



"SAPPER SUMMIT" *RAE CORPS NEWSLETTER*

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SPECIAL EDITION

This is a special edition, primarily to advertise the Sir Clive Steele Lecture. ***Book as soon as you get this.***

We have not had time to put together a full issue. There will still be two more issues to come this year. One will be in September, and the other in November.

ROB YOUL'S COLUMN

STUART SIMPSON'S "LONG LOOK" -- NOT YOUR USUAL STUDY TOUR!

Long Look is the Australian Army's traditional and much sought after reciprocal exchange with the British Army – usually five months or so attached amiably to a unit somewhere in Europe with lots of time for travel. A similar group comes here for the same period.

Ringwood's Sergeant Stuart Simpson applied in early 2003. The son of Staff Sergeant John Simpson, he'd been in for eleven years. It's 'one army' and his CO and others up the line supported him. Within six weeks he knew he would serve with 11 Field Squadron RE, part of 38 Field Engineer Regiment at Ripon, an old cathedral town in Yorkshire on the moors. There was a catch: the regiment was off to Iraq in June! With his family's blessing, he decided he would go just the same.

Arriving in May, he had two weeks of weapons, vehicle and equipment conversion courses. The mess was homely and friendly. He had a week's leave to tour Scotland and England – the Army kindly supplied and fuelled a civilian car. On another day off, to everyone's amazement, he drove to Stonehenge.

He found the soldiers like ours – young, all triers, but anxious. Many had served abroad but this was the real thing! Their personal interests seemed narrower and less practically oriented than typical Australian soldiers – for example few could fix their cars. The unit had one female, a clerk, who came out to Iraq later on. Stuart thought the relationship between NCOs and soldiers was more formal and stratified than in the Australian Army. The sergeant whom Stuart was to replace for Long Look actually didn't come to Australia – the CO needed him in Iraq!

Stuart served in Iraq from June to September, and the unit went home in November. The first three days in a staging camp were devoted to acclimatisation, language, weapons and tactical briefings. Next Stuart went with the advance party for five days up the Shatt-al-Arab, the huge waterway that links Iraq to the Persian Gulf. Then it was Basra, a city of around half a million people, and their home for the rest of the tour.

As leader of an RE property management team, Stuart had a loose mandate – he would ensure all non-military equipment used by the regiment was installed and operated properly and well maintained. At fourteen sites around Basra were generators, toilets facilities, refrigerated containers, switchboards and air conditioners. His Australian farm background and trade training served him well, for as well as his electrical and refrigeration skills, he can repair diesel motors, amongst many other skills.

The time went quickly – at least when he looked back on his return – but he worked many very long days.

And he was in two incidents, one of which, an ambush, was very unnerving. His convoy was headed down a one-way street, when its rear was cut off. The crowd overwhelmed the vehicles, damaging many with concrete bricks and crowbars.

British soldiers were injured, but no shots were fired. Later Stuart's barracks – a palace – was fired on, and he and his men stood to. He recalls that battle procedures were being continuously reviewed, changed as necessary and taught to the troops. He suspects that this commitment to collecting combat intelligence and willingness to adapt is a major strength of the British Army.

Stuart was co-located with some unspectacular CIA agents. They drove a Chevy Suburban, dressed in similar civilian clothes and stood out! He worked with a troop of Swedish sappers, and his barracks housed an entire Italian convoy for two days when it turned up lost. A Canadian MP company, which he came to know quite well, lost its OC, CSM, a driver and six MPs in a short period. The MPs had run out of ammunition – British Army personal allocations were thereafter doubled to 100 rounds per soldier.

In contrast to the execrable rations in the mess at Ripon, the food in Iraq was faultless. Stuart marvels at the way the military cooks produced such excellent meals in kitchen tents that heated daily to around 80 degrees Celsius! His helicopter trip to Baghdad didn't come off – an officer displaced him, as was the case when he went to board a VC 10 airliner for the trip back to Britain. Instead he flew by Hercules, a gruelling, ear-ringing flight punctuated by a two-hour stop at Gibraltar.

He had three more days at Ripon then went to Brise Norton to regroup with his fellow Long Lookers. Then it was Heathrow and home! Of the 117 in the contingent, ten to fifteen had been to Iraq, but only three others had served similar stints to Stuart.

Throughout his time abroad this admirable sapper was able to keep in touch with his wife, Michelle, and family through emails and satellite phone conversations.

... Rob Youl

**Sapper Summit is produced by the
RAE (Vic) Historical and Heritage
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The President is Maj Bruce Campbell (Rtd)
The Secretary/Editor is Maj Austin Byrne (Rtd)
Our address is on the last page.

Note that articles or opinions of authors or contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Association. The format and clarity of the articles is the responsibility of the contributor.

NEWS FROM 22 CONST REGT

105 Construction Sqn has had a busy couple of months. June saw the Sqn concentrate on building and vehicle search techniques, which culminated in Ex High Power over the weekend 17-19 Jun. It was a successful Ex and positive feedback was received at all levels. The search training was greatly enhanced by the loan of a HRES kit from 3 CER, which was greatly appreciated. It made the training realistic and exposed the reservists to new, in-service equipment.

The Sqn then turned its attention back to horizontal and vertical construction in July with Ex Telluride at Puckapunyal. It was a works weekend that focused on completing the School of Artillery hard standing and continuing works on the Donovan Joynt. Unfortunately the weather was against us and although a significant amount of work was done on the hard stand on Saturday morning, heavy rain in the afternoon precluded any further works. Works on the Donovan Joynt progressed significantly with the completion of the balustrade and internal doors/frames. This task will continue in Sept with the installation of the external staircases.

Currently the Sqn is conducting demolitions training in the lead up to the August deployment to Puckapunyal. Under chilly conditions, the Regt will combine to form a Sqn (+) which will deploy on an exercise that will revise members in demolitions and IMT skills. This will also provide lead up training for the AFX in Tasmania in October where the Regt will deploy for the first time.



SUCCESSFUL WATERLOO DINNER

The Corps held a very successful dinner on the 90th Anniversary of the 1st Waterloo Dinner which was held at Galipoli on 18 June 1915. Some 80 people attended at Victoria Barracks Officers Mess.

4CER constructed a very attractive mock up of Watson's Pier at the entrance to the Mess complete with a pile driver and short length of pier.

The band was the 2/10 Fd Regt RAA, and the guest was Brig Keith Calwell, CBE, RASigs, who had known Stan Watson personally.

There was a suggestion that the 100th Anniversary Dinner should be held at Galipoli in 2015 – That's forward planning!

Thgoose present also helped Sir John Holland celebrate his 91st birthday.

Apologies – we have no room for other items!

Major-General Sir Clive Steele, KC, MC, DSO.

1892 - 1955

Major-General Sir Clive Steele is an icon of the Royal Australian Engineers, serving in WWI and WWII where his military career culminated when he was appointed the first ever Engineer-in-Chief in The Australian Army.



Graduating in Civil Engineering from the University of Melbourne, Sir Clive was also a distinguished engineer in Australia and was a foundation member of the Institution of Engineers Australia.

Today his legacy can be witnessed throughout the corps – perhaps most famously at the School of Military Engineering, which has been named in his honour. The Sir Clive Steele Memorial Lecture is an annual event intended to bring Engineers around Australia together to confer on current Engineering issues. ♦

SIR CLIVE STEELE MEMORIAL LECTURE

Oakleigh Barracks

10 September 2005

Presenters

The Lecture will be presented by Lieutenant Colonel Ian Cumming, Commanding Officer 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, speaking on Engineer Operations in Iraq and Aceh.

Also present will be displays from various Engineer and Construction groups and a special presentation from David Steele (son of Sir Clive Steele) presenting the "Life of Sir Clive Steele".

A 3 course meal will be provided for \$15

For any further details please contact the 22nd Construction Regiment on (03) 9550-3900.

Memorial Lecture

Venue	Oakleigh Barracks 1318 North Rd Oakleigh South
Date	10 September 2005
Times: Start	12:00pm
Finish	4:00pm
RSVP: by	26 Aug 05
to	(03) 9550-3900

22 CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT EX-MEMBERS REUNION – 2005.

*This year's Reunion will be held at Bendigo on 21-22-23 October.
All former members should try to come – Meet the people you served with over the years!*

Organisation is by Jenny Eaton, telephone 5156 0298.