed with C Sqn, which was equipped with 52-ton Centurion main battle tanks. Most elements of the unit arrived between Dec 67 and Jan 68 with the tanks arriving on the "Jeparit" between Jan and late Feb 68. On 3 Feb 68, the word "Independent" was dropped and the unit's name and became 1<sup>st</sup> Armd Sqn Wksp, with 1<sup>st</sup> Armd Sqn Wksp Stores Section. On arrival in Nui Dat, unit members secured the unit area, built not only living accommodation with defence positions, but also the tank workshop complex.



**Unit tents and the workshop area as building of Centurion tank repair workshop was completed.**

This activity took place during the TET Offensive – Jan to Sep 68 – when members were also required to carry out perimeter defence patrols and provide APC support with M113A1 Fitters Vehicles to 3RAR in the battle of the provincial capital, Baria, 1 to 7 Feb 68.

Very quickly, unit forward repair teams, including recovery teams, mounted on armoured special vehicles accompanied the C SQN tanks on operational deployments until Nov 68, including the very significant battles for FIRE SUPPORT BASE CORAL and FIRE SUPPORT BASE BALMORAL in May-Jun 68. See more detail at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Coral-Balmoral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Coral-Balmoral)

Our unit grew to a strength of three officers and 93 other ranks. A change in policy resulted in the unit being disbanded in country on 1 Nov 68, with personnel from the unit becoming the nucleus of 106 Fd Wksp and C SQN LAD, and occupied the “Opera House”, built by the 1st Armd Sqn Wksp and the Royal Australian Engineers, which became our Centurion Tank repair building. The first tank was called-in on the 14 Apr 68, for planned repairs.



### Des proudly marches each ANZAC Day

*Des finished his career as a sergeant after 21 years at 1 Base Wksp Bn, Bulimba, Brisbane.*

**58838 Frank E. G. O'Brien Vietnam 1969/70.** I'd worn the RAEME badge for just over two years when I arrived in SVN in early 1969, but my tour was not to be with any RAEME unit. After completing a final apprenticeship year as a fitter & turner at 3 Base Workshops, I began 12 months of studies at the RAAF School of Languages before deploying as an interpreter/translator with Det 1 Div Int Unit.

I had a bed in a tent close to HQ IATF at Nui Dat but spent most of my days and nights working out of Ba Ria, the capital of Phuoc Tuy province. My job entailed visiting all ARVN units around the province daily to gather written reports (SITREPS) before translating them into an Intelligence Summary (INTSUM) and delivering same to HQ I ATF in time for the Task Force Commander's daily briefing to all unit commanders. Not the type of experiences a soldier of my age (20), rank and Corps background could expect to confront, when first selected for a tour of duty in South Vietnam (SVN), but I enjoyed every minute of it.

**Spanner News**



### Frank on patrol with an ARVN unit gathering Intelligence.

My time in Vietnam also included working alongside US Army, CIA, ARVN and National Police personnel, working in the field with both 5RAR and 6RAR, participating in night ambushes with Vietnamese Regional Force units, attending major US and Vietnamese social events, acting as interpreter for meetings between the Australian Task Force Commander and the Province Chief, and hundreds of hours travelling around Phuoc Tuy by air, road and dusty tracks. I had possession of a bedspace and a weapons pit in the US Army's MACV compound within Van Kiep, an ARVN training base on the outskirts of Ba Ria, where I spent my off-duty nights. Van Kiep had everything a young baby-boomer could wish for in a war zone: a club (w/bar stools, poker machines and bar snacks!), movie nights and a tennis court.

From time to time, I would return to my unit at Nui Dat to assist in the urgent translation of captured enemy documents or to act as interpreter during interrogations of newly captured prisoners of war. During these trips back to Nui Dat I often visited a few RAEME mates at 161 Recce Flt and 31 Div Loc Bty, who kept me updated on their jobs, life at Nui Dat and general RAEME news. I'd been out-of-touch since beginning language training and knew very little about the Corps after leaving 3 Base Wksp Bn in 1967.

Perhaps the greatest memory from my year in SVN is the welcome acceptance I received from young and old, from peasant farmers to senior officers. Foreigners speaking Vietnamese was highly unusual (it still is) and earned me a level of respect amongst all I dealt with – including the local ladies! It certainly fired my desire to maintain my language skills over the years when I returned to Australia and resumed my RAEME career. Lucky, I did, because in 1989 and 1992 I won the lottery and was sent back to Vietnam for further language training. Those experiences prompted me to retire from the ARA in 1993 and look for opportunities in the new developing and peaceful Vietnam - I'm still looking for them!

*Frank completed 29 years' service retiring as a LTCOL in 1993 as a member of staff at C&SC Queenscliff, Victoria.*



**64358 CPL Rockleigh “Rocky” Edward Hoare Vietnam 1968-1969 and 1970-71.** 161 (Indep) Recce Flt (161) deployed into Ben Hoe, Vietnam in 1965, then relocated to Vung Tau in 1966 and finally to Nui Dat in 1967 in support of the 1st Australian Task Force.

After finishing my Army apprenticeship in 1966, I joined the “blue berets” and feeling rustproof, iridescent, bulletproof and full of excitement headed to SVN in Feb 1968 arriving just in time for the TET offensive a couple of months later. Given that, the biggest fear I had at the time, was jumping into a pit and finding it occupied by snakes.

I was lucky to crack two tours, as a CFN then CPL (68-69) and SGT (70-71). I consider those two years were amongst the best of my military career. We worked hard, played hard, every day was different with plenty of challenges, and I made many great friends whose company I continue to enjoy today.



**Young CFN Hoare tracking a Sioux Rotor system.**

The unit workshop worked mostly at night so our pilots could undertake their daily missions confident in the knowledge we had adequate aircraft online each day. It was not uncommon at very busy times to find pilots, cooks, medicos, drivers and supply personnel swinging spanners as well. Apart from the routine servicing, we had our share of issues with “Charlie” who didn’t seem to like of our aircraft snooping around his areas, and aircraft sustained battle damage. We also had a couple instances where pilot and aircraft had a disconnect with the aircraft needing to be substantially repaired.

The two main events which rocked the unit were when we lost our OC, MAJ George Constable, in May 68; and two pilots, CAPT Barry Donald and 2LT Alan Jellie, in Dec 69 – all due to enemy gunfire.

One event I recall vividly involved the OC (pilot) and me (observer) tasked to locate a SAS patrol that had not reported in for 3 days. Flying at tree top level following a path (idiots) when over the radio came “@#\$\$%-off or I’ll shoot you down.” We left in a hurry, mission completed.

On a lighter side, the Officer’s Mess had just undergone a significant refurbishment and the officers invited all and sundry to the opening. The major feature of the newly

refurbished mess was the water fountain, which was fed by a 2000-gallon water trailer located next to the SGT’s Mess. A couple of enterprising SNCOs poured 10 gallons of detergent into the water trailer on the day of the mess’ opening. When the water was switched on heaps of bubbles coated the special occasion – cue a couple of very angry officers, but also a lot of other smiling officers and SNCOs.

*Rocky finished his service in 2001 after 38 years as a Major serving with 5 Base Wksp Bn.*

**55289 Eddie “Beans” Bevans, 161 [Indep] Recce Flight South Vietnam, Apr 69 – Apr 70.** I enlisted into the ADF in December 1966 under the Army Adult Trade Training Scheme which saw me training at Bandiana in 1967 to early 1968. Later I arrived at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, in March 1968 to commence aircraft type training as an Engine Fitter.

1968 and early 1969 was a busy 12 months training on various types of rotary and fixed wing (RW & FW) aircraft. Having completed one more technical course, where I quickly learned about the new Army Pilatus Porter aircraft, and some annual and prebarkation leave, saw me in April 1969 sitting at Mascot Airport waiting for a Boeing 707 to whisk me to Saigon.

At that time, I was nineteen and half years old. I was nervous about the upcoming 12 months in SVN but not “scared”. I was confident, but excited at the big adventure I was about to undertake.

I was posted to 161 as a CFN Engine Fitter and quite frankly I was not a very experienced one. But I was expected to get with the program quick time. I liked being treated as adult. The workshop element at 161 was kept very busy providing RW and FW aircraft for daily tasking. Small servicing and maintenance tasks were completed during the daylight hours, but it was common to work through the night, particularly if a helicopter was scheduled for a major service that included an engine change. We would start work in the evening and have the aircraft ready for tasking by 0700 the next day and head off to get some sleep. Occasionally, some kind person left a bucket of iced beer in our tents. Good memories.

We were also involved in the flying operations on recce flights or air strikes tasks in RW or FW aircraft; or having a swag of magnesium flares on board and undertaking night illumination tasking for the battalions.

In my time at 161, we had two focused OCs who would volunteer us for TAOR patrols of about two or three-days duration. I did a couple with 5RAR and one with 7RAR and it was always interesting. I also did a day trip with a troop of APCs as an infantry ready reaction element, as the APCs escorted a US Army convoy heading from Vung Tau to somewhere. The Viet Cong were lucky

they gave us a wide berth, I can tell you! But all just another day in the life of a CFN Engine Fitter at 161.



**Ed “Beans” Bevans with his good mate, Mick Nilon about to go on patrol.**

As I said at the start, the most important thing that I did during my 12 months at 161 Recce Flt was just get stuck in and do my job. Having a sense of humour in all situations was important, especially when doing the less glamorous tasks like “dixi-bashing” at the central kitchen.

So, 12 months after sitting a little nervously at Mascot in Apr 69, I soon found myself back at Mascot being frisked by a bunch of not so happy customs people. It seemed a bit odd, because at 0800 that morning, I was sitting at Nui Dat looking at rubber trees, and now several hours later, I was in Sydney. It is all a bit surreal, but suddenly my old mate, Mick Nilon turns up, and life is good.

At this point I was twenty and a half years old, a returned soldier with my two gongs. Six months later in October 1970 I turned 21 and could vote. But the best bit was I could now legally have a beer in a Queensland pub, where the next part of my life was about to start.

*Beans finished his service after 23 years as a very experienced WO1 Art Acft, seconded for three years to the PNGDF, as ASM of their Air Transport Squadron in Lae.*

**38183 Raymond G. Norman OAM, 4th Field Regiment Light Aid Detachment 1969-1970, Townsville and Vietnam.** I was posted to 4th FD REGT LAD Townsville in mid-July 1969 after serving for three years plus in Malaya/Malaysia with 110 BTY LAD. I was posted to Vietnam in early 1970 as the Sergeant Technical Storeman 4th Fd Regt LAD Nui Dat. The LAD was an independent unit commanded by CAPT Bob Swan and the ASM was WO2 Jim Johnson.

The LAD was a small unit of mechanics and technicians who worked long hours to provide integral maintenance and repair support for the 4th Fd Regt RAA looking after a variety of equipment including artillery pieces, vehicles, small arms and communications equipment. Because of the distance to a base wksp, the LAD was authorized to carry out heavy repairs to the 105 mm howitzers, and at all times, the unit had one gun available in an operational

condition for any battery that experienced an unserviceability.

The LAD not only had Australian tradesman but also New Zealand tradesman from 161 Fd Bty. Later in my tour the LAD also included tradesman from 131 Div Loc Bty attached for administration and technical control.

Many Armament Fitters were rotated through fire support bases, mainly “The Horseshoe” position, in support of various Gun Sections on ops nearby.



*Ray completed 34 years' service retiring with the rank of MAJ. He was awarded an OAM, when RSM of Logistic Command, and served in WA and Albury Wodonga in his final years.*

## RAEMUS ROVER OFFROAD RACING



In the late 70's staff from the Puckapunyal Military Area formed the RAEMUS Rover team. The focus was on developing trade skills amongst active team members. RAEMUS Rover Off-road Racing is now building on that simple platform by still developing new trade skills, but not just within the Army.

The team now support any serving/ex-serving injured or ill members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). We work closely with Mates4Mates, the Queensland RSL and the Soldier Recovery Centre (SRC) to provide not just rehabilitation but new skills that can lead into future employment outside the ADF. From spinning spanners on the race cars, managerial roles or even driver/navigator, we can employ people of any skill level.

The vehicle, the oldest known off road race car in Australia, and its crew compete in the Australian Off-

Road Racing series. We do short course (less than 19km) and long course (19km or more) events throughout the year.

Our main aim is to get our two cars and a team to compete in the Finke Desert Race: it's an international event with massive exposure world-wide. If you are an ex-serving member or an injured/ill member of the ADF or even a current serving member and our project interests, don't be afraid to contact them.

It's time to renew your membership or apply for membership for 2023. Membership is open to all veterans (full membership) and partners/supporters (associate members). Annual membership is still \$25 for new members and \$20 for renewals.

Membership allows for paid race entry, licence fee support, use of race safety gear (approx \$2k per seat) and access to the vast array of both team cars and supporter team navigator seats – plus many other aspects and support for veterans.

For all membership enquiries please email the committee at: [admin@raemusrover.com.au](mailto:admin@raemusrover.com.au) More detail at: <https://www.facebook.com/RAEMUSRover>

### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In the Chairman's message, he outlines some findings resulting from a recent members' survey. Some results, which didn't come as a surprise, show the "average" member is:

- aged between 56-75,
- served between 21 and 40 years,
- achieved the rank of Warrant Officer,
- live in Brisbane,
- has a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, and
- been a member for more than 10 years.

An obvious conclusion we drew from this data is the RAQ cannot survive long-term without an injection of younger members, and while we have recently refreshed our executive with younger folks, we need more young people to step up – male and female.

To improve the situation may I ask readers to do two things: firstly, ask yourself whether you are able to help, or identify someone whom you know is able to assume a position; and encourage them (male or female) to start attending our monthly meetings to learn the way the RAQ operates and enjoy the social side of our monthly meetings. There is a little irony here – while our membership is growing very well, (the RAQ must be doing something right to survive), we need to attract a younger and more diverse demographic.

The RAQ Exec has some ideas, including encouraging younger readers of Friday Files and Spanner News, to consider forming younger members' group, not just in the SE QLD region, but elsewhere in Queensland, and for that **Spanner News**

matter (wearing my RNN COORD hat) across Australia. Kingsley Pocock in his capacity as the RAQ Membership Lead, reminds us on page 4 of the current benefits of membership. There may be others, but volunteering can provide a great deal of pleasure, and doing something for the past and present members of the Corps, far outweighs any material benefits.

Finally, it has been a busy start to the year and ANZAC Day is nearly upon us. 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, so on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, and other occasions this year, please think about those who served in that conflict.

Arte et Marte

**Ross Grant**  
Chairman Comms Committee  
[commschair@qld.raeme.org.au](mailto:commschair@qld.raeme.org.au)



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### ONLINE SHOP: NEW CASUAL TIES IN STOCK

RAEME Casual Ties are here now, they feature:

- Black tie with single woven gold and silver stripes
- Featuring a woven Corps Badge in gold and silver
- Woven Polyester

Members don't forget to login to get your discounted pricing.

Postage costs and options are available at checkout.



## Technical Workforce Review

See the CRAFTSMAN magazine (Issue 72) 2021, for background detail on this important activity; but thanks to the Corps RSM, WO1 Jon Tynan, I have included this edited progress report as at 28 Mar 23.

**ALTC Workforce & Training Group** provided a submission to the DFRT as part of the review process. The DFRT approved the submission on 08 Dec 22. The DFRT determination and decision documents for Matter 9 of 2022 can be found at: [Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical \(RAEME\) Ground Trades | Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal \(dfrt.gov.au\)](https://www.dfrt.gov.au)

It is expected all categories will transfer to updated name and skill grades (simplified) on 11 May 23. Establishment of ECN 034 Technician Assistant and ECN 222 Marine Technician will occur at the same time but still require workforce plans and recruiting strategies to be developed before members can be transitioned in or recruited under ab-initio pathways.  
**ED**

## Reserve Forces Day Committee (Sth Qld)

RECOGNISING THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE TO THE NATION

# DATE CLAIMERS 2023.

SUNDAY 1 July 2023

“Recognition Ceremony” Shrine of Remembrance, ANZAC Square

**Fall in at 0930hrs; Principal Guest arrives 0950hrs  
Unit, Ship, Squadron, Corps, Associations Banners.**

**Music: Pipes & Drums, National Servicemen’s Memorial Band**

**Bugler: Amberlay Brass**

**All Welcome: Tri-Service, All Ranks**

**Refreshments: Grand Central Hotel following the Service.**

**\$25 OFF\***  
**RACQ batteries**

\*\$25 rebate on the purchase of any RACQ battery. Rebate is valid for QLD RAEME ASSC members only. Rebate is for the battery only. Redemption is to RACQ Batteries PO Box 4 Springwood QLD 4127. Member must post this voucher and a copy of the tax invoice from either the RACQ or the RACQ battery stockist clearly indicating the name of the supplier, battery part number, your name, address and ASSC member number only. A cheque will be posted to the address supplied. Voucher is valid for batteries purchased 1 May 2022 - 30 April 2023 and must be used by 30 June 2023.

13 1905 > [racq.com/batteries](https://racq.com/batteries)

**RACQ**  
It pays to belong

## Women *in* Uniform

(in Army in Queensland 1899-2023)



24 Feb 2023-6 Dec 2023

Victoria Barracks  
Petrie Terrace, Brisbane

### Rich history of women serving in Queensland

Snapshots dating from nurses volunteering during the Boer War, through all campaigns where Australians have served. Today, women are integral to Australian Army's capability.

This exhibition covers the women who served, their training and military life.

#### Exhibition and displays

The 1864 Officers' Mess  
Victoria Barracks, Petrie Terrace

#### Highlights

Original uniforms, artefacts, photographs and figures

Showcasing women serving in Army in Queensland from 1899- 2023

#### View the exhibition & Tour the Barracks

Bookings essential:

[armymuseumssouthqueensland.com.au](https://armymuseumssouthqueensland.com.au)

[info@armymuseumssouthqueensland.com.au](mailto:info@armymuseumssouthqueensland.com.au)

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