

EDITION 3-23

SPANNER NEWS

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OCTOBER 2023



Featuring 102 Fd Wksp Coy



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Spanner News

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the final edition of Spanner News for 2023. Our association continues to support our mission to honour, support and foster camaraderie among past and present members of the Corps. We've held a significant number of key activities and chalked up substantial achievements and initiatives in 2023. We remain deeply committed to preserving and celebrating the heritage of RAEME.

Membership growth has remained strong and diverse with many veterans and serving soldiers boosting our membership significantly. The association's commitment to fostering connections was also enhanced, with various social events, meetings and gatherings. By year's end, we will have completed:

- 12 x monthly meetings, including our Annual General Meeting.
- 18 x regional gatherings from the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, west to Toowoomba and North to Townville.
- RAEME Birthday events in Townsville, Darling Downs and Brisbane

The comradeship among RAEME members at these events remains a cornerstone of the association's success, and importantly, these events are a significant factor in our continued membership growth of around 9% in 2023.

The RAQ continued its tradition of supporting fundraising efforts across the RAEME family, with the establishment of the permanent RAEME Recovery Mechanics Memorial at Dotswood North Queensland. I, along with the families, Corps members and veterans attended the unveiling in August. This was a significant project and we know it means a lot to the families and the wider community – the RAQ was very proud to support this initiative.

Our initiatives and activities are driven by a dedicated committee, comprising both veterans and serving personnel. Of equal importance, the committee remained focussed on good governance, ensuring the RAQ remains sustainable long term and adheres to its Constitution. I thank all our members who have volunteered their time and effort to support our Association – your contributions are what makes us successful – thank you very much.

We have routinely kept our memberships and the broader RAEME community informed and connected by publishing regular Friday Files, Spanner News, social media updates, while regularly refreshing our recently updated website. Our online shop provides a significant source of revenue allowing us to comfortably fund our activities. For me, the last twelve months highlights have been:

- successful commemoration of RAEME Birthday and ANZAC Day commemorations;
- providing support for serving soldiers, veterans and their families through events and initiatives;
- strengthened Corps ties and broader community engagement through targeted and community events; and
- the inaugural "Women in RAEME" event at Victoria Barracks, supporting the Army Museum South Queensland "Women in Uniform" exhibition.

As we look to the future, I have a strong sense of optimism. Our goals remain to unite and support RAEME members, honour our Corps legacy and look to the future. Our dedication to excellence, community engagement, and supporting our Corps continues to be seen as a beacon of pride within Army, our members and the broader community.

Arte et Marte

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



FIRST FOR ARMY



The RAQ has just received confirmation that WO1 Andrew "Jim" Beaman OAM (46th VM) has been appointed as Army's first non-Regimental Tier C WO1.

For those readers who are unfamiliar with the tiered system of WOIs, this is something Defence introduced in recent years to note the increased significance of some WO1 positions and the value they bring to the Army. In general, the tier system includes the following levels:

- **Tier A:** Applies to positions involving direct application of trade skills or entry level Regimental Sergeant Major (all corps) or Warrant Officer disciplinary positions at, or higher than, the relevant at a Unit level.
- **Tier B:** Applies to positions involving application of managerial skills (applied with or without reference to trade knowledge) at, or higher than, the relevant of the Formation level.
- **Tier C:** This highest level, applies to positions involving high level management and representational duties, applied generally at a functional or environmental command level.

To date, only Regimental WOIs have been appointed to Tier C. Jim's appointment as the ASM of Landworthiness within Land Capability Division, Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, is a key appointment that not only recognises his contributions to the Army but is also a position in which he will undoubtedly need to draw on his many years of experience. In brief, Jim's experience includes many demanding roles such as ASM of the 1st Bde, 3rd Bde, JOC and AHQ.

Excerpt from *RAEME in ACTION* Oct 2023 provided by Ian Cook.

RAEME RECOVERY MECHANICS MEMORIAL UNVEILING - WED 30 AUG 2023

On Wednesday 30th August 2023, the RAEME community gathered to unveil a memorial honouring the service of two recovery mechanics, WO2 Ryan Leslie and CFN Spanner News

Brendon Payne, killed in a tragic vehicle accident on exercise in August 2021, in North Queensland.



The unveiling of the memorial with members of Ryan's and Brendon's family present was a moment of deep reflection and occurred on the second anniversary of their passing. It was an honour to be part of this solemn occasion, and on behalf of the RAEME Association-Queensland, lay wreaths at the memorial site. The [RAEME Recovery Mechanics Memorial Page](#) will also become a permanent reminder of their service and sacrifice.

The RAQ also received the following letter from the previous CO 2/14 LHR/QMI, who led the effort to establish the memorial.

12th September 2023

Dear Peter,

I am writing to thank you, and all at the RAEME Association of Queensland, for your steadfast support for the memorial to Ryan Leslie and Brendon Payne. The project would never have been possible without your help: be it in the loan of your treasurer, your social media advertising, and the energy and drive of your members. I hope you and your members are rightly proud of what was achieved: I will always be grateful for your support.

With respect and thanks,
Tom McSwain

Rest in Peace

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



FEATURING 3 CSSB AND THEIR 102ND FIELD WORKSHOP COMPANY

102 Fd Wksp Coy, 3 CSSB, experienced another very busy year filled with many remarkable activities and tasks, each contributing to the workshop's operational readiness, well-earned reputation and building the camaraderie of its Craftsmen. From the battalion-level initiatives like Exercise Wapiti Walk, and the meticulous internal readiness preparations at the year's onset, building towards important brigade field exercises, including Brolga Run, and then participation in Talisman Sabre, this was a year to remember. As the calendar pages turned, the workshop concluded the year with the Battalion's resilience activity, Exercise Wapiti Junction, creating a range of other experiences. Beyond these major tasks, the Craftsmen of 102 Fd Wksp also engaged in many activities employing smaller contingents of soldiers and officers alike, including Sea Series, The Shit Box Rally, and MTT-B's deployment to PNG.



Craftsman fixing “fall-apart” vehicles during EX TS 23 LFX

Integral to the success of 102 Fd Wksp throughout the year were the Workshop Platoon Commanders, LT Vout, LT Smith, and LT Zacharin. These PL COMDS were at the helm of the workshop's operations, steering the craftsmen through the challenges and triumphs of each task and activity. This is their story with unique insights and perceptions of the workshops 2023 journey.

Jock Zacharin
LT
FRG 2 PLCOMD



In the dynamic world of military leadership, adaptability often defines an officer's success. My journey as a first-year Lieutenant was not just a pathway of military service but also an exploration of my adaptability. During this transformative period, I was entrusted with the responsibility of managing three different platoons over

nine months, navigating varying chains of command during field exercises and deploying at short notice.

My military career began by “shadowing” the experienced platoon commander of Vehicle Platoon. This mentorship provided valuable insights and a steady learning curve to build my leadership skills and confidence. However, due to the reassignment of the PL COMD, I was unexpectedly given an opportunity to step into his shoes and lead a group of soldiers I had known for just two weeks in a role I had never encountered before.

Over the course of a year, I found myself in command of three different platoons, each with its own unique dynamics, strengths, challenges, necessitating rapid adaptation. Each platoon required a different approach, and I continued to hone my leadership skills, connecting with soldiers from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Building trust was paramount, as was the capacity to empathise with my troops, while making tough decisions.

Field exercises are the lifeblood of military training, serving as the crucible in which soldiers' skills and mettle are tested and refined. For me, these exercises brought an added layer of complexity: a perpetually shifting chain of command. With each field exercise, the established practices underwent a complete transformation.

In these situations, adaptability was not just a desirable trait: it was essential. I found myself amid a constant, real-world experience as I quickly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of each new chain of command and, more importantly, find ways to work harmoniously with them. Instead of viewing constant adjustment as a hindrance, I embraced it as an opportunity for growth.

Reflecting on my first-year experience as a Lieutenant in the ADF, I've gained invaluable insights into the importance of flexibility in navigating the dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of our job. My journey has been a personal test of adaptability and resilience, offering several key lessons which are worth sharing:

- **Embrace Constant Change:** Embracing changes is not just necessary; it's an opportunity for personal and professional growth. Rather than resisting change, it's better to accept it and find ways to thrive in the face of uncertainty.
- **Thinking Quickly and Problem Solving:** Adapting to new platoons, roles, commands or tasks requires quick thinking and essential problem-solving skills. When faced with unfamiliar situations, being able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the team and the situation being confronted requires good communications skills and sound decision-making competencies.
- **Developing Trust, Empathy and Building Stronger Teams:** Building trust with soldiers from diverse backgrounds is foundational to effective leadership. My experience taught me that empathy

and the capacity to understand the perspectives and needs of my soldiers while making tough decisions are central to earning their trust.

- **Liaison Between Command Layers:** Navigating shifting chains of command isn't merely about following orders; it's about serving as an effective liaison between different layers of leadership. Developing an understanding of the intent of higher-ranking officers and the operational needs of those on the ground is essential.
- **Adaptability is a Necessity:** In an environment where change is constant, adaptability isn't a "nice to have", it is an essential skill. In an ever-evolving ADF, adaptability is the currency of success.



Hudson Smith

LT

FRG 1 - GE/EIR PLCOMD

Between the 13 and 21 Oct 23, four Craftsmen from 102 Fd Wksp, 3 CSSB, journeyed from Port Douglas, QLD, to Adelaide, SA, in support of the 2023 Spring Shit-box Rally. They joined over 250 cars taking part in a race across the Australian outback, using knowledge and experience gained within the military to support a great cause.

The Shit-box Rally is a civilian charity event requiring participants to race vehicles worth less than \$1500 across Australia, with all proceeds donated to the Cancer Council. Each team is required to raise a minimum of \$5000, and to date, the tri-annual event has raised over \$40M. Support teams are required to keep these vehicles running when they inevitably breakdown along the route; this was the role of the CSSB Support Team. It is a uniquely Australian event supporting a charity close to many of us.



Craftsman on the Shit-Box Rally between Port Douglas and Adelaide

The team from 102 Fd Wksp followed the participants in two GMM's, which provided advice and maintenance support to vehicles and their crews along the route – not at all surprising given the quality of the \$1500 cost limit on participants' vehicles. The route for this rally was via inland routes through Windorah and Birdsville towards Adelaide.

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As with all rallies, the experience of driving through the outback with strangers in a less than ideal vehicle was an adventure. Creating lifelong mates was "par for the course" during the event, with groups of vehicles allocated at the start, required to travel together for the entire route. When the team arrived in Adelaide, the vehicles were auctioned and the teams enjoyed a few days of well-deserved rest, and then a refit of their vehicles by 9 CSSB, before driving back to Townsville via NSW.

This is the second year that 102 Fd Wksp has supported the event, providing Craftsmen the opportunity to challenge their trade-specific skills on civilian vehicles with limited specialised tooling. Our support for the rally and its cause not only provided opportunities for the "Crafties" involved, but also proudly represented the Corps capabilities to the public.

If you would like to support the event and the Cancer Council or would like more information on Shitbox rallies to participate yourself, this can be found at:

<https://www.shitboxrally.com.au/>



Patrick Vout

LT

Vehicle PLCOMD

From June 1 – 7 Sep 23, in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Mentor Training Team Bravo (MTT-B) embarked on a three-month programme focused on running courses, regional collaboration and cultural exchanges. Concurrently, the team conducted multiple other activities, including involvement in PNG Remembrance Day commemoration, an expedition along a section of the Kokoda Trail and participation in the CDF's Cup rugby competition. This article highlights the role of MTT-B, shedding light on the courses and activities undertaken.

Mentor Training Teams represent a specialised team within the ADF, charged with providing comprehensive guidance, skill development, and support to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) through the delivery of required courses. The team was comprised of soldiers and officers, made up of 3 CSSB, 4 REGT, 2 CAV, 3 RAR, 4 HB, and 10 FSB. A detachment of the UK Defence Force's Royal Gurkha Rifles from Brunei also joined the team. The team is contributing its expertise to facilitating various training courses aimed at improving the capabilities of the PNGDF and promoting bilateral cooperation.

Port Moresby, the capital city of PNG, was the location of the MTT HQ element, near the PNGDF main HQ, 1 Royal Pacific Island Regiment (RPIR) and the Field Supply Battalion. The Goldie River Training Depot (GRTD), approximately 40 minutes north-east of Port Moresby, was also used by MTT-B members. Wewak, home to 2 RPIR, and Lae, home to the Engineering Battalion and Joint Forces Academy, was also used.

MTT-B's main objective was to deliver the following training courses as requested by the PNGDF:

- **Combat Shooting Course:** MTT-B assisted the UK Royal Gurkha Rifles with the conduct of a combat shooting course at the GRTD. This consisted of theory, training serials and live fire activities using the PNGDF standard service rifle, the M-16A2.
- **Clerk Administration Course:** Good clerical and administration skills are essential to enable all elements of the PNGDF. This course covered all aspects of administration required by clerks, including reinforcing the correct procedures used by the PNGDF.
- **Basic Supply Course:** This course covered the basics of supply and logistical tasks required to ensure the correct tracking and supply of materiel.
- **Military First Aid:** 1 and 2 PIR members in Taurama and Wewak, respectively, participated in a multi-day military first aid course. This covered in-depth training in first aid skills, medical procedures, triage and tactical combat casualty care.
- **Support for the Riverine Operations Course:** Members of MTT-B assisted in the PNGDF-led riverine operations course. Considering the domain in which they operate, these skills are essential to the PNGDF to enable them to function in the littoral environment of the South Pacific.
- **Transport Management:** The transport management course covered transport documentation, vehicle first parade procedures and scheduled servicings, as well as basic load lifting and securing. The proper management of the PNGDF vehicle fleet is essential in a country with mountainous terrain and rough roads.
- **Instructor Development:** The Joint Forces Academy (JFA) in Lae is the PNGDF equivalent of RMC and trains future PNGDF, police force, and correctional facility officers. ADF instructors shared their knowledge of student-centred learning with PNGDF instructors, enhancing the academy's teaching ability. Concurrently, MTT-B members assisted in amending lesson plans for future students.
- **Basic First Aid:** Members of the Engineering Battalion and JFA, Lae, also participated in a single-day basic first aid course. This covered first aid basics, including DRCABCD and the treatment of bites, stings, and heat injuries.
- **Basic Recon Course:** This course, instructed by AS SF members, developed PNGDF I PIR infantry basic recon skills. This was especially beneficial considering the constant patrolling conducted by IPIR on the PNG/Indonesian border.

The Kokoda Trail, a historical treasure, holds immense significance in both Australian and Papua New Guinean WW II history. During this programme, 3 BDE embarked

on a challenging segment of the 96-kilometre trail, commencing and concluding their journey at Owers' Corner. Although only a short section, its difficulty and inhospitable terrain gave all participants an insight to the harsh conditions faced by the diggers of that time.



OC and CSM 102 FD WKSP with LT Vout at Ower's Corner

Rugby, cherished by the PNG community, served as a vibrant platform for cultural exchange. MTT-B members were given the privilege of participating in the game's ceremonies and watch as the Engineering Battalion team from Lae won the premiership to much celebration. The fitness and skills displayed by the teams, and the love for the sport by all, was inspiring to watch.



MTT-B attending CDF's Cup rugby competition.

PNG Remembrance Day, a very solemn occasion, commemorates the sacrifices made during WW II and other conflicts. MTT-B members in Port Moresby and Lae participated in this event, laying wreaths to remember soldiers who died fighting for their country. This day is similar to the Australian ANZAC Day and demands significant reverence from the PNGDF. MTT-B members were honoured to share in this commemoration and reinforce our shared history and commitment to regional security.

The three-month programme of MTT-B in PNG underscores the importance of international partnerships, defence cooperation and skill development through training. Members of the MTT-B were provided with the opportunity to share knowledge and form bonds through the training course, confirming our commitment to empowering the capabilities of the PNGDF. As MTT-B

members returned home, they left behind enduring friendships and mutual respect, cementing the partnership between our two nations.

2023 has been a very busy and diverse year for 102 Fd Wksp – there has been many noteworthy achievements and benefits to all participants. From the grand scale of battalion and brigade activities to the smaller equally significant side endeavours, we've learned, grown, and forged strong bonds.

Yet, as the sun sets in 2023, a new dawn rises with fresh challenges. The impending restructuring of defence and the evolving landscape of Townsville will bring changes which will challenge the unit to adapt, innovate, and continue to be the stalwarts of readiness and excellence in 3 BDE. In unity and determination, we embark on this new chapter, ready to overcome any challenge that comes our way, as the reputation of 102 Fd Wksp continues to flourish and thrive.

Arte et Marte

OC and 2IC 102 Fd Wksp Coy MAJ Will Woods and 2IC and CAPT Ethan Cox.



RAMS Birthday Celebrations. On 21 Jul 23, the RAEME Aircraft Maintenance School (RAMS) celebrated its 34th birthday. Birthday celebrations kicked off with a round-robin event of touch football played between all the school wings, culminating in a thrilling final between MRH and ARH Wings, with ARH Wing coming out on top.

Every year RAMS holds a competition to test the ingenuity, creativity and engineering prowess of its staff and trainees. This year the challenge was to construct a fully mechanical egg throwing siege weapon, able to toss an egg at a target 30m away.



To keep things interesting, the CO graciously offered to stand in the firing line as a target, armed with nothing more than a RAEME-coloured bin lid. RAMS wings poured their heart and soul into constructing the most precise egg-throwing machines, presenting on the day an array of

frightening slingshots, catapults, ballistae and even a trebuchet! Five volleys were loosed upon the CO, who bravely and deftly blocked incoming eggs with his “shield,” and TM Wing took out the win with a laser-accurate ballista that scored several direct hits.



Next on the agenda, members tested their strength and skill in the traditional RAEME spanner toss. While some opted for brute strength, with more than a few sore shoulders resulting, others tried strange techniques to “will” the spanner forward and take home the win for their team. In the end, CH-47 Wing wielded the winning combination of physique and intellect, bringing the competition to a tense draw for the final event.

Appropriately, the culminating activity was a Tug O'War, the age-old test of teamwork, communication and combined strength. Each wing demonstrated cohesion and cooperation in the face of an increasingly mud-slick surface, but the gorilla-like physique of CH-47 Wing was too much for the rest to handle.

The birthday officially concluded with a barbecue lunch and cake cutting, followed by a short address from the CO and a presentation of the winning trophy to CH-47 Wing.

Warrick Khan
WO2
School Sergeant Major
RAEME Aircraft Maintenance School

106 FD WKSP COY Exercises Diamond Strike & Talisman Sabre. The 106th Field Workshop, 7th Combat Service Support Battalion (7CSSB) deployed to the Townsville Field Training Area for Exercises Diamond Strike and Talisman Sabre 23 to provide logistic support to the 7th Brigade. This was an excellent opportunity for the Company to practice soldier, trade and general logistic skills within the field environment over an extended period of time.

The start of the exercise provided a small challenge to the Company owing to the lengthy time since the whole company had deployed together, whilst forming new teams over recent months. However, it wasn't long

before we were complimented by Brigade staff for our efforts.

The Company quickly settled into its traditional “field workshop” role and testing field SOPs and trade procedures. The Company was split into three functional platoons, two ready platoons prepared to be pushed forward as required, and one larger platoon kept within the Brigade Maintenance Area (BMA) for all medium to heavy grade repair. The Company performed exceptionally well, especially with many unfamiliar tasks for many of the soldiers, such as supporting mass casualty scenarios. As part of the Brigade Support Group (BSG), the Company performed a tactical redeployment which most soldiers had never been exposed to previously.

The statistics support the Company’s incredible performance over the two-month period. The workshop completed a total of 1,974 production hours across 339 work orders. The Vehicle Mechanics were the busiest trade completing 819 of those hours across 134 work orders. With only two metalsmiths in the field, their skills were also highly sought after, completing 145 hours across 28 work orders. Naturally, the efforts of the Recovery Technicians were crucial, performing over 30 recovery jobs, which equated to over 400 hours of work.

A few standout individuals within the company who went above and beyond to ensure the Brigade’s equipment remained available and functional in a tactical environment included, CPL Neil MacMillan (Metalsmith), CFN Kip Fleming (Vehicle Mechanic), CFN Bradley Scheef (Vehicle Mechanic), LCPL Mason Roberts (Metalsmith) and CFN Leon Tokley (Vehicle Mechanic). Together, these individuals completed 424 hours of technical work, over a quarter of the Company’s total production. The Company’s success would not have been possible without the support of the 106 Fd Wksp RPS Platoon. The RPS supplied the workshop with 90 different repair part NSN’s over the exercises.



Many improvements made by 106 Fd Wksp over this important “field experience”, lead to favourable comments from the COMD 7 BDE at our performance and ability to keep the Brigade’s equipment functional and ready for the fight.

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As a result of their excellent efforts in the field, General Engineering Platoon was awarded the inaugural Army Team Award which recognises a teams’ embodiment of **Good Soldiering**.

Arte et Marte

Harrison Ross

LT

GE/Lima 82 Platoon Commander



RECENT RAQ ACTIVITY REPORTS

Commemoration of Reserve Forces Day – South Queensland 1 Jul 23. This year’s event, the 75th Anniversary of Service to the Nation began, with the Lord Mayors’ Morning tea held in City Hall, with the Chairman, Captain Bob Hume RANR (Rtd), giving an address on the first such activity which took place in Australia in 1998, commemorating fifty years of service.

Invited guests included previous serving and current members of the Reserves, with the addition of many of the Lord Mayor’s Staff, who currently serve as reservists.



MAJ Justin Nally and Ian Leabeater

The Reserve Forces Day Recognition Ceremony, which followed, was celebrated at ANZAC Square, where the Guest Speaker was the Honourable Dr. Jeanette Young AC, PSM, Governor of Queensland. Following on from the ceremony, members in attendance were issued a certificate signed by the Governor General.



MAJGEN (RTD) Stephen Day State President of the QLD RSL, Ian Leabeater and MAJ Justin Nally

The event was attended by current and past members of the Reserves, in addition to potential future members in the form of Australian Defence Force Cadets. Support to the activity was also provided by the National Servicemen's Pipe Band, a Catafalque Party from 9 RQR and a bugler.

Ian Leabeater
Committee Member
Reserve Forces Day - Sth QLD



RAEME ARes/CMF Reunion – 20 Aug 23. Another successful reunion was held at the Sherwood / Indooroopilly RSL with 52 folks in attendance. The RAEME spirit permeated the day and many memories (some reliable and some not so) of former service in CMF/ARES units flowed freely.

We very much appreciate the many dedicated workers who helped on the day preparing and serving the meals and cleaning up – thank you all very much. Mention must be made of RSL members including John Hogan and Phil Kyle, who organised the catering; as well as Andrew Crowe and Graham Farrell, who manned the bar: and Katie Townsend and Deb Ferguson, the RSL staff members, who organised many miscellaneous tasks.



Special guests this year included Peter Matthews, Chair of the RAEME Assoc QLD, and MAJ Justin Nally, OC 108 Fd Wksp Coy, 11 CSSB. The efforts of the bar-b-que cooks was also appreciated and the RAEME cake was delicious.



The cake was cut by MAJ Nally

We are also thankful for the raffle donations from Westside HQ, formerly Sherwood Services Club, and the support of Matt Conway, President of that Club. Once again, we appreciated the contribution from Fred Nielsen, who has for many years produced and donated the much valued prize of a the “RAEME Cane”.

Another successful function is over, and we hope to see everyone again next year – and ready to socialise.

Arte et Marte

John Parfitt
Convenor
iparfitt@bigpond.net.au



Spanner Club Indooroopilly Hotel – 25 Aug 23. Based on the success of the first “off-base” Spanner club held in March this year, a good crowd of local SE QLD “Spanners” once again attended the second Spanner Club at the Indooroopilly Hotel on 25 Aug 23. The event attracted over 60 RAQ members and guests, from across 7 BDE and other SE QLD units, as well as a few local veterans.



The RAQ takes great pride in supporting these events with food platters, a major raffle prize of a full-sized metal Corps Badged manufactured in NQ by AEV, and \$150 RAQ Shop vouchers. Congratulations go to OC 108 Fd Wksp Coy, MAJ Justin Nally, who won the major prize. Proceeds of the raffle were donated to Legacy.



L-R WOI Ian Dale farewells Steve Lowe at the Spanner Club

The highlight of the afternoon was the sincere farewell extended Steve Lowe accompanied by the presentation of a Corps Scroll by WO1 Ian Dale. This act marked Steve's departure from full-time service with the Corps - on behalf of RAQ, may I offer Steve a sincere thank you for his service.

This event's success wouldn't have been possible without the dedicated efforts of its organisers, Ian Dale and David White, who ensured that everything ran smoothly. RAQ members, Bruce Hermann and Brian Daley, supplied and sold our very popular RAQ merchandise. The whole team's commitment to the Spanner Club's mission of creating a tight-knit Corps event was evident throughout the afternoon.

A big thank you must also go Rowena Ferrarotto from Ironside Resources, for her generous financial support covering some of the bar expenses, as well as the provision of stubbie coolers and raffle prizes, courtesy of Aussie Veterans Coffee Co, a veteran owned business.



These Spanner Club gatherings are a fantastic way for serving soldiers, veterans, family and friends to get together and foster the Esprit de Corps of our RAEME personnel. Although not held on base, these events serve as a testament to the enduring spirit that defines the Spanner Clubs, and we extend our thanks to all those who made this evening a resounding success.

We are looking at a suggestion received on the afternoon of holding the next Spanner Club closer to Enoggera Barracks – look for more details in our weekly editions of Friday Files.

RAQ Lunch Gold Coast 26 Aug 23. The RAQ Annual Gold Coast Lunch was held on another superb Spring afternoon overlooking the sparkling Pacific Ocean at Mermaid Beach (AEME) Surf Life Saving Club (MBSLSC).

36 people attended. Numbers were down a little on previous years, but that reflects our current busy lives generally across Australia. However, as always, we had no problem accommodating the excellent view as we sat on the front veranda of the surf club overlooking the Pacific Ocean, while enjoying great service, food and drink.



L to R: Leonie Grant, Dave Grant (no relation) Brian Daley & Claude Palmer enjoying the afternoon

Every year we seem to have a new Corps identity who appears from left field. This year we had retired WO1 Terry Dillon, a 11th Intake Apprentice, who attended for the first time and enjoyed a chat with everyone.



L to R: Kel Phillips, Rod McCormack, Brian Calder, Joe Owens and Cheryl Owens enjoying the food and club service

Another new face at the lunch was BRIG Ed Smeaton, the Representative Colonel Commandant-RAEME. i.e., the national representative of RAEME COL COMDTs, who introduced himself and told us a little of his interesting and broad career. He was able to meet and chat with almost everyone at the lunch. We hope we can see more of Ed, and his wife, Simone.



L to R: Lorraine Freckleton, Beans Bevans and Ed Smeaton in foreground

The RAQ support for the lunch was very much appreciated – the lunch was subsidised with a \$20 meal voucher for those who held a MBSLSC Life membership card (see more below) but support also included three \$50 voucher lucky door prizes, which were redeemable via the RAQ merchandise shop. The lucky winners were Barb Daley, Ed Smeaton and Graeme Morrissey.

We should not forget the Surf Club management and staff. They take their AEME / RAEME roots very seriously and there is a lot of interesting memorabilia displayed in the foyer, dating back to the formative days of the club, at the end of WW2. The Club is generously offering free Life Membership to serving and ex RAEME people. In any organisation Life Membership is hard-won, but the MBSLSC values and respects its roots, hence their generous offer. Have a look at the RAQ web site and make application via the website – it is a simple process.

Similarly, they have a good bunch of hard working staff that looked after us at lunch and nothing seemed to be too much trouble for them – a good-humoured hardworking bunch of people who looked after us very well.

Keep an eye out for first week of June 2024 and you will start to receive emails from the lunch organisers.

Regards,

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



RAQ NQ Function Sat 23 Sep 2023 – Townsville.



L-R - Bruce Ferguson, Duane Maggenti, Mick McMillan, Bert Greenfield, Flynn Wetherbee, Lyndsay Mariner, Greg Jones, Ross Casey, Rocky Hema

A great day was had by all in the balmy and breezy weather of North Queensland at the Empire Hotel, South Townsville on 23 Sep 23. The staff certainly looked after us with refreshing beverages and a wide variety of great bar snacks. Around 50 RAEME personnel attended with a vibrant mix of serving and ex-serving members.

It was fantastic to see some partners and families share lunch and the entertaining banter and frivolities. Two

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meat trays were raffled, as was a large RAEME badge, and a \$100 membership drawer was conducted. We had one lucky member, Mick Robinson (ex WO1 VM) who won both the membership and the RAEME badge. Robbo graciously placed the \$100 over the bar, so well done that man.



Mick Robinson - Winner Badge raffle and \$100 RAQ Member Draw

As Christmas is rapidly approaching, we are gearing up for the final NQ Gathering for 2023 in late November prior to the RAEME Birthday activity to be hosted by 3 CER at Lavarack Bks on 1 Dec 23. Stay tuned to the Friday Files for more info.



L-R - Renee Goninan, Mrs Bergquist, Dean Goninan, Bill Bergquist, Don de Tarczynski

Check out all our other event photos in the [gallery](#).

Cheers.

Tank Pontifex
RAQ NQ
north@qld.raeme.org.au



Sunshine Coast RAQ Lunch – 30 Sep 23. Despite sharing the day with the AFL Grand Final, the Sunshine Coast RAQ Lunch was once again well attended with 70 plus folks enjoying the hospitality of the Maroochy RSL. Difficult road conditions to the Coast caused a few late arrivals at the venue, during another busy school holiday

period, so next year we will ensure we pick a day which is hopefully free of competition and traffic distractions.

Having weathered the “busyness” of the Sunshine Coast, attendees enjoyed the RSL’s Gold Plate Menu, excellent service and good company. COL COMDT QLD, COL Steve Evans, hosted our day and explained the priorities of the HOC and his small Cell, who are focussing on the following important lines of effort (LOE):

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



COL COMDT QLD – COL Steve Evans

He also went on to outline the work undertaken by CO 2/14 LHR/QMI, and various other organisations including the RAQ, to organise the construction of a memorial in honour of two recovery mechanics, WO 2 Ryan Leslie and CFN Brendon Payne, who died tragically in a vehicle accident in 2021. In his report, COL COMDT QLD, detailed the well attended dedication ceremony held in August 2023. He also pointed out funds required to construct the memorial, some \$45,000, had been acquired through generous donations from a range of organisations, individuals and corporates. He went on to

say that this accident was an important reminder of the dangers associated with our profession, while undertaking training exercises.

As our guests enjoyed their tender steak and baked salmon, our guest speaker BRIG Gabby Follett AM, DG Fuel Services Joint Logistic Command, carefully took us through the most recent Defence Strategic Review 2023 (DSR) initiative, which sees some much needed restructuring of ADF organisations to position the ADF for emerging regional threats. Critically, she outlined the potential impacts on existing logistic support units, in particular RAEME units, but also in her own joint portfolio responsible supplying a variety of fuels to the three services. In addition, she provided some background on the use of non-fossil fuels for the three Services in the future.



BRIG Gabby Follett, DG Fuel Services, JLC

Sadly, BRIG Follett had to leave early to catch a flight back to Canberra, but she took time to talk to as many attendees as possible. In this task, she was assisted by BRIG Ed Smeaton DSM, the REP COL COMDT, who was also enjoying the lunch with his wife, Simone. The HOC Cell was represented by, MAJ Steve Howells, SO2 Corps.



Bob McGahey, Elsa and Robbie McGahey and BRIG Ed Smeaton

The MC, Ross Grant, paid tribute to the RAQ Executive who were represented by the RAQ Treasurer, Mick Patman and his wife Sharon, and RAQ Merchandise Member, Bruce Herman, and his wife, Katheryn. Bruce advises he made enough sales to justify his trip, but more importantly, he enjoyed the day and the spirit, which permeated the venue.

With a slight change of program to accommodate BRIG Follett's timely departure to the airport, guests stayed on in the venue chatting animatedly, until they realised there was a close and exciting AFL game underway, elsewhere in the RSL, on a big screen. Most then remained until the game was over – the day's activities were probably a win-win for all guests after all!



Terry Dillon, Ian Hartshorn and Roz Hartshorn

MC closed the proceedings by thanking all for attending, inviting them to break attendance records in 2024. He also thanked the Maroochy RSL staff for their wonderful support – the room looked spectacular and their food matched the layout. He also thanked the RAQ for their support and subsidy, which made the lunch a value for money occasion. Finally, he thanked his co-convenor, Mike Prain, for his hard work, together with the support provided freely by Barbara Prain and Leonie Grant.



A very attentive audience for BRIG Follett

We look forward to welcoming the same guest back next year but also, those who couldn't attend for one reason or another this year.

Arte et Marte

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



Spanner News

Women in RAEME event - Victoria Barracks Brisbane - Wed 11 Oct 2023



Crafties from 106 FD WKSP/9FSB, Margret (Maggie) Jlew, Holly Trigg, Hannah Polley, LT Bec Rasmussen, LCPL Amber Johnson-Brigg and COL COMMDT QLD - COL Steve Evans.

Victoria Barracks in Brisbane became the backdrop for over 30 members and guests who gathered to celebrate the Women in RAEME event. This inaugural event also supported the current 'Women in Uniform' exhibition at Army Museum South Queensland, which runs until the end of the year.

The event highlighted the role of women in the military and their pivotal role within RAEME. Since the Boer War, women have proven themselves as indispensable members of the ADF, contributing to the readiness and capabilities of our nation's defence. This event provided a platform to celebrate their achievements and promote diversity within Army.



Guest Speaker Suzanne Shipp

[Suzanne Shipp](#), our guest speaker, delivered a compelling address that resonated with all attendees. Suzanne joined the Army at age 16 as a 46th Intake Apprentice, completing Year 12 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Engineering while studying at night part time.

The event at Victoria Barracks was not only a celebration of women's achievements but also an opportunity for networking.



Pictured above: **CAPT Adele Catts** leads the tour through the 'Women in Uniform' exhibition.

COMING RAQ EVENTS AND SOCIAL CALENDAR 2023

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

- **VENUE:** Port Office Dining Room, Brisbane CBD (Port Office Hotel) Corner Edward and Margaret Streets.
- **TIMINGS:** 1130 hrs pre-luncheon gathering for 1230 hrs start, finishing at 1700 hrs.
- **MEAL:** Entree, Main (3-way alternate drop), desert (birthday cake) tea and coffee.
- **DRINKS:** Limited drink package included once seated
- **DRESS:** Smart Casual - Gents tie please.
- **TICKETS:** Tickets (\$55 RAQ Members/Serving Soldiers and \$65 for non-members).

BOOK NOW

RSVP: Registrations close Sunday 26th November. If you have any dietary requirements, please email me.

Paul Gibbs
Deputy Chair RAQ
deputychariman@qld.raeme.org.au



The following social events are all that remain to be completed in 2023, after another busy year for the RAQ. For further details on any events, please contact the RAQ Functions Officer at: functions@qld.raeme.org.au or check **Friday Files** each week.

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

Spanner News

Event	Date
RAQ NQ Luncheon Townsville	Sun 26 Nov 2023
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon Toowoomba	Sun 26 Nov 2023
RAEME Birthday Brisbane	Fri 1 Dec 2023
RAEME Birthday Townsville	Fri 1 Dec 2023
RAQ All Ranks Luncheon Port Office Hotel Brisbane	Sat 2 Dec 2023

SPANNER PACK CONTINUES ITS GOOD WORK

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

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

Donations to Spanner Pack can be made by visiting www.qld.raeme.org.au the “SHOP” page and the donation field.

A further 26 Spanner Packs were dispatched to our soldiers deployed to the Solomon islands in October 2023. This now brings the total number of packs despatched, since Op Spanner Pack started in 2008, to 4824 Packs, which is around 9,952 kg of Spanner Pack.

Arte et Marte

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



VALE

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

- **Ullock**, Robert Raymond “Slim” (23rd Rad Mech) passed away on 26 Jul 23 following an illness. He served mostly as a calibration technician. Slim was buried at Guildford Cemetery, Kalamunda Road, South Guildford.
- **Horner**, Lindsay George COL (Rtd) passed away on 4 Aug 23 aged 94. Lindsay served in several postings in Australia and overseas including UK, PNG, and SVN, from Sep to Oct 1970. He played a critical role in establishing the RAEME aviation capability in the late 60s and early 70s. He later became CO 5 Base Wksp, and later still, established the Maintenance

Engineering Agency (MEA). On retirement, he was deeply involved in the Royal Flying Doctor Service – Victoria.

- **Gough, WO1** (Rtd) Albert John “Bert” passed away on 12 Aug 23 aged 82 years. He served two tours on operations in SVN with 101 Fd Wksp from May 1966 to June 1967, and 102 Fd Wksp, from July 1970 to July 1971.
- **Aplin, Arthur, RAAMC.** The RAQ has been advised, by the President of the Aldgate RSL, that Arthur passed away in August. An informal farewell service was held on 31 Aug 23 at Kleeman, Mount Barker, SA. Arthur, served in 106 Fd Wksp from Dec 1968 to Dec 1969. He was an indigenous person whose remains were returned to his home state, (NT), post the informal farewell service.
- **Service, Robert “Bob”** Service passed away 23 Sep 23 aged 81. Bob served as a fitter armament in SVN with 6 RAR from June 1966 to April 1967 and was on board an Iroquois helicopter that resupplied ammunition to D Coy at the battle of Long Tan in August 1966. [More at this link.](#) Bob later retrained as an Airframe Fitter and served in 183 Recce Flt in PNG from 1968 to 1969 and left the Army to work for Bell Helicopters in Brisbane, and other commercial organisations, while working hard for many philanthropic organisations.
- **Steele, Kevin SSGT** passed away on 3 Sep 23 at Tin Can Bay aged 87. Kevin started his career as a National Serviceman and later joined the CMF, serving in several units in Australia, SVN and PNG. Kevin saw operational service with 161 (Indep) Recce Flt SVN from 25 May 66 until 10 May 67 as a Corporal in the Maintenance Control Section.
- **Tremain, LTCOL (Rtd)** Peter Howard passed away on 27 Sep 23, aged 93. Peter joined the CMF in 1948 and served in several units until 11 Jun 57 when he transferred to the ARA, firstly as an infantryman, and in 1959, as a RAEME officer. He also served in PNG and SVN (HQ, Australian Force Vietnam (Army Component)) from 12 May 67 to 21 May 68. His career culminated with his appointment as CO/CI RTC (now ASEME). He resigned on the 19 Aug 80. On discharge he was appointed COL COMDT 3rd and 6th Military Districts.
- **Cullen, David Jackson** passed away on 13 Oct 23, aged 77. Dave's last unit was NQ Wksp, Townsville. He was originally an infantryman and fought at FSB Bribie in Vietnam in 1965-66. David requested no funeral, but his ashes were scattered on Bribie Island where he attended Vietnam Veteran reunions.
- **Goodwin, John Arthur** passed away on 13 Oct 23 aged 78. John was a Rad Mech in 1RAR in SVN from 7 Mar 68 to 18 Feb 69 and later served in Malaysia and Singapore. He was awarded the Infantry Combat Badge. There was no funeral.

- **Meiklejohn, WO1 (Rtd)** (15th VM) Alan George passed away in hospital in Townsville 27 Oct 23 following a fall where he broke his hip and then contracted Covid in hospital. He served in 161 (Indep) Recce Flt Wksp in SVN from 22 Sep 66 until 27 Sep 67.

WELFARE

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

- **Grant, Ross Leonard, MAJ (Rtd)** (16th VM) has recently advised of a significant improvement in his health. Ross was previously diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer. Ross' latest advice is as follows: *“RAQ members and friends, I have been advised by my surgeon and oncologist, following a Liver lobectomy operation on 21 Jul 23, I am now cancer free, and I am bloody happy!*

Please Note. 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.

Barry Shipway
Welfare Officer

welfare@qld.raeme.org.au



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

The Second Edition of RAEME's humour book, “Straight from the Horse's Mouth; More Tall Tales from Australia's Finest Tradies” has now been published and sent to all purchasers!

If you didn't get your order in before they shut off, you may still be in luck. I have a handful of spare copies that I will take to future Association events, but once they are gone (at \$25 each), they are gone!

After that, the books are likely to be available for sale through the Head of Corps Cell Shop and/or the Army Museum, Bandiana (both yet to be confirmed).

The Editors are now collecting stories for Edition 3. Whilst over 20 funny stories have already been received (thank you to all who sent them), more are required.

If you have any funny stories to share, true or otherwise, please send them to the editors at

FunnyStories@raeme.com

Remember, stories don't have to be true, just believable!

Ian Cook
Book Editor

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

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



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

64320 WO2 Dillon Terry, 102 Fd Wksp SVN 1968 to 1969. My love affair with RAEME started when I graduated from the Army Apprentice School in December 1958 as a Fitter and Turner in the 11th Intake. I then trained as an Instrument Fitter on completion of my Apprenticeship because they received One Shilling and Ninepence more a fortnight than ordinary fitters. Over the next few years I moved from Base Wksp Bn to field units and back again. I completed my Artificer Course in 1965 and became an instrument fitter instructor at RTC.

In 1968 I was posted to 102 Fd Wksp in Vung Tau, South Vietnam as the Artificer Instruments. The work was interesting, but our biggest frustration was inordinate delays for repair parts. I started up a close relationship with a Sergeant Costello from the US Army based at the Vung Tau Airport. He became a great source of supplies for a few of our instruments. We found that because the instruments, particularly sighting equipment, were needed by the fighting units asap, we had to cannibalize a great deal. This was done with BER (Beyond Economical Repair) equipment where possible.

My life was normal until one day after laying concrete outside the Sergeants Mess (as it was Sunday, both of us had consumed quite a few cans of liquid amber), SGT Bruce Robertson (now deceased) and I were asked to go immediately to the Hospital and give blood as we had the right type A2 neg. On arrival, I informed the pathologist that we had consumed quite an amount of beer. His immediate response was "It's ok Sergeant Major, we will keep him alive tonight and cure his headache tomorrow morning"! RAEME to the fore.

Spanner News



In late May 68, I was asked to fix a couple of infra-red sights fitted to Centurion tanks at Fire Support Base Balmoral – apparently, when the sights were turned on in the daylight, the Infra-Red Multiplier would blow. Following the re-fitment, I had to wait for darkness to test them, which was difficult as we were now under attack and the tank crews wanted their tanks back.

October 1968 saw the birth of 106 Fd Wksp at Nui Dat. I was in the advance party that spent the first couple of weeks filling sandbags and erecting tents, sighting and digging weapon pits. There were 120 American sandbags and 100 Australian sandbags to each tent and the instruments and telecommunications trucks were sighted alongside one another to conduct field repairs efficiently.

While we were supposed to be carrying out Field Repairs, invariably we were doing Base Repairs. Parts were still hard to get, so a great deal of cannibalising again took place. This was done mainly on "the old boy" net. After all, we were all there for the one reason and that was to keep our "warriors" in the field.

My friend from the American Army helped where possible. He was astounded at the repairs we carried out under difficult circumstances. One day I asked if he could assist with some watch parts. He arrived a few days later with a bag full of about 70 BER watches. The repair of these necessitated the removal of the plastic glass. I gave the boys in the machine shop a design and they made up a device to remove the glass. Just about every officer and senior NCO in the unit got a nice green Field Watch!

Being Soldier Tradesmen we were responsible for our own patrols in what was called TAOR Patrols (Tactical Area of Responsibility). Some Senior NCOs were selected to train with a Battalion before taking our own Patrols. I trained with Whiskey Company New Zealanders attached to 6 Battalion. I felt very proud to be an ANZAC.

My first training patrol was a little scary despite our previous training. We patrolled out to Long Tan area before an overnight bivouac, the next day until 1200 hrs before returning to base. A very uneventful exercise

however I learnt more from those guys than I ever did on exercises in Australia, and the Infantry section commander was impressed with my navigation and map reading skills. After another training patrols, I carried out two patrols with our workshop personnel who performed to a very high standard.

On my return to Australia in 1969 I was posted to 4 Base Wksp BN, Bandiana, which was wonderful as my family could remain where we lived. This was followed in January 1970 by a posting to where my career began, Wing Sergeant Major of the Metal Trades Wing, at the Army Apprentice School, Balcombe. I took up the position 14 years to the day after I arrived as a 15 year old, not really knowing what my career would hold. I found nothing much had changed; however the Apprentice's couldn't work out how I regularly caught them doing something which they shouldn't!

My last posting was in 1975, before taking discharge as my two children started Secondary College, was to 3 Base Wksp at Broadmeadows in the General Engineering Wing.

Over my civilian career, I undertook several State Training Managers jobs which complemented my training and organisational competencies, which I received whilst in RAEME – these were eagerly sort after in civilian life. Because of these skills, I was selected to Manage the Australian Team of young Tradespeople to the World Skill Olympics in 1983, 1985, 1988 and 1990. (This is a competition between under 23-year-old tradespersons held every two years around the world)

The highlight of my career was in 2003 when I received the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to Vocational Education. I believe this achievement and others were as a result of my early career as an Army Apprentice, and the many experiences in my later life, in particular as a Warrant Officer Class I in RAEME.

In 1979 I joined Legacy which supports the Widows and Dependents of Returned Servicemen and Woman. I saw this activity as a way of "Repaying the sacrifice made by our fallen".

18937 CPL Ewan McLeod, 131 Div Loc Bty SVN 1970 – 1971. I graduated from AAS in 1967 as a 20th Intake Radio Mechanic. In 1970, now a qualified Radar Mechanic, I was posted to Holsworthy. Understandably that posting didn't last long as I was destined for service with 131 Div Loc Bty, Nui Dat, SVN, to support the AN-KPQ-I Mortar Locating Radars, which at that time, were being taken out of operational service. My OC, MAJ Vin Noonan, saw an opportunity for three newly arrived technicians to join the 5th LEMCO (Light Equipment Maintenance Company) of the US Army at Long Binh to learn about providing support to the newer AN-KPQ-10 mortar locating radars, and the AN-TPS-25 battlefield

surveillance radar, their ancillaries and miscellaneous electronic equipment.

It soon became apparent that our basic trade training at AAS, followed by later courses at RAEME Training Centre, was benefitting our quick assimilation of the new systems, because we quickly qualified. As a result, we were soon routinely deployed by US Army helicopters, in pairs, one Australian and one American, to remote sites along or near the Cambodian border south of the Parrots Beak, to repair equipment in the field, which often extended to other electronic/electrical tasks.

Deployments usually commenced in the afternoon on these so called "Contact Missions". After being dropped off, it was a case of finding our way home independently after spending the night with our "hosts", as pilots didn't want to hang around waiting for us to complete many tasks. Fortunately, everyone in our team of three Australians and six Americans had a letter signed by the US Army general that declared we were priority 1 on all flights in SVN. However, this sometimes resulted in a "Cooks Tours" to unexpected places.



Equipment faults varied from component failure, poor maintenance, equipment mishandling, lack of care and lack of knowledge of the onsite technician. The most difficult repair encountered was the large wiring harness at the back of the analogue computer drawer at the bottom of an AN-KPQ-10 control console, which was almost completely severed when the drawer was slammed shut. Luckily no power had been applied and once the operator(s) realised what was happening, there were no induced or secondary faults with which to contend. Re-joining the cut wires and insulating the joints took a couple of hours in very difficult circumstances.

By way of an example, of differing maintenance philosophies between the Australian and US Armies, and while trying to repair a recalcitrant Onan 15KVA generator, which was continually "hunting" and generally misbehaving, the US Army provided a "motor" technician to attend the engine; the problems continued, so a "carburettor" technician arrived; still problems persisted,

so finally a “generator” technician arrived. The problem continued and none of the arrivals had an integrated knowledge of the system, a reflection on the then training system employed by the US Army. Finally, the generator was fixed and inspected every hour to ensure its continued satisfactory operation.

Another incident I recall vividly occurred when I was crouching low and conducting a check on another generator, in steady soaking rain, when there was a loud explosion. I was knocked out and when I came to, I was lying on my back in the red mud with my right hand resting on the frame of the generator – I could feel the generator vibrating, but could hear nothing. I found out later that an RPG had hit the sandbagged wall around the generator and the accommodation building, which supported our radar, but despite some protection, I’d worn most of the blast and was concussed. Going back into the CP, the human goldfish mouthed something at me, but my eyes were fixed on the unfriendly tracers coming from the direction of Cambodia – it was a busy night.

We experienced an interesting and rewarding time at 5th LEMCO with such a wide variation of mission tasks. No mission or task was the same, and I know my colleagues had similar experiences, although the damage to my right ear hearing was a souvenir I would have happily left behind.

Ewan completed 25 years’ service retiring with the rank of MAJOR. His final appointment was OC 1 Sig Regt Wksp, but he continued in the ARES for 15 years providing training for RA Sigs and SF personnel across Australia, including equipment evaluation and modification for mission purposes.

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

I hope readers have enjoyed the wide range of stories from our RAQ members who served in SVN as we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War. Stories of what members of our Corps did throughout their careers are important, whether they occurred 80 years ago or 10 years ago. Our stories are the key elements of our heritage and help us learn why we have such a well-deserved reputation as soldiers and tradesmen.

Some of you may recall we captured a lot of the more contemporary stories in the most recent edition of “*With Skill and Fighting: Craftsman of the Australian Army 1942-2014*”, published in 2014. At that time, many stories were offered but not all were published because the book’s size was limited by cost and the ability to have coherent stories across a significant period of years. This suggests there are a lot of historically significant stories yet to be told, and published, as well as including contemporary stories since 2014 – maybe there is a reader who would like to start the next Corps history!

In recent weeks, I visited the Army Museum, Bandiana, and spoke to Mr Dave West, one of the curators, but one who is immensely interested in RAEME Corps history. I have asked Dave to provide me with information on the sort of material the museum values and requires for its displays, or which can be kept safely in the museum’s repository for posterity. I also discovered the Museum holds a rich source of RAEME stories and a huge amount of historic material, which students or other interested parties may like to access. May I encourage you to think of the museum when studying history or looking for a safe storage place.

Finally, I have advised the RAQ Chairman, Pete Matthews, of my desire to step down as Patron of the RAQ. I have enjoyed the honour of occupying the position for some 10 years, and the goals we achieved together during that time, but now the perfect time to bring in fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Sound succession planning is important.

I will continue with the position of COORD of the RAEME National Network (RNN), but I have been in discussions with a very fine person, who is interested in taking on the job in time – we are discussing a sensible handover date. I will continue to compile and edit Spanner News, but good succession planning demands, that our RAQ appointments and tasks need to be reviewed routinely – including mine.

Once again may I thank everyone for their involvement in the RAQ in 2023 – it has been one of our biggest and busiest years to date. On your behalf, may I thank the RAQ executive, the regional executives and organisers across Queensland and those of you who participated in our many events for your loyalty and involvement. Enjoy the coming holiday break and I look for to 2024 to another big year in the RAQ.

Arte et Marte

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



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LATE MAIL – MERMAID BEACH AEME SLC BOOK LAUNCH – TUES 21 NOV 2023

Mermaid Beach AEME Surf Life Saving Club
 The first 50 Years

MERMAID TALES

Our 360 page book “MERMAID TALES”, the history of the Mermaid Beach AEME Surf Life Saving Club in its first 50 years, will be officially launched by the Mayor of the Gold Coast, Tom Tate, at 12.00 noon on Tuesday, 21 November at the Clubhouse on Hedges Avenue, Mermaid Beach.

The book tells the story of the Club’s journey from its humble birth in 1945 to its 50th Anniversary in 1995, a period that laid the foundations for the successful, award-winning Club we celebrate today.

All Corps members and veterans are cordially invited to attend, and hope you will join us in celebrating this milestone event.

The book will be on sale at the launch.

Spanner News

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<https://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility/>

RAEME Association Queensland Merchandise 2023

The RAQ has a huge range of merchandise on sale at our [online shop](#)

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