"SAPPER SUMMIT"

RAE CORPS NEWSLETTER

VICTORIAN ENGINEERS

December 2008 *ISSN 1325 – 7676* *Number 64*

Merry Christmas
to all our readers.

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From the Editor:

Congratulations to the Old Sappers

The Old Sappers will be holding their 74th Annual General Meeting at the Oakleigh Barracks on Sunday 14 December.

They have survived every reorganisation the Army has thrown at Victoria since the depression!

Congratulations on a great tradition.

Coloured photos

We have included coloured photos in this issue covering various events over the year.

Colonel Commandant's Message

Brig P J (Hutch) Hutchinson DSC took over as Colonel Commandant earlier this year. He has put together a short article saying what he has seen to date and where he sees the Corps going in Victoria. It is on page 2.

Thanks

Thanks to all contributors for assisting in the production of Sapper Summit. A Magazine like this would fold without the routine supply of 'copy' from the various Units, Associations, and individuals.

A Merry Christmas to All, and may 2009 be a great year for you.

... The Editor

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

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Articles for Sapper Summit!

Our deadlines for articles for the 2009 issues are:

- March issue by 23 February
- May issue by 24 April
- August issue by 7 August
- November issue by 23 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:

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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.

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MESSAGE FROM THE COLONEL COMMANDANT RAE SOUTHERN REGION, BRIG P.J. (HUTCH) HUTCHINSON

It has now been about six months since the Chief of Army approved my appointment as the Colonel Commandant RAE Southern Region. Unfortunately I was away overseas for the start of the appointment and hence missed the Waterloo Dinner and other activities around the Corps Birthday etc. However, I have now had the chance to visit both 4 CER and 22 Const Regt, including seeing training at Puckapunyal, to meet serving and retired Sappers in Victoria formally and informally, to catch up with the Head of Corps, BRIG Wayne Budd CSC, and to speak directly with a number of you. The Corps as a whole is in good shape, with Reconstruction Task Force 4 having completed its mission in Afghanistan and the new Mentoring and Reconstruction Task force 1 also prominently featuring engineers; with a Sapper as the Chief of Army, others doing very well in both Senior Officer and RSM appointments; with our Regular units in good shape and much expanded over where they were 15 years ago when I commanded a CER of 288 that was only 50 stronger than a Const Sqn of 5 years earlier. But our Reserve units are much smaller than they were then and recruiting, retention and operational, training and development commitments are a real challenge.

I take my hat off to both our Victorian RAE Regiments and the commitment of all ranks within, they are doing a great job meeting the challenges they have been set by Army. However, I feel that we lost a lot with the disbandment of 6 Engineer Group and the old Works Service and move of 21 Const Sqn north. I believe that we missed an opportunity to reshape 6 Engr Gp into a Civil Affairs headquarters that would have been able to provide much of the staff support advice that I would have liked in Iraq, or that would be useful in Afghanistan now or East Timor or the Solomons recently. We can't turn the clock back and that moment has now passed, but I also believe that there remains great talent in the Victorian Sappers, in the Reserve, in Industry and in the retired 'Old Sappers' both individually and in their associations. But at the moment we are not harnessing this, we are not communicating well between all the different groups or across the groups.

I had lunch on Friday with a group of retired and serving Sapper officers, but other than two ex-Reservists the group of 25 was retired and still serving regular officers. I don't want to merge all associations or stop various groups doing their own thing. But I am keen to provide opportunities for us all to communicate and occasionally get together, beyond just the Waterloo Dinner. As well as promoting cross group socialising on occasions I am keen to harness the intellectual capital in the Victorian Sappers for ideas on how we can do two key things:

- How do we help our Army and Defence force address some pressing problems - such as how to better provide a whole of nation response to nation building, particularly for failed or failing states in our region? I am happy to hear your suggested pressing problems also and will be seeking guidance from the Head of Corps on this also.

- How do we encourage more young men and women to join and stay in the Reserve?

Basically I am keen to redress the decline in the prominence of Victorian Sappers and to reinvigorate our contribution physically and intellectually to the Corps and the Army. We have a proud history to maintain and to build. I look forward to hearing your ideas and to engaging with you as I travel around the State and to various Sapper occasions. I hope you are willing to help.

... *Brig P J (Hutch) Hutchinson.*

ROB YOUL'S COLUMN

Watching Barack Obama get into his stride, I decided to look at the history of Afro-American servicemen in the US, mostly via the Internet. I found a long, complex and astonishing contribution.

Revolutionary War

In 1776, the Black population of British North America was around 500 000, and only 5000 served under George Washington. The British Army included a thousand southern runaway slaves, who doubtless preferred fighting on the side that had already abolished slavery. In the northeast, any Blacks involved served the American cause. The first Black-American regiment, First Rhode Island, enlisted 130 volunteers, on the basis that the colony would legislate their freedom, and they would receive standard wages and bounties.

War of 1812

The Navy had many Black sailors, who contributed to US victories at sea. New York State sent 2000 Black soldiers in two regiments, promising freedom to any who were slaves. Louisiana had the only Black-inclusive militia; although a slave state, it had 4600 free Blacks by 1809, many of whom had emigrated there after the Haitian Revolution. Blacks also fought valiantly for the British, once again convinced that a British victory would gain them freedom faster. In 1814, about 5000 Chesapeake Bay slaves joined the Royal Navy. The option of free emigration to Canada or the West Indies was more appealing than remaining enslaved at home. During the British invasion of Maryland, 1500 Black marines inflicted a humiliating defeat on American forces.

Civil War

Emancipation and military service overlapped from the beginning. The Confederate seizure of Fort Sumter inspired a wave of free Black men to enlist, only to be turned away, because a 1792 law barred Negroes from bearing arms for the US Army, despite their participation in both earlier conflicts. In Boston, disappointed volunteers passed a resolution urging the law be changed.

The Lincoln administration prevaricated, worried this would prompt border states to secede. By mid 1862, however, the escalating number of former slaves and the decline in White volunteers forced action. Congress first freed those slaves who had masters in the Confederate Army, then abolished slavery in the US. After Antietam, recruitment surged. Volunteers from South Carolina, Tennessee, and Massachusetts filled the first authorised Black regiments, spurred by Black leaders such as Frederick Douglass. In May 1863 the Government established the Bureau of Colored Troops to manage the burgeoning numbers of Black soldiers.

By War's end, 179 000 Black men had served as soldiers, one-tenth of the Union Army, with 19 000 in the Navy. Nearly 40 000 Black soldiers died—30,000 of infection or disease. Black soldiers fought in the artillery and infantry. Prejudice reduced their use as fighters, but many served with distinction. The July 1863 assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, in which Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Volunteers lost two-thirds of its officers and half its troops, was memorably dramatised in the film *Glory*. By war's end, sixteen Black soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor.

Blacks performed all the non-combat functions that sustain an army. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, labourers, nurses, scouts, spies, steamboat pilots, surgeons and teamsters also contributed. There were nearly 80 Black commissioned officers. Moreover, Black women, who could not formally join the Army, served as nurses, spies and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman, a scout in Second South Carolina Volunteers.

Racial discrimination still prevailed, even in the North, and segregation permeated the US military. Typically units formed with White officers and Black NCOs and enlisted men. Although Black soldiers received the same rations and supplies, and comparable medical care, Black privates were initially paid $10 monthly, less a $3 clothing deduction, with White soldiers on $13 monthly, deduction-free. Congress granted retrospective equal pay to Black troops in June 1864.

Black troops faced greater peril if captured. In 1863 the Confederate Congress threatened to punish severely officers of Black troops and to enslave Black soldiers. In return, President Lincoln promised reprisals on Confederate PoWs. In the worst known abuse, Confederate soldiers, with General Nathan B Forrest on hand, massacred Black Union soldiers captured at Fort Pillow, TN, in 1864.

The Plains Wars

From 1866, Black units, the then little-known 'Buffalo Soldiers', served in the remotest corners of the West, fighting against the Comanche and Kiowa in the 1860s and 70s, the Apache from 1877-86 and in the Pine Ridge campaign of 1890–91 in the Dakotas and Nebraska, which included Wounded Knee. Several years ago, General Colin Powell dedicated the Fort Leavenworth memorial to these men.

Spanish-American War—Cuba and the Philippines 1898

Black regiments fought in the five-month Spanish-American War in Cuba: the 9th and 10th Cavalry along with the 24th and 25th Infantry, all 'Buffalo Soldiers'. Volunteer infantry regiments were raised later. A Black company was in Puerto Rico. The War Department perceived that Blacks were naturally adapted to survive the tropical climate and disease, but they contracted fevers like everyone else.

The centrepiece of the land war was the city of Santiago and nearby El Caney, San Juan Hill and Kettle Hill. Of 13 000 US troops engaged, 1250 were Black. Thanks to superb PR, for decades battle honours at San Juan Hill were awarded to Teddy Roosevelt, leader of the 'Roughriders,' later US President, but historians now assign a major part of the victory to the Black units. Frank Knox, US Secretary of the Navy during World War II, separated from his regiment amidst the chaos, said these soldiers, five of whom won the Medal of Honour, were 'the bravest men he had ever seen'. On the water, when *USS Maine* blew up in Havana harbour, some thirty Black sailors died.

In the Philippines the US hoped to rally Filipinos against the Spanish colonial government. After a brief naval and military campaign, the Treaty of Paris in December 1899 saw Spain recognise Cuban independence, and cede Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the US. The US paid Spain $20 million for the Philippines. Filipinos felt betrayed, seeing the US as just another oppressor. This led to the three-year Philippine-American War, which actually continued as a guerrilla action until 1913. The declared war was vicious, with the US Army resorting to torture and retaliation. (Shades of the early 2000s: Congress in 1901-02 was consumed in a debate on the morality of 'water-boarding'.) American Blacks strongly opposed the war, but the two Black regiments raised for the campaign proved outstanding in this Vietnam-style conflict, out-thinking the guerrillas in terms of patrolling, ambush and subterfuge. One Black corporal, David Fagen, became a rebel commander, and attracted twenty other soldiers, Black and White, to his side.

After the War, the Navy segregated in response to Japan's victory over Russia in 1905. Creating a 'Great White Fleet', which came here in 1908, supposedly demonstrated Caucasian supremacy to the Japanese Navy and would discourage attacks on newly acquired US territory in Asia. Blacks could only be stewards and messmen in the Navy, replacing Japanese-Americans, now seen as a security threat. It was only in 1948 that Harry Truman ended this astonishing system.

World War I

Pershing placed the all-Black 93 Division, a rag-tag outfit kitted in Civil War uniforms, under French command, satisfying France's need for manpower and removing Pershing's problem—Black soldiers. So 93 Division exchanged its American equipment for French rifles, bayonets, helmets, packs and so on, then organised, trained and operated as a French division, the first US unit to serve under foreign command. In the French Army, it found acceptance, respect and glory, winning a unit *Croix de Guerre*, only to return to an unchanged segregated 'Jim Crow' America.

Abyssinia and Spain

In the mid 1930s, two Black Americans, John Robinson and Hubert Julian, flew for the Ethiopian Air Force—which had just three aircraft for transporting cargo. Moreover Black American nurses and doctors from Harlem organised medical-supply drives to help Red Cross operations in the country. Around 100 Black Americans fought in 15 International Brigade in Spain.

World War II

In both World Wars, the African-American soldier seemed destined to failure. Believing Blacks lazy and dull, commanders used them mainly for menial tasks, such as stevedoring and digging. Even when politically forced to form all-Black regiments and divisions, they tended to employ them where little would be lost if they failed. When Black Americans performed well, as in France, White America ignored their successes, but if they failed, as some did, the news was broadcast widely. Few in authority were willing to admit that the system of racial segregation was at fault, and that between Black soldiers and their White commanders there was no trust, cohesion and respect, the chief constituents of good military performance.

More than 500 000 African-American soldiers served in Europe. Despite their numbers they still faced racial discrimination. Changes began in 1941, when African-American civil rights leaders convinced the government to set up experimental all-Black combat units, to see if African-American soldiers could perform military tasks as well as White soldiers. However in the Army, it is said that true integration came only after the Ardennes counteroffensive in 1944-45, when manpower was very short.

Retired US Army Colonel Bill De Shields, historian and founder of The Black Military History Institute of America in Annapolis, Maryland, says, 'The symbol of Black participation at that time was a *Double V*, which meant two victories: victory against

the enemy abroad, and victory against the enemy at home. The enemy at home of course being racism, discrimination, prejudice and Jim Crow.'

'The experiment and the participation African-Americans made during war time from World War II right on to the Vietnam War enabled us to make a change in civilian life. It shows you that Blacks and Whites working together, can work on an integrated basis. It shows that it does not disrupt the morale of the troops,' says De Shields.

Most Black soldiers enlisting during World War II knew that they would serve in segregated units. Those in the Pacific were generally used in defence. However, 761 Tank Battalion fought across western Europe, meeting a Russian Front in Austria. The Marines and the Army Air Corps (the predecessor to the Air Force) refused to accept Blacks until late in the War. However, when the time came, the USAAF flying school at Tuskegee, Alabama trained almost 1000 pilots, 450 of whom served overseas. One graduate flew 149 missions in 1944-45, protecting harbours in Italy and American bombers over Germany. The navy only accepted Blacks as mess men.

For other soldiers, the war enabled them, through military service or employment, to discover the large cities of the North. One said afterwards, 'I knew then that I wasn't going to go back on the farm. I knew that I was going to go to college somewhere. That's the thing that changed my life. I knew that a Black man could do things other than mess around ploughing with an ox, messing around cutting cross-ties. That's the thing that changed me.'

For author James Jones of 761 Tank Battalion, it was the French who made a profound difference in his life. They 'had a certain kind of openness and warmth that they exhibited towards minorities that was just unexplainable. You wouldn't know you were Black when you were in their company.' Relationships between Black and White soldiers were mixed. The open hostility of some White US units sometimes erupted; White soldiers would attack, beat and even kill Blacks. Some Black and White soldiers formed friendships when serving together—especially at the front. But when they returned home, the colour line once again reappeared.

Film-maker Ken Burns recounts several stories of this era. After the war, many Whites wanted to 'put them back in their place.' One soldier's father warned him not to come home to Mississippi in uniform, as the police were beating Black soldiers and searching them. If they found a picture of a White woman in a soldier's wallet, they'd kill him. The serviceman returned dressed as a sharecropper in overalls and jumper. Another man came back to Mississippi wearing his medals; a neighbour said, 'Look at them spangles on your chest. Glad you back. Let me tell you one thing don't you forget...you're still a nigger!'

But the war had changed attitudes about Jim Crow. A former WAC (Women's Army Corps), said, 'It had to change, because we're not going to have it this way anymore.' Some veterans came back militant and ready to fight. They realised that Jim Crow was not immutable, and the South didn't have to be that way. 'We thought it was the way it was supposed to be,' another remarked. 'We was dumb to the facts and didn't know.' But when Europeans and Australians and other Whites treated them as human beings, 'It opened up my eyes to the racial problems.' Black veterans led many voter registration drives in 1946.

Korea

Despite orders from President Harry Truman in 1948 to integrate the US military, Black soldiers remained in separate units during the Korean War. A classic case is well recorded. In September 1950, two months after war started, Major General William B. Kean asked the Eighth Army to disband the all-Black 24th Infantry regiment because it was 'untrustworthy and incapable of carrying out missions expected of an infantry regiment. Controversy continues today. The African-American veterans of 24 Division, and others, meanwhile, contend that the unit's main problem was racial prejudice and mistrust, which created an environment that made good leadership very difficult to achieve. For example, almost all White officers were rotated and Black officers were unlikely to be promoted above captain. Nevertheless the unit won an early victory. Korea also had a Black air ace, Captain Chappie James.

Vietnam

By the Vietnam War (1962-75) the military was fully integrated. African-Americans made up more than ten percent of all forces in Southeast Asia. De Shields says, 'The Vietnam War was the one war in which Blacks did it all. They were the generals, they were the leaders, they flew the airplanes, they drove the tanks, they were in combat units, they led troops in battle, they did it all and they did it well, so there was nothing left to prove.'

Since then, Black participation in the US armed forces has grown. Today, there are more than 2.5 million Black veterans. And African-Americans, who make up more than 13 percent of the US population, account for 20 percent of those serving in the military.

... *Rob Youl*

RECENT EVENTS

RAE OFFICERS GOLF DAY

The Officers Golf Day at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club was held on 17 October. Eight pairs teed off and had a successful game and enjoyed the day.

Two teams cam in on the same score of +3. There was then a count-back, and a father-and-son combination walked away with the trophy. The winners were

- Father: LtCol John Hutchinson.
- Son: Brig Hutch Hutchinson.

Lt Col John Hutch is a repeat offender, having been a member of the winning pair in 2004. Brig Peter (Hutch) Hutch is the Colonel Commandant. Congratulations!

The runner-up pair was LtCol Van Ree and Lt Col Mellior.

. . . *Information from several sources.*

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COMING EVENTS

SIR CLIVE STEELE LECTURE

The Sir Clive Steele lecture for 2008 has been deferred until next year. 22 Const Regt had a speaker tee-ed up but it was not possible to get the lecture programmed into this year's other commitments.

The next edition of Sapper Summit will provide details.

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EXCURSIONS

We are currently trying to arrange an excursion to the Pay Corps Museum at Watsonia.

This is likely to be after Easter in 2009. The next edition of Sapper Summit will provide details.

NEWS FROM THE UNITS

4 CER UPDATE

4 CER conducted its annual field exercise (AFX) during the period 13 to 21 Sep 08. 4 CER elements deployed to Puckapunyal to conduct a range of tasks including the reconstruction of the ammunition bunker at Demolitions Range West, force protection activities at the Urban Operations Training Facility, range shooting, anti-tank ditching, ongoing plant construction tasks, and infantry minor tactics. A CPX was run concurrently, incorporating a series of engineer planning exercises, engineer recons, CP procedure, and the exercising of command and control over actual and notional ground elements.

The AFX proved to be a dynamic, challenging and demanding activity for all ranks. Of particular note are the efforts of 5 CE TP in the reconstruction of the ammunition bunker at Demolitions Range West. This proved to be a physically and technically challenging task, with the Sappers working extremely hard to achieve a very good result within a compressed time-frame. Running concurrently to the AFX was an IET Phase One Course, run out of the 39 SQN Depot at Newborough. 4 CER committed a large number of students and instructors to this course, which shifted a large amount of our untrained soldiers into the CE Troops and RRF positions.

The October training weekend involved the deployment of the Regiment to Puckapunyal to conduct a range of tasks. The main effort was a route search activity, incorporating the use of live demolitions to clear dummy land-mines. Other activities included a 9mm pistol course, plant continuation training, and basic navigation training for our recruits. The weekend was both interesting and challenging, and provided our soldiers with operationally focussed training.

4 CER now looks forward to Exercise SAPPER SURPRISE during the upcoming November training weekend. This is a section competition, which will include representation from 22 Const Regt. The activity will be conducted at Newborough, and will include a range of all-corps skills challenges. 4 CER looks forward to the opportunity to compete against the 22 Const Regt elements.

A large number of our Sappers recently deployed on OP RESOLUTE as part of the joint effort to protect Australia's northern waters in conjunction with the RAN. We wish them well in the coming months and look forward to their safe return. We also welcome back SGT Daly and CPL Cooper, who both recently returned from operations abroad.

... *Capt J.H. Cuypers*
Adjutant

4 CER AFE, 2008

5 CE TP Reconstructed the Ammunition Bunker at the Demolitions Range West, Puckapunyal

22 Construction Regiment AFE, 2008

SGT Van der Velden implants wedges as SPR Hillbrick plans the cut

SPR Hillbrick explains his cut to the CO and MAJ Pike after felling at medium tree at Puckapunyal Training Area

The Old Sappers marching in the Victorian Defence Reserves Support Day March on 31 August. The Woodpeckers banner is in the background.

The Woodies enjoying themselves at Lakes Entrance in November

Official Opening of the Moe and District Veterans and Services Support Centre on 29 October by the Minister of Veterans' Affairs, the Honourable Alan Griffin MP. Des Oldis is on the left.

THE REUNION PHOTO (NOT IN ORDER)

SNOW MUSGROVE, BILL HOUSTON, DES OLDIS, RON MERRIGAN, TOM JONES, DON BILLETT, JOHN MOREY, MICK MURRAY, BRIAN KESBY, KEN HAMILTON , TERRY OLSEN, IAN IPSEN, BARRY NEVILLE, IAN LE POIDEVIN, ROD CATCHPOLE, LAURIE DRISCOLL, MIKE MEANY, DAVID GILL, RICK BOYANTON, PHIL COX, LEON VAN DER VELDEN, SPENCER GOSS, JOHN WILLIAMS, GARRY HEDT, JOHN DRAPER, CRAIG RHODE, BOB SMITH, PETER HARRIS, KEVIN ZANONI, HEATHER LEVER, MAX BAMFORD, IAN KINCAID, KON ZURAWELL, DAVE SHANKLAND, SLIM SOMERVILLE, ALAN NUTT, MARK NESTOR, BILL BROWN, GEORGE HARRIS, STEPHEN SIMPSON, ROY MATTHEWS, RAY CURRAN, RAY WATSON, RUSS LEVER BARNEY BARROW, FRANK PASQUALI, ALAN STEWART, MARG ZURAWELL, DANIEL BUSH, VIN MANGION, PETER TURNER, LAURIE KEMPTON, BILL STANTON, BRIAN SIMPSON, BOB FITZWILLIAM, JOHN CHENEY, KEN OLSEN, TONY ISHTCHUK, BRUCE FURNELL, BERNIE GOODWIN, TREVOR GERRISH, MARIE HIBBERT, PETER Mc EVOY, SHAN LLOYD.

16 CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT REUNION AT NEWBOROUGH IN MARCH 2008.
Organised by the La Trobe Valley Sappers.

22 CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

2008 marked the year of the rebirth of the old 91 Forestry, this time a Troop rather than Squadron, but remaining an integral part of 22 Construction Regiment. It has been approximately 15 years since 91 Forestry and the Woodpeckers operated in Victoria, and now based at the Newborough Training Depot in East Gippsland the Troop are working hard to re-develop their Forestry knowledge along with tree felling and timber processing skills.

Earlier this year a section minus from 91 Troop attended a 10 day Basic Forestry Course conducted by Forestech with the aim to enhance basic skills learnt during IET and develop core Forestry skills. In-line with this technical training in house environmental and sustainability management was being delivered by knowledge matter expect Noel Less ably assisted by our own Major Geoff Pike.

With much theory and OJT completed the challenge was set to undertake Forestry operations in an uncontrolled environment, in order to assess both individual and team skills and safety.

Ex Cross-Cut, undertaken over two training weekends, was undertaken with the intent to provide performance based training and development of individual and collective skills to 91 Troop skills with the mission to provide specification materials from Forestry operations.

During the August phase of training, 91 Troop members deployed to Blue Rock Dam. Throughout the weekend, and in inclement weather conditions, worked tirelessly at the DSE firewood coupe, undertaking stump removal, basic cross cut techniques, general clearing and limited tree felling of the area in accordance with DSE's stringent controls.

Over the September weekend, 91 Troop deployed to Puckapunyal Military Training Area to conduct a real time tree-felling task for DS-P in order to clear a flight path for the newly constructed helipad at the Puckapunyal medical centre.

The task involved the removal of approximately 40 trees which varied in size from small through to large (800mm dia, 40m high) trees. This gave the sappers an opportunity to use the full suite of felling techniques that they have been developing. The PSM was not deployed on either of these tasks, however skills are being well honed at the Newborough deport with decent trees being imported to fine tune operator skills, and materials being used to construct strong points at the Depot

Later this year 91 Troop will again send a troop minus to Forestech, with the view to complete Intermediate and Advanced Forestry qualifications to secure its position as the Army's training centre in Forestry operations.

This task has been a great opportunity for training as well as to demonstrate the units capability, and will stand 91 Troop in good stead for supporting both CFA and DSE during the upcoming 2009 summer bushfire season, where 22 Construction Regiment will again stand-up an on call detachment to lead the ADF contingent.

... *LT Dale Hopcraft*

ASSOCIATION REPORTS

WOODPECKER NEWS.

A WOODY WEEKEND.

The Woodpeckers had a very pleasant weekend at Lakes Entrance over 7/8/9/ Nov 08. As the photo shows, 15 people enjoyed the dinner on Saturday night in the Lakes Entrance RSL, after an excursion that took in the Buchan Caves, lunch at the Buchan pub (where the old forestry photos were admired and discussed) and afternoon tea at Metung.

Prior to the excursion, five members visited Noel Fraser's house to view Noel's PHOTOBUCKET project. Mystified? Well if you want to view some historical photos of Woody exploits, go to:
http://s309.photobucket.com/albums/kk363/noeljamesfraser/
and click on 91 Forestry Sqn in the left hand column. Hover the pointer over a familiar face and see the subject's name pop up. This has the potential to be an excellent historical record.

A General Meeting was held on Sunday morning, and the date of the next Committee meeting was agreed – Sunday 22 Feb 08, 1200 hrs at the Noble Park RSL. Reports of the Latrobe Valley Sappers' weekend were enthusiastic, and it was agreed that both organisations would exchange memberships. A future joint meeting is definitely on the cards.

A motion of thanks was passed to Mick Murray for organising accommodation and transport, and another one thanking Graeme Ford for the Secretarial work he carries out so well.

.. *Oliver Raymond*
President

RAE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association held on Sunday 9th November 2008 there was only one change to the committee of Management and that was the Secretary/Treasurer position. The new bloke on the block is Vin (Jerry) Neale. Jerry is also taking over as editor of the Association's newsletter. He comes with some new fresh ideas, and it is hoped that these ideas can come to fruition.

At the AGM there were some thoughts expressed about the venue for the next Reunion in2009 and even thoughts about 2010.

Allan Rantall gave a memorable report on his job as Delegate to a couple of affiliates. Allan actually spoke for about 20 minutes, he was really wound up, I have never heard him say more that half a dozen words at any one time, but he was just energised. Great report from Allan.

The first half of the meeting at the Noble Park RSL was drowned out by the vocalist, so we moved to a quieter spot. We were going to wait for him to take a break but we were told that he could sing for 3 hours none stop. If anyone wants a vocalist that can sing for hours, I can highly recommend this one.

A "Thank You" to those members who did turn up -- it was a good meeting and a fair bit was accomplished. Different points of view were put forward and discussed. Members were to report back to a future meeting on actions that were allocated.

... *Lorraine*
www.raevietnamassociation.org

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OLD SAPPERS ASSOCIATION INC.

November 9th was our monthly meeting day and our members had many choices of which function to attend. The annual RSL State Remembrance Service was conducted at the War Graves Cemetery Springvale, various RSL Sub Branches conducted their own Remembrance Service and RAE Vietnam Association held their AGM. Something about raining and pouring.

We have commenced planning for the future of the Association as 2010 will bring changes to our SOP's whether we like it or not.
Something about forewarned and armed.

The Old Sappers Association will conduct its 74th AGM on December 14th 2008. That is a truly remarkable achievement and testament to the resilience of old sappers.

To facilitate catering, those interested in attending should contact our Secretary, Jim Crosling on 9438 2273 by 5th December. Inquiries re membership are always welcome on the same number.

... *Jim Muir, President*

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22 CONST REGT EX-MEMBERS ANNUAL REUNION BENALLA, OCT 2008

What a great weekend, a BBQ at Jim Spencer's on the Friday night was well attended, Jan and her helpers had done an absolutely fantastic job with the spread laid on. Lots of stories told and history discussed.

Our bus trip on the Saturday started at 8.30am from the motel and our first item on the trip was a tour of Winton and a "HOT LAP" in the bus around the track, interesting taking a 57 seater bus around Winton Raceway. Our bus driver was actually one of the racing car drivers that use Winton on a regular basis as it turned out, so he was able to give a running commentary as we went around the track.

We then went to Glenrowan and many enjoyed the Ned Kelly show and others walked around the town and purchased various things before we all enjoyed a lovely scone and morning tea at the Billy Tea Rooms. After that we went onto Milawa and got to go through the Mustard and Olive Shops and lunch at the Milawa Bakery. Then onto the Cheese factory for a private cheese tasting, for those who did not participate in the Cheese tasting it was on to the Brown Brothers Winery and to a private tasting session. This was a highlight for those who chose this option, a little late getting back to pick up the others, however we all were in good spirits. Then to the Lavender Farm, the different smells were amazing. After a very busy day it was back to the motel for a rest and a quick change for our dinner at the Bowls Club.

The Benalla Bowls Club did a splendid job of setting up the function room for us, and looked after our needs well. Jim Spencer was Dining President and as it turned our 107 Plant Sqn personnel and their spouses made up the head table. We had 61 people attend the dinner. Our candelabra set the tables off well and they are being used every year. It has worked out very well in having our own, and if anyone else would like to donate one it would be appreciated. Lots of raffle tickets sold as we had

over 50 prizes to hand out. Stuart Hipwell's partner Gail won the lucky placemat prize. Of special significance we had a donation of a bottle of anniversary port from 22nd Const Regt's Anniversary and this was eventually sold to Glen Mayer (Bob's son).

Thank you to all who donated raffle prizes for the weekend it certainly makes things easier. For those who assisted over the weekend thank you, it makes the whole function so much more enjoyable for all.

A special thanks to Stewart and Bev Olney for the making and donation of a gavel and bell. A truly special piece of work that will be the centre of the head table for many years to come.

The weekend for one of our group was difficult as she had a fall some weeks earlier, however a huge effort was made for Gladys Brumhead to enjoy the weekend, a special pillow was presented to her on the Friday night to rest her foot on and this made it somewhat easier for her. We tried to find a wheelchair with little success, but lots of options were offered, from wheelie bins, shopping trolleys and even skateboards however she opted for lots of pluck and her walking frame. Glad you joined in Gladys but I bet you rested for a few days after the weekend.

Thanks also to Jim and Jan, Chick and Margaret for the amount of work getting the weekend together, my partner Alan (who does heaps to help and without him the task would be monumental).

For those who couldn't attend this year, you truly missed a great weekend.

MARK IN NEXT YEARS REUNION DATES NOW: Dates are 23rd to 25th October. It will be in Leongatha next year and the planning is nearly finalized.

For any further information please contact me.

Regards

..... *Jen Eaton*
Email address: jensden@bigpond.net.au
Mobile: 0427 196 038

♠ ♠ ♠

How about a letter to the editor??

Latrobe Valley Sappers

During Daylight saving months, the Latrobe Valley Sappers meet at the Newborough Depot Combined Officers / Sergeants' Mess from 1600 hrs on the first Friday and 3rd Friday nights of every month for a drink and a yarn.

There is a standing invitation to any Ex-RAE in the area, or just visiting the Valley, to join them for a pleasant Friday night.

The President is Terry Olsen, tel (03) 5167 1756

♠ ♠ ♠

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANZAC Peace Prize for Scouting:

Sapper Major General Bill Crews AO Retd, the RSL National President, has announced that the RSL ANZAC Peace Prize has been awarded to Scouts Australia for 2008.

2008 marks the Centenary of Scouting in Australia and has also been declared the Year of the Scout. The award of the ANZAC Peace Prize recognizes the part that Scouting has played in the development of two million Australians over the past 100 years.

Today young men and women, boys and girls, continue to enjoy the benefits of belonging to the largest youth movement in the world, with more than 28 million members in 155 countries. Regardless of nationality, creed or religion Scouts from all parts of the world have made a significant contribution to international goodwill, understanding and world peace which underpinned the RSL award. There are currently more than 60,000 Scouts in Australia, with numbers growing.

Professor David de Krester AC, the Governor and Chief Scout of Victoria, concurs that the award marks a century of giving young people great opportunities to learn cooperation, independence and resourcefulness, and helping to instil a sense of both individual and community responsibility.

... *LtCol Don (Chippy) Hughes RAE*
Group Leader
Warrandyte/Park Orchards Scout Group

From a Well Known Retired Member of 16 Construction Regt, RAE (SR) ... WO11 Lindsay Mottram.

On 28 September last I received a phone call from WO11 Lindsay Mottram, well known as a long serving member of 16 Const Regt RAE (SR). Lindsay enlisted in 16 Regt in 1953, when the Regiment was formed under the command of Lt Col L.T. Wallace, who had previously been OC 99 Const Sqn in 1951-52. Lindsay remained a member of 16 Regt. 'for the duration'.

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with the history of Supplementary Reserve (SR) engineer units, 22 Const Regt was formed in 1950 by the Victorian Government Authorities, followed by 99 Const Sqn in 1951 and 16 Const Regt in 1953, both formed by SECV, with 91 Forestry Sqn also formed in 1953.

Lindsay rang to remind me that he thought 28 September was probably the 65th Anniversary of the famous successful attack by Australian Commandos on Japanese shipping in Singapore Harbour. The attack was launched by mainly Australian commandos paddling canoes into the harbour in the dead of night. The canoes were launched from a captured Indonesian fishing boat (or prah) , the Krait.

The Krait was sailed from Australia by an RAN crew, who successfully eluded Japanese naval and air patrols to reach the entrance to Singapore Harbour, whence the canoes were launched and used to attach limpet mines to a number of merchant ships in the harbour. The method was used twice, the first time being completely successful in sinking several ships, with the canoes returning safely to the mother ship. Unfortunately a second attempt some months later, with the Japanese alerted and defences improved, resulted in the canoes being intercepted and the crews executed before they could reach their targets.

Two sapper volunteers, both demolition experts, were included in the successful contingent, but being only a numerically small part of the whole contingent, the RAE received little public recognition. Lindsay, to whom one of the sappers is a distant relative would like their deeds to be better recognised. Incidentally, the boat used for the operation returned successfully to Australia. In the1990s it was restored and now floats proudly in the Maritime Museum in Sydney Harbour, where I was able to inspect it from a distance on a visit in 2001.

During Lindsay's call, he also reminisced about his time in16 Regt, particularly his first camp at Scrub Hill in 1953, when army uniforms and equipment were in such short supply that SECV engineers and tradesmen were requested to bring their SECV issue overalls, work clothes and tools to camp. Incidentally some tradesmen, particularly motor mechanics in
22 Regt, were still doing this ten years later. At that time many of the military vehicles issued for camp had to be towed to our campsites and 'operated on' when they arrived.

Lindsay is now aged 88, not very mobile and is feeling out of touch with army life. He would appreciate a call from any of his old SECV and army friends to share old memories. He is living in the Heidelberg area and can be contacted on telephone: (03) 9432 8421.

It was great to talk to you, Lindsay.

.... *Bruce Campbell*

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Did you know??

Your fortnightly online copy of ***Army***, the soldiers' newspaper, is now available.

follow this link
http://digital.realviewtechnologies.com/?xml=defencenews_army.xml.

You can view ***Army*** page by page at your leisure.

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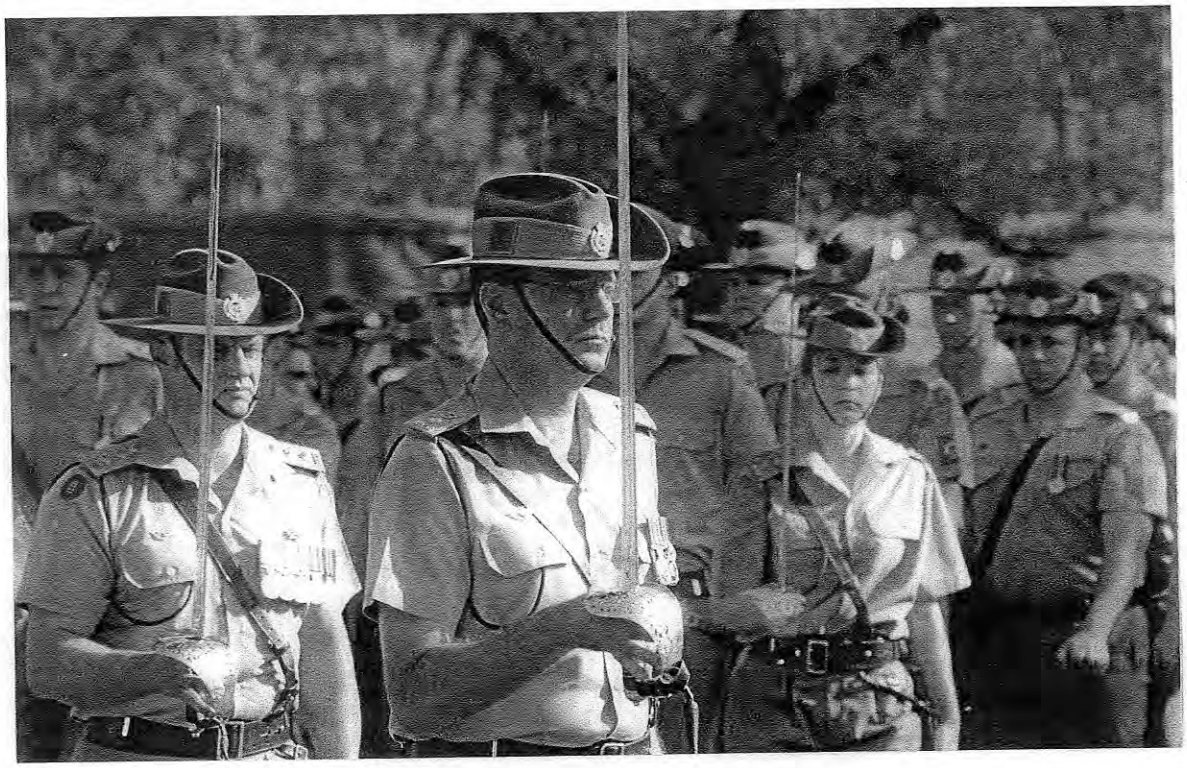
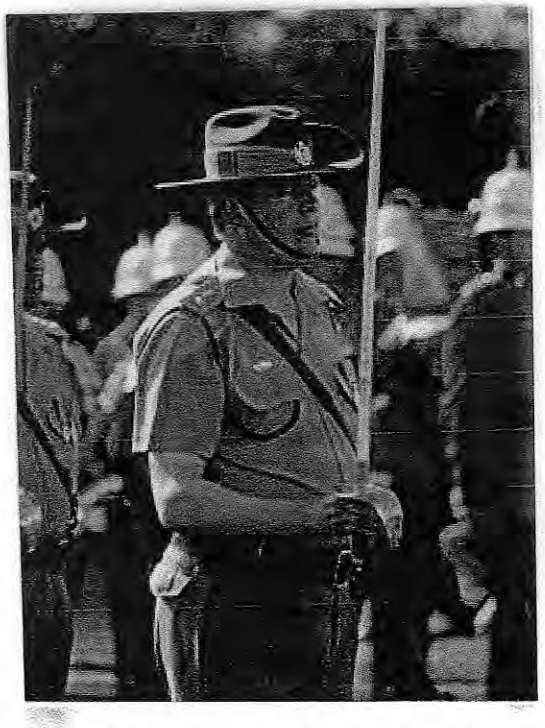
REGIMENTAL COs MOVE ON

The Commanding Officers of both 4 CER and 22 Construction Regiment have completed their terms of appointment and hand over their Regiments early in the new year.



LT COL Don Hogben , CO 4 CER
(The new CO will be LT COL Craig Madden)



LT COL John Raike, CO 22 Construction Regiment
(The new CO will be LT COL Campbell Smith)

... Thanks for your service, and all the best for the future.