"SAPPER SUMMIT"

RAE CORPS NEWSLETTER

VICTORIAN ENGINEERS

March 2006 *ISSN 1325 – 7676* *Number 53*

Have you paid your 2006 Subs for Sapper Summit??

We are now seeking subscriptions for 2006. Anyone on our subscriber list who has not paid the current year's subscription will have a red sticker at the bottom of this page ... a mere $10.00 to keep in touch! See page 2 for details.

Contents

Editorial	1
Sapper Summit Support	2
Subscriptions	2
Rob Youl's Column	3
H & H Association News	4
Coming Events	
- Anzac Day Arrangements	5
- 22 Regt Offrs Dine-In	5
- Waterloo Dinner 2006	5
- Reserve Forces Day March	5
From the Units	
- 4 CER	6
- 22 Construction Regt	6
Association Reports	7
The Aerodrome on Norfolk Island	9
The History of Fortifications	12

Printed by: Kwik Kopy, 6 Burwood Highway, Burwood

EDITORIAL: GOING IN TOO MANY DIRECTIONS!

I have been sitting in the Editor's seat since the death of the late Eddie Vial in late 2001. As part of my job, I try to get articles from the various RAE associations, committees and olds and bolds organisations in Victoria. If you include the Corps Committee and individuals such as Capt Bill McAuley who organises an RAE Annual Officers Golf Day, there are some eleven groups serving us Sappers. This does not include the various WW2 Unit Associations, or the two Regiments.

I have to say all groups are well intentioned and are functioning, and the co-operation I get from my contact people is excellent, HOWEVER, we are a highly un-coordinated lot, and it is obvious that some groups are showing signs that they are in danger of imploding within a few years.

I know that several are having trouble with a dwindling and ageing membership and nearly all have trouble getting new blood to take on key committee positions. The Historical and Heritage Association sought new members last year ... result, one additional person!

A couple of years ago, our Colonel Commandant, Brig Bob Slater AM, tried to get a bridging association going, but it did not get off the ground. I think we will have to make some sort of attempt during 2006 to re-assess our overall viability and to see if we can get some better co-ordination.

. . . . *The Editor.*

SAPPER SUMMIT

Sapper Summit is produced four times a year by the RAE (Vic) Historical and Heritage Association Inc. (Reg No. A0046126U.)

The President is Maj Bruce Campbell (Rtd)
The Secretary/Editor is Maj Austin Byrne (Rtd)

Mail can be sent to:
The Editor, Sapper Summit,
RAE (Vic) Historical and Heritage Association Inc,
C/- Oakleigh Barracks,
1318 North Road,
OAKLEIGH SOUTH, VIC, 3167

We need Your Articles!

Our deadlines for articles for the rest of 2005 are:

- May issue by 29 April
- August issue by 12 August
- November issue by 28 October

We are looking for news items, suggestions, letters to the editor, etc, including any constructive criticisms. For the next issue, send them to either:

Austin Byrne on Tel: 9803 1061
email to: austbyrne@bigpond.com OR

Bruce Campbell on Tel: 9568 0320 or 5974 1685
email: bandbcampbell@optusnet.com.au

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.

Larger edition.

This issue runs to 16 pages, instead of the normal 12.
This is because of the articles on the Norfolk Island Aerodrome and on the History of Fortifications.

SAPPER SUMMIT SUBS ARE DUE

It is now time to renew your subscription to Sapper Summit!

There is no increase in the subscription rate for 2006. It remains at $10.00.

We have three different groups of readers:

- The RAE (Victoria) Corps Committee pays for the copies of Sapper Summit for serving members of 4 CER and 22 Construction Regiment, and for a short list of official copies which go to other Units and Associations. (The address labels have a ► beside the name)
- The RAE Association at Ringwood pays for their members in bulk. (They have a ♣ on the address label)
- Everyone else is a general subscriber and is expected to pay the $10.00 per year subscription. (Once you have paid the current year, there is a ♦ beside your name on the address label)

Because some people have already paid for 2006, we are putting a sticker on the bottom of page 1 to show where you stand --- A RED STICKER MEANS YOU HAVE TO PAY. If you have a red sticker, please forward your payment by the end of April using the form at the back of this issue.

CORPS SUBSCRIPTIONS

The CORPS Committee relies on Corps Subscriptions to carry out its role. Whilst subs are voluntary for retired personnel, everyone is urged to contribute. The rates are detailed at the bottom of page 15. The CORPS Committee in general fosters esprit-de-corps amongst sappers, administers corps property and assets as well as acts as a central link for all the niche engineer groups (e.g. The RAE Association, Vietnam Veterans, the Old Sappers, the Historical and Heritage Association, etc).

One cheque can cover both subscriptions - see page 15

ROB YOUL'S COLUMN

MORE ON MONTY

Rob Youl started a series on Monty in Issue 47 of Sapper Summit, but in March last year, we left him sitting behind the minefields at El Alamein ..... so here is Rob's continuation:

This year being the twentieth anniversary of the Landcare movement in Victoria, I am involved during the next six months with several substantial publications. Accordingly, the prospect of further detailed articles on Monty and World War II is daunting. I thought for the next column or so I would streamline his life after taking over Eighth Army and fighting El Alamein, but maybe return eventually to that battle if readers so desired.

I have adopted a new approach this time, borrowing from four internet sources - Juno Beach Centre, Digger history, Wikipedia and Grolier – as well as Nigel Hamilton's books.

To recapitulate, Bernard Law Montgomery was born in London on 17 November 1887, the son of an Anglican bishop, and lived some years in Hobart. He attended St. Paul's School and Sandhurst Military Academy. In 1908, he enlisted in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, served in India and, after World War I broke out, in France, where he was severely wounded. Montgomery returned to the front in 1916 and, after the war, as Chief of General Staff for 47th London Division, was regarded as a master at training troops. He believed that top physical fitness went hand in hand with good leadership.

Rising in rank to major general, he commanded a division in Palestine and Trans Jordan in 1938-39. During the early months of World War II, Montgomery commanded II Army Corps. In France, unable to stop the Germans' progress, his formation was extracted from Dunkirk on 1 June 1940.

In August 1942, Churchill sent Montgomery to Egypt to command Eighth Army, which Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps had just defeated. Through concerted energy, intellect, personality, purpose, traditional command structures and commonsense, Montgomery was able to very quickly restore the force's confidence and meticulously prepare it for battle.

On 30 August, Erwin Rommel attacked at Alam el Halfa. Montgomery responded by withdrawing his troops to El Alamein to establish a good defensive line from the coast to the impassable Qattara Depression. Montgomery could now prevent Rommel and the German Army advancing further into Egypt.

Over the next six weeks, Montgomery stockpiled vast quantities of weapons and ammunition, aiming at acquiring overwhelming firepower. By the middle of October the Eighth Army totalled 195 000 men, 1900 guns and 1350 tanks, including large numbers of recently delivered Sherman M4s and Grant M3s.

On 23 October Montgomery launched Operation Lightfoot with the largest artillery bombardment since World War One. The attack came at the worst time for Afrika Korps. Rommel was on sick leave in Austria; his stand-in, General Georg Stumme, died of a heart attack during the 1000-gun bombardment. General Ritter von Thoma took over, as Hitler was ordering Rommel's immediate return to Egypt – von Thoma himself was captured.

The Germans defended their positions well; after two days Eighth Army had made little progress and Montgomery curtailed the attack. When Rommel returned he counterattacked Kidney Ridge on 27 October. Montgomery returned to the offensive and Ninth Australian Division created a salient into the enemy positions, holding on skilfully despite several German counter-attacks.

Churchill was disappointed by Eighth Army's lack of success, accusing Montgomery of fighting a "half-hearted" battle. Ignoring these criticisms, Montgomery planned a new offensive, Operation Supercharge.

On 1 November 1942, Montgomery attacked Kidney Ridge. After initially resisting, Rommel decided his line was unsustainable and withdrew. However, Hitler overruled his commander, forcing the Germans to stand and fight. The next day Montgomery ordered his men forward. The Eighth Army broke through; with Rommel in danger of being surrounded, Hitler eventually approved a retreat. Soldiers on foot, including numerous Italians, were unable to move fast enough and many were captured.

It looked like the British would cut Rommel off, but a storm on 6 November turned the desert into a quagmire, halting pursuit. Rommel, with only twenty tanks left, managed to reach Sollum on the Libyan border.

On 8 November, Erwin Rommel learned of the Allied invasion of Morocco and Algeria under General Dwight Eisenhower's command. His depleted army now had two fronts to man.

The Eighth Army recaptured Tobruk on 13 November to wrap up operations. During the Alamein campaign half of Rommel's 100,000 man army was killed, wounded or taken prisoner. He lost over 450 tanks and 1,000 guns. The British and Commonwealth forces suffered 13,500 casualties with 500 tanks damaged. However, 350 could be repaired.

For Churchill, El Alamein marked the turning point of the war. He ordered the ringing of

church bells all over Britain and said later, "Before Alamein we never had a victory; after Alamein we never had a defeat!"

Eighth Army continued to advance, capturing Tripoli on 23 January 1943. Rommel was unable to mount a successful counterattack and on 9 March Jurgen von Arnim replaced him as the Axis' African commander in chief. He too failed to halt the Allied advance westwards and on 11 May 1943, the Axis forces surrendered in Tunisia.

At the January 1943 Casablanca conference, Churchill and Roosevelt decided to invade Sicily, hoping that its capture might convince Italy to withdraw from the war. Success would also force Hitler to divert troops from the Eastern Front and relieve the Red Army.

General Eisenhower was given supreme command. General Harold Alexander commanded ground operations; his 15th Army Group included Montgomery (Eighth Army) and General George Patton (US Seventh Army). Admiral Andrew Cunningham directed naval operations and Air Marshal Arthur Tedder was air commander.

On 10 July 1943, the Eighth Army landed at five points in south-eastern Sicily and the US Seventh Army at three beaches west of the British. Patton and his troops quickly took Gela, Licata and Vittoria. The British landings were unopposed and Syracuse fell the same day, followed by Palazzolo (11 July), Augusta (13 July) and Vizzini (14 July), and US troops captured Biscani airfield and Niscemi (14 July).

Patton now moved west and General Omar Bradley north, forcing the German Army to retreat across the Simeto River. Patton took Palermo on 22 July, cutting off 50,000 Italian troops, then turned east along the northern coast towards the port of Messina.

Meanwhile German forces under Field Marshal Albrecht Kesselring were delaying Montgomery and the Eighth Army. The Allies attempted several amphibious assaults to cut the Germans off but were unable to stop mass evacuation across the Messina Straits to Calabria. Some 40 000 German and 60,000 Italian troops, with 10,000 German vehicles and 47 tanks reached the mainland.

On 17 August 1943, Patton and his troops marched into Messina. Capturing Sicily cleared the way for Allied shipping in the Mediterranean. It also undermined Benito Mussolini, whom Victor Emmanuel III forced to resign.

Montgomery, as commander of Eighth Army, led the invasion of mainland Italy on 3 September 1943. Under his command were Fifth and Tenth British Corps, Second Polish Corps and First Canadian Corps, the latter under Lieutenant General HDG Crerar. Monty's landing at Reggio drew little resistance, and that day British warships landed First Parachute Division at Taranto. Six days later the US Sixth Corps arrived at Salerno, meeting heavy German bombardment; the beachhead was not secured until 20 September.

The German Army fought ferociously in southern Italy, so the Allies made slow progress north towards Rome. The Fifth Army took Naples on 1 October and later that day Eighth Army captured the Foggia airfields.

Monty was soon to be called home to plan and play a lead in the return to continental Europe.

. . . to be continued

... Rob Youl

NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATION

The Historical and Heritage Association Inc. held its AGM on 22 March 2006. There were ieight members present and the outgoing committee was re-elected:

Chairman	Bruce Campbell
Vice-Chairman	Les Malseed
Secretary	Austin Byrne
Treasurer	Norm Dodgson
Ordinary Member }	Tony Bourke
of Committee }	Bill Atkins

The Association currently has twenty-two members. The main activities over the last year were:

- The production of four issues of Sapper Summit.
- Running two workshops to sort the memorabilia collection.
- Seeking information from former members of 16 Construction Regiment as a basis for producing a Unit History.

The Association operates with a Committee of Management and a Working Group. The Association's main expenditure was Sapper Summit production and mailing.

Some Future Actions:
Association Membership:

We sought more members for the Association last year .. it takes some effort to write Unit Histories ... and achieved one new member! We still want people to join the Association who can:

- Help with the production of Sapper Summit (edit, write articles based on information from others, maintain subscriber lists, etc.)
- Help us move to an email option for Sapper Summit.

- Help with cataloguing and displaying memorabilia
- Help with writing Unit Histories

Unit Histories:

We hope to start collecting information for a Unit History of 16 Construction Regiment. We have had a good response to our request to former members for assistance, and will follow that up this year.

We will also start assembling information on the Ringwood Units for a History. This would follow on from the one produced in the 1970's on 3 Div Engineers. This will be in association with the RAE Association at Ringwood.

Sapper Summit by Email:

By the end of the year we should be distributing Sapper Summit as a hard copy and in an email version. They would have different subscription rates. We received mixed comments from subscribers last year, so it is likely we will run with a dual system.

Anyone who would like to assist the H & H Association can telephone Bruce Campbell or Austin Byrne, or write. (see page 2 for contact details)

COMING EVENTS

ANZAC DAY ARRANGEMENTS

Anzac Day 2006 falls on a Monday, and will be celebrated with the usual ceremonies, including a Dawn Service at the Oakleigh Barracks.

The ceremony at the Oakleigh Barracks will follow the normal arrangements:

0530 hours	Gunfire Breakfast
0600 hours	Dawn Service
0640 hours	Breakfast in gym

4 CER will, as usual, be fully committed providing guards and catafalque parties to local ceremonies.
They will start with a Dawn Service at the new 4 CER Soldiers Memorial at the Ringwood Depot. They will then be involved in the March in the City as part of 4 Bde. (Contact the Depot in April on 9870 7073 for timing details.)

We have had trouble organizing excursions ... we had none last year. We hope we will have better news in the next issue.

"BACK TO 22"
22 CONST REGT OFFICERS DINING-IN
Saturday 22 April 2006

22 Const Regt is holding a Dining-In for all current and past serving Officers of the Regiment.

The date:	Saturday 22 April
Timings:	1900hrs for 1930hrs.
Dress:	Winter Mess Dress or Black Tie (Ladies: Formal)
Cost:	TBA, but approximately $60
Bookings:	Lt Dale Hopcraft (03) 9550 3934 or Mob: 0408 301 868 or dale.hopcraft@defence.gov.au

The RSVP date is 7 April, but ring as soon as you get this.
This is a great opportunity for a get together.

WATERLOO DINNER

This year's Officers Waterloo Dinner will be held on Saturday 17 June. The venue is the Victoria Barracks Officers Mess.
Put the date in your diary. Further details will be in the May issue. (organization is by 4 CER)

The Old Sappers Waterloo Dinner details will be in the next issue also.

RESERVE FORCES DAY MARCH SUNDAY 2 JULY 2006.

The Reserve Forces Day March in Melbourne will be on Sunday 2nd July. The assembly time is 1100hrs for a step off at 1130hrs.

This year's March celebrates several milestones including:

- 70th Anniversary of 21 Sqn, RAAF
- 90th Anniversary of Military Police
- 55th Anniversary of National Service

Mark this date in your diary for 2005.
We will have our usual RAE Get Together after the March at Bells Hotel in South Melbourne.
Full details will be in the May issue.

NEWS FROM THE UNITS

4 CER

4 CER commenced 2006 in mid-January with some new key personnel marching in including the XO (Regt 2IC) MAJ Brent Rodgers, OC 38 Spt Sqn MAJ Allan Tadich, RSM WO1 Carl Barnett and QM WO1 Chris McKenna. 4 CER also welcomed new officers CAPT Martin Ruschena and LT Peter Righetti to the Unit. Vacancies of Operations Officer (MAJ) and Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant (SGT) will be managed in 2006.

The CO (LTCOL David Westphalen), OC 10 Sqn (MAJ David Andrewartha) and A/ OPSO (CAPT Tanya Goddard) remain points of continuity for 2005/ 06.

This year promises to be busy starting with operations for the 2006 Commonwealth Games. 4 CER had personnel deployed on a range of tasks for the duration of the games. Sapper Brendan Leyden has also recently returned from Operation Relex (patrolling in Australian waters to the north) after four months away.

Support to RMC and the University Regiments will continue in 2006, with plant support provided to the Defence Trials in Woomera. Recruiting activities will also commence with an Engineers display at the Maroondah Festival.

Activities

The Regiment has recently completed annual induction training in January.
Future activities include:

a. Dawn service at 4 CER memorial on Anzac Day, followed by the Regiment marching in the city on Anzac Day as a part of 4 Bde,
b. Demolitions in May,
c. Bde exercise at Cultana Training Area (SA) in September, and
d. Bridging in November.

The Reserve Response Force (RRF) and Force Protection Company Group will be focuses this year.

Dates for noting:

1. 25 Apr 06-- Anzac Day Dawn Service at the 4 CER Soldiers Memorial.
   Please contact the 4 CER Orderly Room in April to confirm details.

2. 17 Jun 06—Officers Waterloo Dinner, Victoria Barracks.

22 CONST REGIMENT

LTCOL Steve Bell handed over command of the Regiment to LTCOL John Raike in December 2005. LTCOL Bell is now posted full time to DMO. The year has got off to a busy start. The Regt conducted induction training at HMAS Cerberus in January 2006 followed by a Regimental Planning Conference that was conducted at Fort Queenscliff in February. Mission analysis and a 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats' (SWOT) analysis were used to steer the direction of the Regiment for the next two years.

WO2 Stevenson has returned from OP Chiron in Timor Leste and the Regiment has been deploying personnel on Op Acolyte in support of the Commonwealth Games and later in the year on AACAP 06. A plant course and PSO course are currently being conducted in Gippsland and the Regiment will be conducting further courses this year including a Mod 1 IET.

Key Personnel of 22 Const Regt for 2006:

CO - LTCOL John Raike
RSM - WO1 Pat Jorna
XO - MAJ Terry Prudden
OPSO - MAJ Shaun Higbid
ADJT - CAPT Sarah Reynolds
OC 39 Const Sqn - MAJ Cliff Parfiit
OC 105 Const Sqn - MAJ Mike Longmire
RQMS - WO1 Noel Schwartz

* * * *

Ex Market Garden, 8 Feb 06
105 Const Sqn

After coordinating our command, orderly room, transport, Q store, medical, Victorian Police Districts, National Park and civilian property owners, the sappers of 105 Const Sqn embarked on Ex Market Garden.

The activity involved receiving patrol orders at the base of Mt Dandenong, then navigating by foot through civilian land, roads and National Park to the summit. Transportation back to Oakleigh Barracks was waiting at the top so it was all executed within the Wednesday parade night. This was the fourth activity of its type within 18 months all arranged and executed at JNCO level.

The name 'Market Garden' was taken from the movie 'A bridge too far', in this case a hill too far! History was rewritten, as this time it was a success! The individual effort of all those involved was excellent.

Expression of Interest Requested from RAE Officers – Waterloo Dinner 2015 Gallipoli

We are looking at holding a Waterloo Dinner at Gallipoli One Hundred years to the day after the original dinner was held at Gallipoli.
If you are at all a little keen send us your contact details, including:

Name
Rank
Number
E-mail
Phone
Postal address

Contact person:
Captain Gerry BETTS
22 Construction Regiment
E-mail: Gerry.Betts@defence.gov.au

ASSOCIATION REPORTS

OLD SAPPERS ASSOCIATION INC.

During January we joined members of the 2/22 Lark Force for their annual Shrine Pilgrimage. The format was altered this year but it is envisaged the pilgrimage will continue for the foreseeable future.

The 71st AGM of the Association was conducted during February when an election was necessary for the ordinary members of committee.

President J. Muir,
Vice President N. J. F. Dodgson,
Secretary/Treasurer J. Crosling, Ordinary
Members of Committee J. Carroll, F. Hosemans and A. Rantall.

The other item of note from the AGM was a motion to change the name of the Association. This will become a special resolution and will be dealt with according to the model rules.

Our next function will be Anzac Day and the Committee has determined that our bar will not be open after the march. Realistically a sad sign of the times.

We are always keen to welcome new members and anyone interested should contact our Secretary, Jim Crosling on 9438 2273.

.... *Jim Muir*

WOODPECKERS RAE ASSOCATION

Members and Partners of the Association came together on the weekend of 19/20 November 2005 for a number of activities using the Sovereign Park Motor Inn as a base.

Using the Professional Conference facilities provided for us, Saturday activities started mid afternoon with the tabling of memorabilia brought by members. The photographs, etc. brought back many pleasant memories of past Army service. Tony Jackson put on the Power Point presentation of the 105 venture to Tasmania held a few weeks before. The fellowship enjoyed over afternoon tea set the scene for the whole weekend.

Late afternoon, our Annual General Meeting was held. Members present accepted the recommendation to seek the legal status of Incorporation. The following Statement of Purposes was adopted:

- To foster old associations, loyalties, achievements and traditions of ex-World War II Forestry Companies, 91 Forestry Squadron 55 Resources Squadron, 105 Engineer Support Squadron and 105 Construction Squadron and their successors.

- To support members and their families on a needs basis.

- To initiate, organise, sponsor or encourage social/recreational activities.

- Maintain Memorandum of Understanding dated 20/11/2004 with 105 Construction Squadron RAE and 22 Construction Regiment RAE.

Also, it was agreed our Committee of Management for 05/06 would conform with the Model Rules for an Incorporated Association.
The Office Holders of the Association are:

- President – Michael Murray
- Vice President – Oliver (Ollie) Raymond
- Treasurer – Bob Brasher
- Secretary – John Morey
- Ordinary members – Tony Jackson, Graeme Ford and co-opted member – Les Lasham, make up a strong Committee of Management.

A short walk after the AGM found us inside the Tourism Award Winner – Sovereign Hill. With pre-dinner drinks in the 'Theatre Retiring Room Foyer' and moving into the 'Theatre Retiring Room' for Dinner, all present were stunned by the ambience of the setting. Our special dinner menu

and selected beverages more than complemented the setting. The evening was topped off by 'Peter Lalor' addressing, from our balcony, the attendees at the Renown/Award Winning Show – "Blood on the Southern Cross".

Back at the motor Inn a few members opted to 'top up' before heading to bed and be late for a big breaky on Sunday morning. – A great Saturday.

At 1030 hours on Sunday at the POW Memorial Wall we were briefed by Liz Heagney. Liz's efforts as a volunteer researcher for this SOMBRE and BEAUTIFUL monument to Aussie POW's is acknowledged in the booklet produced for the opening and a plaque at the Memorial entry. We were so lucky to enjoy her informative presentation. Further, Les Lasham and Tony and Lyn Jackson sought and got from Liz further info on POW family members. If you visit the Memorial Wall look out for Liz with her water bottle in a Woody stubbie holder.

The weekend finished at the Ballarat RSL. Despite the low cost of a cooked lunch, a number of us opted to only snack at our meal and/or rehydrate!! The Association presented the RSL with a plaque as a thank you for past, present and future favours.

A GREAT WEEKEND – Info on any of the facilities please contact me.

John Morey and I attended the final 05 Parade for 22 Construction Regiment. Yes, Noel Tipton I was happy to give up my front row seat to the Brig!! The Parade was understated but effective and the BBQ following allowed John and I to renew old mates, etc. Pity that Steve Bell and Mark Roberts are moving on, as they are signatories to our MOU. Trust they briefed their replacements as to the importance of ongoing relationships with Associations like the Woodys.

SITREP –JANUARY 27, 2006

"We have a great fuel reduction burn to our north west now! Should be good for about 5 years."
...From Ollie Raymond at Tyers after the Erica fires.

LOST AND FOUND:
AMF Drill Manual 1963 ex WO II Chambers T.H.91 Forestry Sqn RAE. Purchased recently in second hand bookshop in Daylesford by Martin Roberts for $15.

ANDREW RIDD:
Many will remember the Military Funeral given to Riddy in 2000. Sadly I report his young brother passed on in 03. Mark's grave is immediately behind Riddys at the Stawell cemetery. Only Penny remains.

.... from Michael Murray
(President)

RAE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

The 24th Anzac Day reunion for the Association will be held at the Bedford Hotel, 1 Flemington Rd Nth Melbourne, commencing after the march. Please watch newspaper or Mufti for form up location for the march. Everyone welcome.

There is a pleasant atmosphere at the reunion and I am pleased to say that a lot more ladies are attending with their husbands. There is a very nice lunch at pub prices and Members are provided with 5 free beer tickets, non members (of which there are quite a few) can buy beer at a discounted price. About 3pm the raffle draw is started with many prizes for the taking, top prize is usually something electrical (Bar Fridge etc). Comfortable seating is available as well as tables and chairs. It has become one of the prime stop off point on Anzac Day for many Veterans from all corps.

The Association is still going strong and getting stronger by the year. We have a strong committee under the leadership of Alan Brown as President. Roger Herrod is Vic President. Max (Doc) Livingston is again Secretary/Treasurer. The rest of the committee consists of George Hawkins, Les Cowell, Jim Crosling, Harold Bromley, Alan Rantall and Chris Trickett.

Next year 2007, we will celebrate our 25th Reunion and formation of the Association and we would like everyone to keep this date in mind and come along and help us make it one to remember.

Doc can be contacted by phone on 5126 4161 or email on doclivo@vic.australis.com.au.
The Association also has a very good web site at www.raevietnamassociation.org

... Lorraine Livingstone

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAPPERS IN VIETNAM 16th to 18th August 2006.

In the November Sapper Summit we said that there was a 40th Anniversary Reunion scheduled for August 2006.

Here are some more details:
It is called "Operation RAEVN 40" and celebrates the 40th anniversary of the first RAE Units, other than training teams, to go to Vietnam. It is also one of the last opportunities to return to Steele Barracks at Moorebank before the Sappers move out permanently!

It starts at the Cambeltown RSL with registration from 1300hrs on Wednesday 16 August. The next day will be at SME, followed by a Semi Formal Dinner. It concludes on Friday with a Commemoration Service at the RAE Vietnam Memorial at Steele Barracks.

The Editor received a 6-page email on the topic! If you want details on registering, contact John Pendergast, the Organizing Committee Secretary on 0405 504 724 or at opraevn40@optusnet.com.au

Calling All Past & Present Sappers.

Invitation

Our RAE birthday reunion function for 2006 is to be held on

FRIDAY 30th June 2005

at the 4 CER Depot,
Dublin Road Ringwood East.

Timings 7.30pm onwards.
Costs TBA

The evening is open to all past and present sappers, plus support staff of the RAE and their partners --- It's a chance to catch up with the old and bold as well as the new. Hope to see you there!

More details will be in the next edition, and on schoolfriends.com.au

Contact Details: Margaret Handte / Jenko – 03 9879 2986-voice mail

22 CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT REUNION – 2006.

The next Reunion will be held at Warrnambool in October.

Please put the weekend 27 / 28/ 29 October in your diary and keep it free.

The Motel has been booked!

Organisation is by Jenny Eaton, telephone 5156 0298.

The Blue Tongues

George Weeks is one of the organizers for The Blue Tongues Weekend, to be held at Majors Creek over the weekend 26/27/28 May 2006.

It's a 105 Construction SquadronReunion. If you are interested, ring George for details, or to book on (03) 5854 6414

NOTE THE DATE CHANGE

CONSTRUCTION OF THE AERODROME ON NORFOLK ISLAND DURING WORLD WAR TWO.

Major E.G. Renton

During a visit to Norfolk Island in October 2005 I obtained a book by Gil Hitch, titled: The Pacific War 1941 – 1945 and Norfolk Island. Also at that time the local weekly paper, The Norfolk Islander, ran a feature over four editions titled: "The Tree of Knowledge Dies". I was told that the Tree of Knowledge was a community notice board used by locals for messages. I don't know if it was a Norfolk pine, or a notice board attached to it. However during the construction of the aerodrome the trees planted by convicts about 1835 and lining both sides of Pine Avenue were removed.

Norfolk Island is a small 8km by 5km inland in the South Pacific about 1400km east of Brisbane, 1100km north of Auckland, New Zealand and 800km south of Noumea, New Caledonia. It has a coastline of about 32km, mostly cliffs up to 100m high. It is the junction point of the Pacific cable from Vancouver Canada to Australia and New Zealand.

Captain Cook discovered Norfolk Island in 1774 and it remained unoccupied until 1788. It became a penal settlement until 1856 apart from a period of twelve years where it was unoccupied (1844 to 1825). Shortly after in 1856 the descendants of the 'Bounty' mutineers were moved there from Pitcairn Island. In 1913 it became a territory of Australia.

The first aircraft to alight there was in January 1931 when Francis Chichester (Later Sir) arrived in his gipsy moth float plane. He departed for Lord Howe Island 880km away taking 7 hours 40minutes. It is interesting to note that today's passenger jets take only 2hours 30 minutes to fly to Sydney a distance of about 1500km. The Norfolk Island aerodrome is the by-product of the War in the

Pacific. It was built in 1942/43. The first aircraft to land on the island was a RNZAF Hudson bomber on 25 December 1942.

Norfolk Island was never attacked during the war but there was plenty of action in the surrounding seas and the islands to the north. Although the Japanese did not commence their assault on Pearl Harbour Hawaii and Malaya until 7/8 December 1941 the Germans were active. Between May and November 1940 three German armed merchant ships roamed the ocean from east of New Zealand to the coast of Western Australia shelling and sinking allied merchant ships and laying mines. They went as far as north Nauru. When France signed an armistice with Germany on 15 June 1940 the country was divided into the German occupied north and the Vichy government "neutral" southern part of France. The Vichy were pro German but the supporters of de Gaul's Free French – pro Allies. This divided the loyalties of the navy and occupants of overseas territories in the Pacific such as New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, (now Vanuatu) France and Great Britain then governed the New Hebrides jointly and the appointment of a de Gaulist Resident Commission was well supported.

In September 1940, in New Caledonia a power struggle developed between de Gaullists and the Vichy, but the de Gaullist prevailed. The light cruiser HMAS Adelaide stood by at Noumea but was not required to take any action. In December 1941 350 Australian AIF Commandoes and 70 civilian road workers from the N.S.W Department of Main Roads landed at Noumea. The Free French Destroyer, Le Triomphant, escorted the coastal line, Ormiston carrying the soldiers, civilians and cargo. They built an airfield at Tontouta to the north. On 7/8 December 1941 the Japanese attacked the US Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbour with devastating success. Fortunately the two aircraft carriers Lexington and Enterprise were at sea and escaped. They were to play a vital role in the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway.

The American reaction was to prepare for war. The Japanese had awakened a giant!! The President accepted the plan to make Australia their base and start at once to expand it and secure their communication to it. US Marines were landed at Somoa and troops in Fiji in Janurary 1942. On the 15 February the Japanese land 20,000 marines at Rabul and the 8th Division went into captivity as Singapore surrendered.

On the 17th March General MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander of South West Pacific Area and in April orders an assessment to ascertain if an airfield can be built on Norfolk Island. In May the Japanese land a Tulagi (5th) opposite Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and the Phillipine Islands surrender to Japan (7th). The Battle of the Coral Sea (7th – 8th) resulted in turning back the Japanese invasion force for Port Moresby, New Guinea. In July the US Joint Chiefs of Staff – issued their first directive governing the strategy of the war in the Pacific. It was to conquer and garrison Santa Cruz and Solomon Islands and thus stop the Japanese advance southward. With the discovery that the Japanese had begun work on an airfield at Guadalcanal, orders were given to implement the directive within the month.

The US Commander in Chief Pacific Admiral Ghormley included Norfolk Island in his strategic defence. It was to be:

- A base for anti submarine air patrols
- A landing place for aircraft in distress
- A staging port for aircraft in the long sea flight from Australia or New Zealand to New Caledonia
- An initial possibility of use by long-range bombers.

In June/July 1942 60 AIF soldiers arrived on the Island, many being Norfolk Islanders to strengthen the 66 men of the Norfolk Island Infantry Detachment. Their task was the safety of the cable station to where New Zealand Cable joined the Pacific cable linking Australia and Canada via Fiji.

At a date considerably before August 1942 the US Army decided to construct an aerodrome on Norfolk Island for heavy bombers with US personal and equipment but circumstances made it necessary to arrange for the work by done by an Australian organisation and Australian personnel. It is not improbable that these US resources were diverted to Guadalcanal to complete the airfield started by the Japanese in July 1942.

In August 1942 a party of volunteers from NSW DMR, and other NSW government departments were enlisted in the Civil Construction Corps for the duration of the work with the right of discharge, if they desired on return to Australia. This was done to protect them in the event of becoming POW's.

A preliminary party carried out a survey and estimate of quantities ahead of the main party which arrived on 31 Aug 1942. Earth works began on 6 October 1942 working two 10-hour shifts seven days a week. The first aircraft landed on the first operational runway on 25 December 1942 and the second runway was opened on 13 February 1943. All works were completed by the end of February and the men left for Sydney on 5 March 42. There was 264 Australians and 53 locals involved with the work.

Site selection required the removal of the Norfolk pines on the side of Pine Avenue as they lay in the path of the 1650km long No 2 runway, NE – SW. Three different ways were tried before a final

method was adopted. A ripper cut the roots down 60cm then 200 gallons of water was used to soften up the ground. It was then possible for about 24 trees a day to be pulled down instead of the previous best effort of 9. Each runway was cleared to a width of 90 metres with the central 30 metre being pavement. An extra 15 metres was allowed for wing clearance.

Apart from the two runways, four hideouts and links were built, and there were hardstanding areas for planes to hold and warm up. About 250,000 cubic metres of earth and clay were moved. The central pavement had alternate layers of clay and sand mixed together using ploughs, graders and harrows to provide a 27.5 cm thickness. After watering and compaction it was firm enough to carry a bomber.

No 1. Runway (NNW-SSE-1800m long) had a 5cm layer of sand to cushion the metal mats laid as a surface. Each mat was 1/8" steel, 10 feet long, 15" wide interlocked with its neighbour. 2" diameter holes had been punched out during manufacture lessening the weight and improving anchorage.

No 2 Runway (NE-SW-1650m long) had only two 90-metre lengths of matting laid at the ends for hard standing with 120 metre stacked in reserve.

At the runway intersection the mats were pinned to the ground with metre long U pins at about half metre spacings. A total of 56,000 mats, each weighing 24 kg, were laid -- a total of 1500 tons. The only fatalities were two men killed when there was a rock fall in the quarry. Two others had minor injuries.

Most of the equipment used was from the US Government under the Land Lease Scheme after the US Land Lease Act 1941, which allowed the transfer of goods and services to an ally to aid in the common cause of winning the war. With payment being made by a return or by a similar transfer of other goods and services.

A list of the equipment supplied was:

2 launches	4 fuel tankers
2 steel barges	2 water tankers
5 D8 dozens	21 trucks
5 tractors	4 rollers
10 ton crane	8 grader

A quite substantial packet!

Difficulties were experienced unloading this equipment because Norfolk Island had no bays that could shelter ships from the weather. All stores equipment, and until 1942, people had to be loaded off the ships into lighters, barges or boats and taken to one of the two quays, then off loaded. One quay was on the north coast at Cascade Bay and the other on the south coast at Sydney Bay, Kingston. It was not uncommon for unloading to be disrupted due to changing weather conditions and ships having to move from one side of the island to the other. During 1942 another quay was built at Ball Bay on the east coast. Although the water was deeper ship captains were reluctant to come too close. Access was up a grade too steep for regular trucks but heavy plant was taken up.

The New Zealand Army involvement started on 23 September 1942 before construction of the runways commenced. An advance party of the 1800 strong N Force arrived and by mid October the balance of troops were there. It was a composite force of:

- Infantry Bn
- Composite anti-aircraft Bty 4 x 3/7" a/a guns; plus 8 x 40mm Bofor QF a/a guns
- Heavy Bty 4 x 155mm guns
- Fd. Troop Mobile 25 pounder guns

The last of these troops left on 10 April 1944. The RNZAF was involved on the island from 16 January 1943 until July 1948 when control was handed over to the Department of Civil Aviation Australia. During their stay they manned the radar located on one of the peaks Mt Bates 308 m high, and high frequency/directional finder HF/DF equipment as well as launches.

The radar had a range of 115 km and was instrumental in saving a flying fortress with engine trouble flying in circles 140 km to the south. No personnel were allowed in front of the aerial when in operation as radiation from the aerial made hair stand up on head and arms.

Searchlights were stationed on the island but there is no indication whether they were Army, Airforce, or others who manned them.

Hitch's book mentions a number of different types of aircraft that used the aerodrome-Catalinas, AirSea Rescue Hudson with lifeboard slung underneath, Mosquitoes, Dakotas C47 (DC3) and Flying Fortress. There are pictures of P-40 kitty hawks, TBF1 avengers, PV1 venturas, and F4U-1 corsairs on Norfolk Island postage stamps so presumably they also operated from there or passed through.

Although the war affected the life of the islanders, it did provide them with benefits. The civilian hospital which was located at the NNW end of No 2 runway is now where the military hospital was loctated ... a more central position. Some of the Norfolk pines beside Pine Avenue can be seen at the SSE end of No 2 runway. Both runways are now asphalted and the aerodrome allows air travel to Australia, New Zealand and other places and it is easier for tourists to visit and enjoy this interesting island.

..... *Ted Renton*

THE HISTORY OF FORTIFICATIONS

Jim Newlands has made Fortifications somewhat of a hobby. He has produced a short history, in two parts, for Sapper Summit. This is the first segment. It will be continued in the next issue.

The Development of Fortifications

Some years ago, Don Hughes, in an article in "Sapper Summit", listed and explained several of the terms used to describe the wide range of structures found in the variety of Sapper constructions built into, and forming part of, the permanent fortifications which still dot (and frequently dominate) the landscape of most European and Asian cities and countries. To us, the terms are rather esoteric, unfamiliar and meaningless. Batardeaux, Fleche, Place d'Armes, lunette, banquette, parados or caponier are terms which don't mean much to us. As Military Engineers you should be aware that the names of these structures were once a major part of every Sapper's vocabulary, because the Sapper worked with them, and what's more, the Sapper built them. Frequently, they fought and died in them. The somewhat archaic terms, the majority of which are foreign words, mean little to us today in Australia simply because not only are they obsolete, they are totally unfamiliar to us. We cannot relate to them in the same way Europeans do, because we have not been exposed to them in the same way they have. The local people there deal with the (often) huge local fortifications as part of their normal environment, whereas we cannot relate to them, since we have not been exposed to them. Many European cities/towns have encircling walls, built during the Middle Ages and from the 17th Century, and they are still major tourist attractions. Almost every town in Europe which was fortified has a town museum which includes models illustrating the history of the development of the local fortifications, with a very proud description of the role the fortifications played in the town's history. And rightly so. Rothenberg ob der Tauber and Nordlingen are two of the most visited towns in Germany. Their fortifications still exist. Both are sites on the Romantische Strasse in Germany. The major tourist attractions of both towns are their still standing encircling walls.

Many European cities/towns now use their restored (often at great public expense) fortifications as everyday recreational facilities, museums or cultural venues. Recently, (June 2005) a week-long conference in Magdeburg (Germany), examined the current role of each of the restored fortifications in the cities and towns of the local area. The courtyard in front of the Renaissance palace in the Castle of Heidelberg is commonly used for musical performances and concerts. One evening, I sat there as a member of the audience listening to a superb concert. To this day, I still cannot hear Haydn's Trumpet Concerto, played magnificently that evening, without envisaging the beautifully sculptured Renaissance façade of the palace there. The acoustics were superb. Another example of current use is Forte Belvedere which overlooks Florence, and has been used for some time as a school for artists.
Be this as it may; today's uses are not the uses for which they were originally built. In a more sober vein, the European fortifications reflect the centuries during which war with neighbouring countries or provinces was an almost constant threat or reality. This is probably the main reason why the same massive structures are missing from the Australian landscape. They needed them; we didn't. I propose to write a series of articles (subject to editorial censorship) relating to the history of fortifications. It will be simplified, but I will provide a list of references. If you have difficulty locating the references, please contact me. I may be contacted at :

Jim Newlands
6 Maculata Walk
Vermont South
(9802 7702)
Suggestions are welcome.

The aim of this series of articles is to describe the development of fortification, and in doing so, at later stages, to explain the majority of the esoteric terms used. The articles will include the development of the hill forts, vitrified hill forts, brochs, duns in early Britain, Roman fortification strategies, Mediaeval castles and the later changes to them resulting from the introduction of gunpowder will be mentioned. The focus of the earlier descriptions is slanted towards the developments in Britain I offer no apologies for this. Most of the literature written in English relates to this. There were significant developments in Mediterranean Europe, in Central South America, where significant fortifications, involving masonry of cyclopean proportions were constructed, but these are beyond the scope of these brief articles
The major aspects of the different systems of later fortifications formulated by fortress engineers, viz Vauban , Cormontaigne, Coehorn and Brialmont, and the contributions each of these designers made will be discussed, as will be siege tactics. As far as possible, diagrams will be used to explain the structures used. The major aims of this series of articles is to explain what was developed, and why they were developed. If you have any aspects you wish to discuss or have any questions, by all means, note the above contact number and talk to me.
One episode will give an explanation of the terms themselves and a graphic depiction of the structure itself. This may be more useful if it is presented at an early stage. I would appreciate your comments and suggestions. Contact either the Editor, or myself, with your comments.

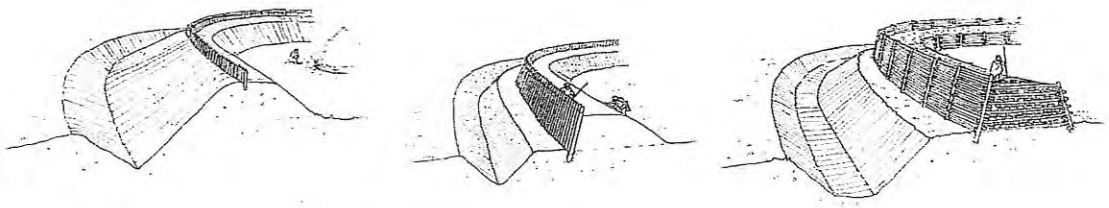
EPISODE 1 THE BEGINNINGS OF FORTIFICATIONS.

Fortification really means that Man learnt to protect himself by using a variety of artificial means. From the Dawn of Time he altered his environment to improve his chances of survival. This involved the development and imposition of several strategies.. For example, among other things, he learnt to clothe his naked body, warmed himself by using fire and protected himself by using weapons. Very early in the process, he fortified his residence by using stone slabs to reduce the size of his cave entrance. Narrowing the entrance to the cave meant that fewer cavemen were needed to protect the entrance. Due to the narrowed entrance, enemies and wild animals found reduced access to the interior an inhibitor. Caveman survived. Undoubtedly, this strategy helped to develop Mankind's advancement. At least, he survived. Later, the developments to protect himself and his dependents became more sophisticated.

In Britain, there are many examples of the range of early, (Stone Age, and Iron Age) primitive structures built for defence. Bands of seaborne pirates were a frequent problem for the local inhabitants. Several types of defensive structure evolved, according to the situation. Within these defences, the local populace and their stock could take shelter in dire emergency. Unfortunately, advance warning was not always forthcoming, and the inhabitants were often at a severe disadvantage.

One group of structures, recognised as being the oldest in Britain and widely distributed throughout Britain, were the hill forts. These were basically fortified enclosures defended by banks of earth and ditches, constructed on hill tops. The summit of the chosen hill would be encircled by a ditch with the spoil thrown uphill to form a rampart. This was usually crowned with a wooden palisade, built in a variety of styles, ranging from simple to complex. Some examples are shown below.

(a) (b) (c)



1.1 Artist's reconstruction of types of hill fort ramparts.
(a) "dump" or glacis type with palisade
(b) "revetted" earth ramparts piled behind palisade
(c) "timber-laced rampart
From Kightly, Charles "Strongholds of the Realm" Thames and Hudson (London) 1979 p10

Frequently, multiple ditches were built for improved protection, with the spoil used for several ramparts. These multivallate (more than one rampart or walls) hill forts were common in the south of Britain. Maiden Castle (Britain's largest hill fort) near Dorchester, covering an area of more than 200 acres (78 hectares) has three massive deep concentric ditches with complex defences protecting the overlapping entrances. An aerial view of this hill fort is shown below. The museum in Dorchester has some interesting exhibits relating to the Roman assault on this hill fort. One particularly gruesome exhibit is that of a human's spinal cord, represented by several vertebrae, severed by the metal point of a metal arrow, still in place, fired from a Roman ballista.

1.2 The vast Iron Age hill fort of Maiden Castle, near Dorchester. It fell to the Romans in AD 44 after a protracted fight at the eastern gate (on the right).
From Kightly, Charles "Strongholds of the Realm" Thames and Hudson (London) 1979 p16

In Britain there are almost 3000 sites where this type of fortification was built, mainly in Southern England. Many are still well preserved. Cadbury, in Somerset is often named as the site of King Arthur's Camelot. The site is well preserved. Several examples of the sites, particularly in Scotland, are small, and would not have been big enough to house a village.

One particular type of fort, common in Scotland and Ireland, was the promontory fort, where a wall of earth or stone was constructed across a seaside promontory, and so was protected in most directions by sea cliffs. A ditch would be dug to reinforce the rampart. The major advantage of these forts was the limited amount of labour required to build the shortened walls.

One variation on the theme of the hill fort rampart was the vitrified fort where the walls were formed of molten rock. Here the stone fragments of the wall were heated and melted into a united mass. The heat required for this would have been enormous, and could have come only from the burning of huge quantities of fuel. One suggestion is that the stones in the timber-laced ramparts melted when the wooden interlaced parts were set on fire. This is unlikely, because it seems improbable that there would have been sufficient timber to generate the heat required. The second is that the rock walls were assembled and the massive amounts of timber were used to solidify the walls.
The best known example of a vitrified hill fort in Britain is in Aberdeenshire, near Inverurie, in the north of Scotland (Tap o' Noth), superbly preserved, which dominates the surrounding countryside. It is a long climb up to it. The whole area for miles around is barren of timber. It would have been an enormous task to carry sufficient timber to melt the rock walls. The vitrification of the walls is still obvious. Many of the rocks used in the construction of the ramparts have been melted, and are fused in large masses.

The oppidum was similar in structure to the earthen walled sites, but it was built on a very large scale, ie over several square miles.. There were few of these built, due to the scale of the structure. They encompassed several square miles, and protected large numbers of people.