

RAE CORPS MAGAZINE
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION (Vic) Inc



SAPPER SUMMIT

Once a Sapper, Always a Sapper



SAPPERS ATTEND VIETNAM VETERANS' GRAVESIDE VIGIL at SPRINGVALE CEMETERY

50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR—BATTLE OF LONG TAN

2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan which was an action fought by ANZAC forces in Vietnam on 18 August 1966. Many events are being conducted around Australia during 2016 to commemorate Australian service in the Vietnam conflict. On 21 February, 2016, simultaneous graveside vigils were held at the sites where Australian casualties of the Vietnam War are buried. Victorian sappers attended the vigil at the Springvale graveside of Spr Denis Brooks who was killed in a mine incident whilst working on a barrier mine field. The vigil was conducted by Vietnam veteran and RAE Association member Allan (Blue) Rantall. (Continued p 3)

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SAPPER SUMMIT

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Inside this issue

Vietnam Veterans Graveside Vigil.....	p1
Op Coracle Donation to AAMME.....	p5
President's Column.....	p6
From the Regiment	p7
Sapper Profiles	p10
Podcasts.....	p13
Rob Youl's Column.....	p14
ANZAC Day 2016.....	p18
2016 Event Calendar.....	p19
AAMME Visit.....	p20
Sapper Muster 2016.....	p24
Rifles and Sub Machine Guns of the Vietnam War.....	p28
Op Coracle.....	p35
Vale	p39
From the Associations.....	p40
Ringwood RSL President	p42
Welfare and Wellbeing.....	p43
Australia's Military Involvement in Vietnam.....	p46
Application Form.....	p51

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Vietnam Veterans' graveside vigil—sappers service L-R Ivan Scully, Margaret Handte, COL Brian Florence AM MC (Retd), Bodo Boucher, Allan Rantall, LTCOL D. Hughes (Retd), LTCOL C. Bowater RFD (Retd), Eric (Jock) Howa , Alex Grana.

GRAVESITE VIGIL – SPRINGVALE CEMETERY – 21ST FEBRUARY 2016 SAPPER DENNIS LINDSAY BROOKS

The weather was perfect for the graveside vigil, not too hot or too cold.

There were 12 people in attendance at the gravesite.

Two people present were in Vietnam when Sapper Brooks was seriously wounded on the Barrier Mine Field 10th May 1967.

In that incident, two others were killed outright, Sapper Terrence Renshaw and Sapper Ramon Deed.

Sapper Brooks died from his wounds on the 22nd May 1967.

Those in attendance at Gravesite were CPL Allan Rantall (who performed the service) and

Cra sman Reno Borg (who performed the fladues) Also in attendance were:

COLONEL BRIAN FLORENCE AM MC – OC 1 FLD SQN VIETNAM

SAPPER IVAN SCULLY – Survived the incident in Vietnam

LTCOL COLIN BOWATER – President RAE

Associati n Victoria

LTCOL DON HUGHES – Vice President RAE Associati n Victoria

MARGARET HANDTE – Committee Member RAE Associati n Victoria.

KATHRYN KELLY – DAUGHTER OF CAPTAIN KELLY 1 FLD SQN DECD

DAVID T. KELLY – SON OF CAPTAIN KELLY 1 FLD SQN

JED RUSSO - GRANDSON OF CAPTAIN KELLY

ERIC HOWATT – Commi ee Member RAE Associati n Victoria

BODO BOETTCHER – SAPPER—Member of RAE Associati n Victoria

ALEX GRANNA – SAPPER –Member RAE Associati n Victoria

MRS.BERYL RANTALL

MRS.MELITA BORG.

The service was conducted by Allan Rantall and Reno Borg. Those who a ended thought that it was a very moving service. A er the main poppy and flag was presented, Allan and Reno moved back to presenta on positi n. Poppies were also laid from everyone a ending the service.

LTCOL Don Hughes and COL Brian Florence laid two wreaths at the gravesite.

A er the service, Don Hughes and Allan Rantall laid wreaths on the other 4 Sapper plaques within the Springvale Cemetery complex..

Whilst the service for SPR Brooks was being conducted, other services were simultaneously held at other veterans' gravesites. An offici service in involving the

RAE CORPS SHOP



If you wish to get items from the Corps Shop: See [h ps://www.raevictoria.asn.au/merchandise.php](https://www.raevictoria.asn.au/merchandise.php) For details for email corpsshop@gmail.com

Minister for Veterans' Affairs was also held within the cemetery complex.

Prior to the service, CPL Allan Rantall had been in contact with Sapper Denis Brooks' father who lives in Queensland. He is 88 years old and was very moved that some recognition was being given to his son at Springvale Cemetery. He was too frail to attend and was grateful that the gravesite vigil was held in his son's honour at last.

He couldn't express his thanks enough to Allan Rantall. Engineer Head of Corps, Brigadier Wayne Budd and Brigadier Peter Hutchison were appreciative that these gravesite vigils were being done. They sent their apologies that they were unable to attend on the day.

Allan Rantall



The "Last Post" is played at the Official Service at Springvale Cemetery



Minister for Veterans' Affairs attending the official Vietnam Veteran's Graveside Vigil Service at Springvale Cemetery of 21 February 2016

OPERATION CORACLE

Donation To Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering



Above: Graeme Lambert presents AAMME Curator, Sebastian Spencer with a series of unique photographs from Op Coracle. The photos were donated to the museum by RAE Association Vice President -Don Hughes. The Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering works to tell the sapper story.

Whilst the museum has over a half a million items, the curator eagerly seeks items that represent the post Vietnam era. With many operational deployments and humanitarian contributions, the sapper story since Vietnam is diverse and complex. Documents, photographs, videos and diaries covering any sapper role, especially since Vietnam, would be welcomed by the museum. If readers have anything they would like to entrust to the museum for expert and permanent care, then Sebastian Spencer would welcome your contact.

Coming to Sapper Summit

What's new at the Museum.....

The Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering will have a regular column in Sapper Summit to advise readers of developments, acquisitions and projects conducted by the museum. Our members are and the family of all a part of the sapper story and it is hoped the regular column will help connect the museum sappers in Victoria.



AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM of MILITARY ENGINEERING

Our Role

To collect, preserve and exhibit the history of the Corps of Royal Australia Engineers and the Royal Australian Survey Corps




Public Access

The museum is open to the general public. Visitors without a Defence Pass are to meet at the Holsworthy Barracks Pass Office.

Car rent, government issued photo identification will be required for all visitors over 16 years of age.

Group bookings are essential, other visitors are advised to call to confirm timings.

Location:
Macarthur Precinct, Soldiers Way, Holsworthy Barracks, Holsworthy (Enter via Heathcote Road)

Contact:
Tel: 02 8762 8822 Fax: 02 8762 8842
Email: AAMME@mailbox.defence.gov.au

Hours:
ADF Members and Defence Civilians: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
General Public: Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 10:45am and 12:45pm
Other times can be arranged by appointment.

President's Column



I hope you have had an enjoyable break over the holidays. 2015 was a very busy year for the Association and 2016 looks like being another full on year.

Planning for 2016 is well under way with the following activities being planned:

Sapper Muster

The Sapper Muster was held on Saturday 27 Feb. It was an excellent night with over 100 guests. See attached report.

Visit to the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering

On the 12 March, 9 members of the Association visited the RAE Museum at Holsworthy NSW. We were given a guided tour by the curator Mr Sebastian Spencer and his assistant Michelle. Sebastian's knowledge, dedication and information about the displays was outstanding.

The visit well worthwhile and much appreciated by the members. See attached report.

Association AGM

The Association AGM will be held on 12 April 2016 at the Ringwood Barracks commencing at 1500 hrs. More details to follow.

Anzac day Parade 2016

This year's ANZAC Day Parade is on Monday 25 April 2016. The RSL has allocated us the same assembly area as last year that is Collins St West (South Side) Depart Timing is 1155hrs

Members are to be in position 30 minutes before step off that is 1025hrs

Visit to the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital

There will be an excursion to the Repatriation Hospital Heidelberg on Thursday 12 May 2016 which will include a tour of the Hospital and grounds, free parking and lunch.

2016 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

2016 Annual Subscriptions are now due and will remain at \$15.00. Financial members will receive a membership lapel pin and a member's 2016 handbook. These will be posted to members shortly.

AWARDS TO 22 ENGINEER REGIMENT PERSONNEL

Two of these awards were presented by our Patron COL John Wertheimer at the Sapper Muster. They were presented to:

Most outstanding JNCO LCPL Anurag Sharma; and Most Outstanding J Officer Lt Simon Duell

The winner of the most outstanding Sapper award, Sapper William Van Berkel was unable to attend and his award will be presented in the near future.

UBIQUE
Colin Bowater
President



Sample members' lapel pin.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS FOUNDATION

For information about the Foundation and news of events and projects, visit the Foundation's web site or click this link:

www.raefoundation.org.au

From The Regiment



CO 22 Engineer Regiment

It's great to be back for the first edition of 2016. It never ceases to amaze me how much the men and women of 22nd Engineer Regiment have achieved in the 12 months since I assumed command. They are working hard to deliver real capability for Army, and as we move forward to our ceremonial exercise in a matter of months, I am confident that we will continue to build on the groundwork done so far. As I type this column, the members of 22nd Engineer Regiment and 3rd Field Squadron (Adelaide) forming the Battle Group JACKA Engineer Squadron have just returned from Cultana in South Australia on Exercise PREDATOR'S GALLOP. This has been our final combined arms exercise prior to certification; you can read more about it later in this edition of *Sapper Summit*. However, I will note that I have asked the JACKA Engineer Squadron members to increase their commitment to Army throughout the last half of the READYING year - and it inspires me to see so many Reservists who have been willing and able to step up to the challenge.

Concurrently with Exercise PREDATOR'S GALLOP, the unit conducted an in-house single-coded Plant Operators Course and Medium Rigid GS (MR2) driver's course in the Puckapunyal Training Area. Eight 22ER and three 3 Fd Sqn members graduated from the plant course, whilst seven 22ER members and one 3 Fd Sqn member graduated from the MR2 course. Well done to those men and women; they are directly enhancing the capability of their units through their increased employability for Ex HAMEL and beyond.

In other news, on Friday 26 February, I attended the annual Reynolds Dinner hosted by the RAE Foundation. There were three main objectives for the dinner; to fundraise for the Foundation, to spread the Foundation's message and generally just to have a great night out with good friends and colleagues past and present. The RAE Foundation is a voluntary, not for profit organisation founded by Sappers. It performs a number of roles, amongst those being to assist in the welfare of the members of the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers and, in special circumstances, their dependents. I commend the RAE

Foundation to you.

Looking ahead, the 2016 ANZAC Day Dawn Service hosted by 22ER will be held at Ringwood, with all current and former serving members and their families warmly invited. Look out for further details on the service later in the *Summit*. Regrettably, the Sir Clive Steele lecture scheduled for Fri 27 May has been postponed to the latter half of 2016 - further details will be provided in the next edition. May's training will be to primarily practise our counter-mobility Corps Mission Essential tasks and June's main effort will be to prepare our members for Ex HAMEL in July.

Ubique

Michelle McCormack
LTCOL
Commanding Officer

EXERCISE PREDATOR'S GALLOP

Over period 11-20 March, 22 ER in conjunction with 3 FD SQN deployed their JACKA ENGR SQN to the Cultana Training Area in support of 1 CER for EXERCISE PREDATORS GALLOP (EX PG). EX PG was a 1st Brigade Combined Arms Training Activity (CATA) designed to test the Brigade, complete with the ARes Reinforcing Battle Group, in conventional operations. This was the first exercise where the ARes Reinforcing Battle Group would attach to 1 BDE. For the JACKA ENGR SQN, this was the first time we would integrate with 1 CER as another Sub Unit (E4); an important milestone as we move towards certification on EX HAMEL in July this year.

As the other 1 CER Field Squadrons conducted Battle Grouping with their respective 1st BDE manoeuvre elements, E4 was tasked with preparation of a Company Delay Position with tactical obstacles within the High Explosive Target Area (HETA). Whilst this task was seemingly straight forward, it posed significant training opportunities for Combat and Construction Engineers alike in a range of skill.

As detailed below by the commanders of each task, E4 elements conducted a wide array of

tasks including a live area search of the HETA to identify unexploded ordnance (UXO) ready for destruction and render the area safe for the conduct of defensive works. Our members also developed a Company Defensive Position and emplaced a DISRUPT obstacle belt forward of the position.

This defensive position was to be utilized by the enemy later in the exercise, when Battle Group Lion (the 1 Armoured Regiment Battle Group) would culminate Tonne capacity and was able to accommodate any type of vehicle crossing. Earlier in the day the majority of a Battle Group had crossed these two bridges, including Abrams tanks and Hercules recovery vehicles which had tested the load capacity of the heavier bridge.



As there was low traffic and it was only going in one direction, only the heavier bridge was being manned. I received a handover from the section controlling that bridge covering the safety rules for the bridges and tips for guiding vehicles as well as how to remove and replace the kerbs to allow tanks to cross.

During the handover I had dropped a small team at the junction site to prevent traffic going to the unmanned bridge. It became obvious this wasn't a sustainable solution; the distance and lack of communication between this site and the bridge meant there would be no overall control or mutual support, not to mention the workload for three or four soldiers at each site to maintain 24-hour coverage. The section consolidated at the

main bridge site after marking the second bridge closed and indicating the route to our bridge with cyalumes.

Throughout the handover and consolidation, the bridge remained open. During this process we saw the last elements of the battle group over the bridge: the Engineer troop, two Artillery batteries, and the PMV-mounted Infantry platoon that had been protecting the crossing. We were then on our own with the bridge. The following morning there was a little more traffic toward and away from the battle group, including a visit from CO 1 CER and COMD 1 BDE.

This task was a highlight of the exercise for me – the task was interesting and gave the whole section some exposure to bridging (a new experience for most of us). The contrast of operating as an independent section in an exercise of mostly troop-level tasks was also a great experience.

Mine Marking



EX PREDATORS GALLOP was a change of pace for the members of 22 ER and 3 FD SQN. We were given a large scale task that would not be achievable on a normal training weekend, and with this came the requirement for forward planning, consideration of logistics and stores beyond what is immediately in front of you and working with assets from the ARA that are normally unavailable for ARES training.

1 CER could not have been more

accommodating as we achieved as an additional sub unit, backfilling our equipment deficiencies and providing the appropriate Regiment assets and technical advice to complete the task we were given. This positive experience left all members of E4 excited and motivated for further integration on EX HAMEL.



ADF buys More Bridges

The Australian Defence Force has signed contracts worth \$109million (£53m) with British military bridge manufacturer WFEL for two new tactical bridge systems – one of which is a new capability for the ADF.

This new acquisition is in addition to the Improved Ribbon Bridge purchase.

The bridges are designed to provide temporary infrastructure and can be used in combat situations or in the event of natural disasters.

They will be manufactured at WFEL's production facility in Stockport, UK, and delivery will begin in late 2017.

MGB first entered service more than 30 years ago and has played a major role in both military and disaster relief operations around the world and is used by more than 40 armed forces worldwide.

Under the ADF contracts, WFEL would supply

double-storey, link-reinforced MGB sets which can span up to 49 metres.

These bridges will be supplemented by additional equipment that will allow bridges of up to 76m to be constructed, using WFEL's portable pier sets.

WFEL will also supply DSBs which can be deployed by just eight people in under 90 minutes.

"The bridges will be specially manufactured by WFEL to be launched from the ADF's RMMV Rheinmetall MAN 10 x 10 fully-armoured military vehicles.

"The DSB – of which more than 130 systems have been sold – is already in use with the US, Swiss and Turkish armed forces and has been used as temporary infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Both the MGBs and DSBs will be supplied with additional walkways, which allow foot traffic to safely cross the bridge separated from vehicular traffic.

The contracts signed the ADF and WFEL fall under Project Land 155, a program to provide land forces with the ability to cross wet and dry gaps during combat operations – and is in addition to the Improved Ribbon Bridge system purchase.

(Source: Contact –Air Land Sea)



Medium Girder Bridge

SAPPER PROFILES



See notes p29

Sapper Jim Stafford 8594513

22ER, 10 CES, 4 TP

Sapper Jim Stafford of 10CES, 22ER, said, "I haven't done anything spectacular in the ADF but I guess my age, previous service and full time job are of interest to some." Stafford grew up with a Navy family background. His Great Grandfather, his Grandfather's, his father and his brother all served lengthy periods in either the RAN or RANR. His Great Grandfather and Grandfather both had the honour of being part of the Australian Contingents marching at the King and Queens' Coronation Parades in London in 1937 and 1953. At school Stafford joined the Army Cadets and enjoyed it more than school. During year 12 in 1981 Stafford continued the family tradition and aged 17 signed up with the Melbourne Port Division of the RANR as a Quarter Master Gunner. At the time the Reserves were based at HMAS Lonsdale in Port Melbourne which has since been demolished and apartments now sit on the old parade ground. The Reserves had their own Attack Class patrol boat HMAS Bayonet which was located at HMAS Cerberus. Its crew were entirely Reservists and replaced other full time patrol boat operations when they took time off from



BSORS (Bass Strait Oil Rig Surveillance).

At the time this was a full time role for the Navy to prevent commercial shipping from running into oil rigs. This was before GPS and auto pilots were widely used and there was a very real concern that a ship would take a short cut and run into an oil rig and create chaos. On many patrols the crew of 19 included Stafford on the helm or manning the gun, his dad a Petty Officer Stoker in the engine room and his brother a Diver. His dad went on to serve 39 years and his brother who joined in 1983 is still in as a Leading Seaman Diver. In 1987 Stafford completed his 6 years stint in the Reserves. The base was closing and they were being moved to HMAS Cerberus. Stafford was already too busy with ship work and decided not to sign on for a further 3 or 6 years as it was then. This period saw the biggest change in the RANR with numbers going from a few hundred to less than 100 and the patrol boat role was changed to Mine Warfare. During his time Stafford did a number of patrols both in Bass Strait and further north out of Cairns. "Many weekends were spent at sea, Cerberus,



Williamstown Dockyard, Williamstown Rifle Range (now houses), and West Head Gunnery Range", he said. Weapons used by Naval Reservists' then were primarily the SLR rifle, the .50 cal machine gun and the 40/60 Bofor. At the time, there were no overseas operational deployments taking place so Stafford didn't get to venture outside Australian waters.

In 1984 whilst still in the Reserves Staffor joined the Victoria Police working initially in the city and then in 1986 joined the Traffic Operations Group at St. Kilda where he rode a motorcycle until 2000. He had three trips in ambulances, twice for crashes and once after being bashed by three drugged thugs he had upset by pulling them over after a pursuit. "I knew I was in trouble that day after they kicked over my police motorcycle but I made good use of my baton and got through it", he said. One of his accidents was in 1989 and was caused by a woman driving through a STOP sign in front of him and he went over the roof of her Alfa at 60 km/h. He ended up with several broken bones but recovered and got back on the bike a few months later. The offending driver complained he had ruined her Alfa and was issued a traffic ticket for going through a STOP sign. "There are bound to be a few mishaps riding a police motorcycle 8 hours a day for that many years", he said.

In 2000 Staffor decided it was time for a change and was successful in transferring to the Police Air Wing as a Tactical Flight Officer. The Victoria Police Air Wing operates four twin engine helicopters around the clock. Staffor's role includes mission controller, navigator, radio operator, FLIR camera operator, aerial photographer, winch crewman, winch operator, fast rope



dispatcher and airborne sniper controller to

name a few. The Air Wing is based at Essendon Airport and covers all of Victoria and often interstate. They also crew the Air Ambulance helicopter for the Melbourne region and are trained to assist the paramedic to monitor the patient and draw up the required drugs and then transfer the patient. By 2006 Staffor became an Instructor and now trains the 'new guys' whilst remaining operational. "The job has its challenges and is never dull", he said. Staffor went on to say, "Most jobs we do go un-noticed but some get a lot of media attention. We generally don't talk a lot about it because it is just our job and it is luck of the draw as to who ends up on the aircraft for each job. It is really the helicopter that allows us to rescue people, we just get it there. I have attended a few high profile jobs over the years. One was the Monash University shootings in 2002 where we had multiple patients. I was also involved in the 2009 bush fires searching for victims, delivering supplies, conducting medivacs and assisting with the post-reinvestigation. We saw the Army Reserve in action and their efforts were really appreciated. I have done quite a number of winch rescues and too many body recoveries which is part of the job." Winch rescues can be done over land or at sea in all conditions. At the time of writing Staffor had just winched out two stranded Canadian hikers on the Alpine Walking Track near Mt. Buller. "Most search and rescue operations are resolved quickly these days because people carry and activate a beacon which takes us straight to them. Years ago we had to search for days just to find them", he said. At night they operate on NVG's so landing on roads or in paddocks is no problem. Winch rescues can also be done on NVG's although most are done during the day for safety when time allows. Winch rescues can be conducted up to 250' (76m) if the terrain is steep or obstacles are in the way. Staffor said, "People often ask what the worst injuries I have seen are. Train accidents, industrial

and car accidents and burns are the most intensive tasks we a end. Probably the worst injuries I have dealt with was a bloke on the outskirts of Melbourne a number of years ago who decided it would be fun to make a homemade bomb. He did survive with a number of amputations and facial burns. Car accidents are a daily occurrence for us and I have lost count of the number of fatalities I have a ended. Generally we can assist severely injured people get to hospital faster which is rewarding. We get used to it but I have seen a number of colleagues' succumb to PTSD over the years. Like Army, you have to look a er and keep an eye on your mates." Staffor also spends a lot of me following stolen cars, responding to police tasks and conduc ng surveillance. He said rescues are only a small part of the job. He has been serving in the police for over 31 years.

In 2009 Staffor d had the opportunity to a end RAMSI (Operation ANODE) in Solomon Islands as a contract helicopter crewman. "It gave me a great insight into the role of the Army Reserve and probably inspired me to join especially having just seen them at the fir s as well. I flew many of the Reservists and Police on deployment around the Islands as well as delivering supplies and conduc ng medivacs to the outposts", he said.



In 2012 Staffor d decided to join the Army

Reserve. "I have an interest in construc on and having just built my house as an owner builder I decided the Engineers sounded the best and a Construc on Regiment near home was perfect. I started at 22nd Construc on Regiment in early 2013 and went to Kapooka aged 49. I managed to keep up with the younger blokes and got through", Staffor said. He later took part in the parade that combined 22nd Construc on Regiment with 4 CER to form 22 Engineer Regiment. Staffor d went on to say, "It has been an interes ng me to join and I am serving with many people who have seen ac ve service. I don't mind admi ng I am proud to be a part of the Regiment and to be able to work with them. I have also had the honour of marching twice with the 'old' Sappers at the Reserve Forces Day parade. I recommend other Reservists' to join in this year. As a Combat Engineer in 10CES I see a lot of similari es to my full me work, it is all about ge ng the job done with what you have available."



Staffor d said he was lucky to be on the first Reserve intake to a end the new SME at Holsworthy and got to go back for a number of lessons at the old SME at Moorebank. "It was a ghost town but full of so much history that we were honoured to be there. I am sure over me the new SME will be full of its own history but the old SME will never be forgo en, the new Sappers will see to that", he said.

Staffor d has been married 23 years and has a 19 year old son and a daughter aged 17. Following his families' military traditi n, his son, a 2nd year Army Officer Cadet is studying

Science at ADFA in Canberra. "He hopes to get into Aviation but I will see if I can convince him to be a Sapper. It will be interesting when I have to call my son 'Sir' and salute him!" he said.

Stafford is also in the process of fully restoring a 1968 Morris Mini Cooper S.



Sapper-Australia-Waterloo Connection

CAPT Andrew White was born on 23 September 1793 to Rachel Turner, the convict house keeper of the First Fleet's Surgeon General, John White. John White left NSW but made provision for Andrew and his mother. Andrew received a British education and entered the British Army with a Commission (dated 1 July 1812) as a Second Lieutenant in the **Royal Engineers**. He went to France in 1813 and served at Waterloo. He returned to Australia to his emancipated mother. He died on 24 November 1837.

Issue 93 Podcast

Gallipoli

The word 'Gallipoli' reverberates with significance as the fabled origin of an independent Australian identity. As a military campaign it is legend but, does the yarn stand up to history?

In this Nightlife podcast of a recent Literary Event Fairfax Columnist and prolific author Peter Fitzsimons reveals that when it comes to Australia's baptism of fire on the Gallipoli Peninsula the truth makes just about as good a yarn as you can get.

Click the link below to access this podcast:

<http://www.abc.net.au/nightlife/stories/4141766.htm>

Peter Fitzsimons



TEXTS IN THE CITY—DEAR AMERICA

In this episode of Texts in the City, Tony Birch looks at Bernard Edelman's *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* with author and Vietnam veteran Barry Heard. They discuss war and trauma, and questions of honesty, memory and emotional sensitivity—in the context of both the text and Heard's personal experiences.

Click the link below to listen:

<http://www.wheelercentre.com/broadcasts/texts-in-the-city-dear-america>

Editor's Note:

Podcasts listed in Sapper Summit do not promote the views or opinions of the RAE Association Victoria Inc. Podcasts are included to provide readers with material of historical military or military related interest. (Ed)

Rob Youl's Column

I'd planned columns on Korea, after a fascinating seminar late last year on that rather overlooked war, whose grave ramifications remain. Our editor's justified emphasis on Vietnam in 2016, fifteen years after Long Tan, sees me postponing the Korean project, and writing broadly about Vietnam to help set the scene.

My first Indochinese memories: May 1954, Movietone news at Traralgon's Valley theatre, Dien Bien Phu, besieged 55 days, aerial view, blurred black landscape, smoke-bursts; and later on a *Victorian School Paper* cover showing happy kids and dairy cow given by Australia's Colombo Plan to their village in one of the three small friendly Indochinese countries: South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Over the next decade, one became vaguely aware of the complex regional politics via occasional news stories, the growing US military involvement, then our own, and eventually on 6 July 1964 Australia's first battle casualty, infanteer WO II Kevin Conway. Fifteen months later I was in the army myself, thanks to conscription, which began on 30 June 1965.

Predictably, today's reunited Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a complex country with 92 million people: 86 percent Kinh, the dominant plains-dwelling Vietnamese whose forebears settled there and in Cambodia from China from roughly 1000 BC-1000 AD, and 14 percent 'Montagnards', the earlier inhabitants, the diverse peoples (there are 54 groupings) whom the Kinh pushed back into the highlands. Of Austronesian origin (like Polynesians), speaking many different tongues, the Montagnards also live in south-west China, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and north-east India. Ho Chi Minh City has at least 8.5 million people, and Hanoi 7.5 million. The religions by percentage: indigenous 45, no religion 28, Buddhist 16, Christian 8, with 70 000 Muslims and 50 000 Hindu.

Vietnam was increasingly reluctantly part of the Chinese empire from 111 BC-939 AD, when victory at Bach Dang River brought independence and its own prosperous kingdom, which later, via frequent warfare, extended west into modern Cambodia, all of which France colonised in the mid 19th century, creating three Vietnamese entities, Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina. France also appropriated Laos and Cambodia. Anti-French rebellions were common and bloody, but France brought modernism and strengthened Catholicism. With Vichy approval, Japanese forces occupied the French colonies from 1940-45 – from before Pearl Harbor. Indeed, US sanctions and blockades to hinder Japanese imports from resource-

rich Indochina, especially rubber, steel and probably coal, helped the Japanese justify attacking America. When war ended, France expected to return and continue its regional rule and lucrative trade in Vietnam. Indeed, the July 1945 Potsdam talks treated Indochina as French, dividing it at the 18th parallel so Chiang Kai-shek in the north and Lord Mountbatten in the south could receive the Japanese surrender. Because France was exhausted, a British-Indian force landed to help the French regain control – shades of the Dutch East Indies. It seems few at the top realised then that many colonised peoples had had enough.

However a pragmatic nationalist leader, Ho Chi Minh, who had lived in France, trained in the USSR, and, with US backing, ably led his Viet Minh against the Japanese, declared a pro-communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam, soon recognised by the Soviet Union and China. Shamefully, in the interregnum between Japan's surrender and the French return, lengthened by MacArthur's publicity machine and bad weather deferring the Tokyo surrender, chaos reigned, with British and Indian troops, rearmed Vichy French POWs and Japanese soldiers holding back the Viet Minh. Interestingly, the US had no great desire to see colonial administrations re-established. And Ho's ruthless government led many to flee south.

The Viet Minh and France fought the First Indochina War for the next nine years; France backed its puppet, decadent, but still influential, emperor Bao Dai, who walked a tightrope. Despite substantial US support, the war, often between major formations, went badly. Dien Bien Phu brought its bloody end, when in a northern upland valley surrounded by timbered ranges, 50 000 Viet Minh systematically undermined then over-ran 20 000 exposed French and French colonial forces. The armistice eventually, despite argy-bargy and Ho Chi Minh's six months in Paris, created two 'temporary' states divided by the 17th parallel: North Vietnam, under Ho and centred on Hanoi, and South Vietnam, with Saigon its capital and its leader, Ngo Dinh Diem, one of several over the next almost twenty years. Bao Dai, now living in France, had made a 'captain's pick'.

A vignette: Sgt George Scheldt, was a memorable cook with the MMBW and 6 Construction Group until the 1980s or beyond. He told me he cycled from his native Germany to Asia after WW II, joined the French Foreign Legion, and fought at Dien Bien Phu. More esoteric was a scene from Bernard Fall's *Street Without Joy*, OTU Scheyville's bible: French army camp; four officers playing tennis in whites; waiting stoically to speak to one of the quartet a Cambodian warrant officer, a smartly starched colonial NCO with three rows of ribbons, indicating long loyal service to France in various ugly African colonial campaigns, plus Free France during WWII. The officers ignore him. Suddenly

a distant bugle indicates the tricolor's lowering at sunset. The Cambodian braces to attention and crisply salutes La France. Tennis continues, uninterrupted.

Following partition, the Second Indochina War commenced. My outline will not suffice, but here goes, helped greatly by the VVAA website (<http://www.vvaa.org.au/calendar.htm>). Firstly in 1955 more US military aid arrived in the south, backed by training. In Canberra in 1957, Ngo Dinh Diem met PM Menzies, who promised our backing. In 1960 the National Liberation Front for Vietnam emerged; the southerners dubbed it Viet Cong ('communist Vietnamese'). In May 1962 Defence Minister Athol Townley announced 30 army advisors would go to South Vietnam, and the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) formed in August that year. In November 1963 Diem and his brother, both Catholic, tyrants, and now alienated from the predominantly Buddhist population, were murdered during a US-approved coup. Instability multiplied, facilitating further northern infiltration. Soon after, with John Kennedy dead, the incoming Lyndon Johnson announced a much greater US commitment, initially 15 000 advisors. By mid 1964, the AATTV numbered over 80; it grew further to operate all over South Vietnam and doubtless beyond, with the endurance and drive of its highly professional members widely recognised. In August 1964, a decision still debated, Congress hugely extended Johnson's powers with respect to Vietnam after US Navy ships were allegedly attacked off North Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin. The US force grew quickly, division by division, to a peak half million servicemen. The USAF heavily bombed North Vietnam.

Menzies reintroduced national service on 10 November 1964 to increase our army by forty percent. A month later he committed a battalion group based on 1RAR, with APC, signals and logistical support, to be stationed with the US 173 Airborne Division at Bien Hoa, just north of Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City. In early June that force disembarked from HMAS Sydney at Vung Tau; on 30 June national service started, with 2000 men marching into rapidly constructed or renovated barracks at Puckapunyal and Kapooka. 1 RAR was strengthened from August 1965 with artillery, additional APCs, field engineers – from 1 Field Squadron RAE, army helicopters and light aircraft, and more logistics. At least half of the Australian community then supported our Indochinese presence, but by late October, dissent surfaced with 65 arrests at Sydney's first demonstration. The many further protests over the next six years had big political repercussions.

The pace quickened: WOII 'Dasher' Wheatley was nominated posthumously for the Victoria Cross that November – the first of four VCs in Vietnam, all AATTV;

Harold Holt became PM when Menzies retired in January 1966; on 6 March Holt announced that a task force (1 ATF), 4350-strong (including many 'nashos'), would replace 1 RAR and operate more independently in Phuoc Tuy (now Ba Ria-Vung Tau), a coastal province across the bay from Saigon. It would comprise two battalions (5RAR and 6 RAR), an SAS squadron, extensive combat and logistical support, with eight Iroquois helicopters from 9 Squadron RAAF; Vung Tau would house 1 Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG). Most army units included 'nashos'. New Zealand's RNZA supplied a very competent field battery that we had long worked with in Malaya.

Amazingly, twelve weeks later on 24 May, RAAF Iroquois ferried 5 RAR into the selected tactical base, a rubber plantation at Nui Dat, NNE of and less than 25 kilometres inland from 1 ALSG; by 4 June 1ATF was fully on the ground. These early days saw the first nasho killed, South Australian Private Errol Noack, and on 18 August the critical Battle of Long Tan, when D Company 6 RAR, with guts, accurate artillery, excellent leadership, astonishingly good soldiering, help from atrocious weather and luck, bumped into and fought off a large enemy force, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, of whom at least 245 died, compared with 18 Australians. This early decisive action meant more prudent enemy regional strategies and operations thereafter. That afternoon, D Company soldiers, as they unknowingly approached one of our now more famous battle grounds, heard Col Joye and the Joy Boys and Lieutenant Paentertaining the task force at nearby Nui Dat. Amongst the privates reinforcing battered D Company after Long Tan was my good friend and Ringwood colleague WO1 Ted Boltong.

More than a skeletal timeline for Australia's following tough eight-nine years is beyond this column. The task force grew to three battalions and a tank squadron (Centurions with their accurate guns but limited jungle mobility), and included a NZ rifle company, initially serving with 2RAR. We weathered the South Vietnam-wide Tet Offensive in late January 1968, when Baria, between our two bases, was attacked. Theatre-wide heavy enemy losses were counterbalanced by political gains and increased Western dissatisfaction with the war. Later in 1968 we fought and survived the vicious hand-to-hand Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral back in Bien Hoa province; twenty-six died and over 100 were wounded. In August 1969 polling showed 55 percent of Australians wanted our troops home. Ho, 79, died the next month.

That December the US withdrew 25 000 troops, planning further repatriation. PM Gorton announced plans for reductions, and did not replace 8 RAR when it returned in November 1970. By now co-ordinated moratorium rallies in capital cities were drawing up to

120 000 protestors. William McMahon, Gorton's successor, further reduced 1 ATF, extracting the tanks, Canberra bombers and some Caribou transports – by now RAAF aircraft operated across South Vietnam.

On 18 August 1971, the PM announced all units would return, excepting a diminished AATTV, and also shortened 'nasho' obligations to eighteen months. On 6 October 3 RAR airlifted onto HMAS Sydney from Nui Dat; next day 4 RAR decamped for Vung Tau. On 27 January 1972, a US-North Vietnamese peace agreement was signed, and six weeks later 1 ALSG Vung Tau shrank to a 150-strong 'assistance group'. AATTV remained, also reduced. On 2 December 1972, the new Whitlam government terminated conscription, pardoned imprisoned protestors and, days later, ended our Vietnamese military commitments as precisely as it could. On 23 January 1973, President Nixon announced 'peace with honour'! A ceasefire rapidly followed. In February 1973, Australian recognised the Hanoi government, but maintained links with Saigon. The last US units left on 29 March.

Ceasefire violations mounted, and in January 1974 the South's president, Nguyen Van Thieu, pronounced that the war had restarted. From late March, RAAF aircraft flew numerous relief missions; one of the last helped evacuate our Saigon embassy. By 30 April, after four chaotic months, Saigon had fallen. Vietnam was one country. A side effect was the migration of over 150 000 Vietnamese to Australia over the next two decades or so, the first by small boat, afterwards mostly via official channels. Doubtless, numerous descendants serve in the ADF.

Soldiering in Vietnam? We served alongside the South Vietnamese Army, US, NZ, the Philippines, Korea and Thailand against a local, well organised opponent – the combined North Vietnamese Army and the South's doughty militia, the VC. None would doubt Vietnamese military prowess on either side when motivated and well supplied. Our arms units faced challenging long patrols through forest and farmland, recon and ambushes, harrowing village clearances, generally well supported by allied artillery, and occasional set-piece engagements. Jungle skills from Malaya and Borneo were vital, their messiahs Brigadier Ted Serong and Colonel George Warfe. Air superiority was ours, and army and RAAF helicopters came into their own, but of course were vulnerable to Russian and Chinese ground-air weapons, supplied profusely via the Ho Chi Minh Trail, running tortuously through Laos. Russia also provided 15 000 combat advisors – like our AATTV? US-produced APCs were our basic armoured vehicles, often modified for mortars, medevac, maintenance, salvage, resupply and other tasks. Sappers played their traditional roles: minelaying and clearing (our worst problem?), fixed defences, diverse military and civil

construction, water supply, dealing with booby traps, land clearing, community projects, demolitions. (What have I missed? Doubtless, lots!) And at least one new gig: tunnel warfare. The enemy burrowed everywhere, often deeply, to hide, heal, store food and materiel and facilitate attacks and withdrawals. The RAE had to locate, explore and destroy these tunnels.

By drawing many contributions this year from readers who served there from 1962-72, we hope *Sapper Summit* can expand the above osteoporotic skeleton. Tell us about your service! And your return to Oz! Popular accounts indicate homecoming soldiers were shunned, but Mark Dapin in his excellent *Vietnam: The Nashos' War* could only discern cheering crowds and warm public welcomes. Nevertheless, we have all heard stories of hurtful reactions at more intimate levels.

The toll: well over three million Vietnamese, over 58 200 US service personnel (almost all etched onto Washington's Wall), and 502 Australians (directly – but some later deaths soon after at home seemed tightly bound to the war), plus 37 Kiwi soldiers. Even when 40 000 strong, Australia's army was like a family, so each casualty was painful. Since then many veterans have died prematurely or severely declined. However when I scan the ranks every Anzac Day, hundreds look pretty standard Oz males to me. Clearly, the Vietnam War made many good and bad contributions to our psyche, culture, history and place in the region and world, and to our armed forces.

Vietnam post-war under collector Le Duan proved no paradise, with resentment, re-education, refugees and revenge, and the tragic Third Indochina War from 1978-91 across the region through Cambodia and Laos, and into Thailand. It also involved, topically, battles between Vietnam and China on their land border, and in the Spratlys. However 1986 saw leadership and policy reforms, and a 'socialist-oriented market economy', after which the country opened up, and liberalised, so that it is now a literate world citizen, industrial, a major World Trade Organization member and an oil-producer. Still centralised and Communist Party-run, including the media, it isn't problem-free, but, in the Australian tradition, thankfully our enemy has become our friend and trading partner.

Finally, briefly, the geography and infrastructure ... I enjoyed a visit in 1998. Having missed it in wartime, I was keen to go. Some 1800 kilometres long and from 50-600 kilometres wide, Vietnam is the size of Germany, with forested mountains and fertile basaltic plateaus to the west, and generally coastal plain and forest to the east, with Hanoi astride the Red River, the great northern basin, and Saigon on one of the numerous distributaries of the Mekong Delta, many

dredged and straightened for river traffic. The monsoonal climate varies from north to south, and there are rather arid rain-shadows. Though not overlooked by government, the rich biodiversity is hugely stressed by the usual factors: population, expansion of farming, dam-building, poaching, the pet trade, war and climate change. Tourism brings massive income; scenic delights include Ha Long Bay's spectacular limestone pinnacles, colonial Hanoi, the superb fishing village of Hoi An near Da Nang, the intriguing ornate brick Cham towers that dot central Vietnam, the granite coast around Nha Trang, and bustling Ho Chi Minh City, where my daughter was nursing this February. War-time relics abound, especially B57 fuselage parts: my cousin said he saw the Chinese T59 tank that crashed through the Saigon palace gates ten times. You can readily go to Khe Sanh and the DMZ, as I did. Vietnam is a genetic treasure trove agriculturally, with coffee, rice and cashews major exports, and the food is superb. Finally, whereas bicycles, motor scooters, motorcycles and buses transport almost everyone, with a daily average toll of 30, a high-speed rail line over 1600 kilometres long will eventually link the two metropolises, replacing the colonial-era service. What changes in half a century!

Rob's sketches:

Saigon Cathedral



Hoi An Market



Na Trang



Ba Ria



**SME Vietnam Memorial
Holsworthy NSW**



ANZAC DAY ARRANGEMENTS ANNOUNCED

In 2016 members and fellow sappers have been invited to participate in a number of ANZAC Day commemorative activities. These are detailed below:

ANZAC DAY 2016



22nd Engineer Regiment

The Commanding Officer, LTCOL MA McCormack and members of the 22nd Engineer Regiment cordially invite family, past members, friends, associations and employers to the ANZAC Day Dawn Service to be held at Ringwood Training Depot on the 25 April 2016.

Timings:

Gunfire breakfast – 0530 h
Service commences – 0600 h
Service concludes – 0640 h
Breakfast – 0645 h
Bar Open – 0700 h
Bar Closed – 1000h

Inclement weather:

In the case of inclement weather, the Dawn Service will be held in the Drill Hall.

Dress:

Civilian dress is Lounge suit (or female equivalent). Military members are requested to wear Dress Order 2C – Ceremonial dress.

Unit POC:

The Regimental Sergeant Major can be contacted at anthony.luchterhand@defence.gov.au for any ANZAC Day issues.



RINGWOOD RSL

The President of Ringwood and RSL and regular contributor to Sapper Summit, David Jamieson, has invited the RAE Association -Victoria to participate in the 2016 Ringwood ANZAC march and commemorative service.

Date : Sunday 17 April

0930—assemble at New/Seymour Streets, Ringwood (formerly Target Square)

1000—March commences proceeding east along Maroondah Highway to the Memorial Clock Tower.

1030—Memorial service and wreath laying.

1100—Reform and march to Ringwood RSL clubrooms where refreshments will be served.

MELBOURNE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIVE MARCH

Date: 25 April

Assemble 1130 hours Collins Street, west of Swanston St on the south side.

Step off at 1155 hours.

For both the Ringwood and Melbourne marches, the RAE Association will march as a group. These are major events for the Association and the Association welcomes the participation of all serving and retired sappers.

RSL march protocols apply to both events. These can be found on the Association's website at:

<https://www.raevictoria.asn.au/projects-and-events.php>

A photographic feature of ANZAC Day 2016 will be published in Sapper Summit 94 which should be available in late May.

Please check the Association's web site and Facebook page regularly for updates on ANZAC Day 2016.

The RAE Association (Vic) is conducting a number of events and tours in 2016. Please check our web site regularly for updates and event details at www.raevictoria.asn.au

RAE Association (Vic) Events Calendar 2016

Committee Meetings 09 Feb, 12 Apr, 14 Jun, 09 Aug, 11 Oct, 13 Dec. Locations and times TBA

History Project Meetings (bi monthly) Contact Noel Tipton 22 Construction Regt and Don Hughes for 4 CER details.

Sapper Summit - tri monthly.

"LARK FORCE" celebrations Jan (OSA)

2016 Sapper Muster 27 Feb at Oakleigh Barracks

Visit to SME Museum Saturday 12 March

Good Friday Children's Appeal (Bus from Ringwood Depot) 25 MARCH

Association AGM 12 April preceded by Committee of Management Meeting.

17 April Ringwood RSL ANZAC March

Heidelberg, ANZAC Ceremony Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital 22 April

ANZAC Day wreath laying Dawn Services Ringwood RSL and 22 ER

ANZAC Parade 25 April. March with RAE Association Victoria banner.

VISIT to Repat Hospital Thursday 12 May

Blue Tongues Reunion Nagambie dates TBA

Sir CLIVE STEELE Lecture 27 May Oakleigh Barracks,

Waterloo Dinner -18 June -Loc TBA

OSA Waterloo Dinner June Loc TBA

Reserve Force Day March 3 July at the Shrine.

Long Tan Vietnam Veterans' Day August 18

Peacekeepers and Peacemaker Day = September

22 Construction Regiment Reunion Group 21-22 October Bendigo

Woodies

Location and dates TBA

Visit 22 ER Sapper training TBA

RAE Foundation "Reynolds Dinner" visit www.raefoundation.org.au

Puckapunyal Firepower Demonstration – October

Remembrance Day 11 November

22 Engineer Regiment End of Year Parade and RAE Association Awards presentation – November

Sapper Christmas get together - TBA



VICTORIA CROSS—AUSTRALIAN SAPPER HISTORY

The first Australian born VC recipient was Mark Sever BELL who was born in Sydney On 15 May 1843. LT BELL was awarded the Victoria Cross whilst serving with the Royal Engineers in the Ashanti War in British West Africa (now Ghana) in 1874 but is not included in the list of Australian VC recipients because he left Australia as an infant and did not regard himself as Australian. He received his award from the Queen at Windsor Castle on 27 November 1874.

VISIT TO AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF MILITARY ENGINEERING



A small but enthusiastic group of RAE Association—Victoria members travelling to Holsworthy on 12 March to enjoy a guided tour of the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering. This is a state of the art museum which aims to tell the Australian “sapper story” through the innovative and careful display of many of the half a million items held by the museum. Museum Curator, Sebastian Spencer conducted a guided tour for the group and all benefited from his enthusiasm and extensive knowledge of the both the museum’s artefacts and Sapper history. The museum features a timeline depicting the story of Australian Military Engineering from colonial times. The “Ubique Gallery” holds an extraordinary collection of maps, documents and historical items from every conflict, deployment and humanitarian contribution involving sappers. The main body of the museum displays an amazing collection of plant and equipment arranged to RAE tasking groups. Sebastian’s expert knowledge ensured the group was introduced to the first bulldozer ever built in Australia (apparently made from parts copied from a US dozer “borrowed” from the docks during WW2 by enterprising sappers who saw a need for Australian supplied equipment), the railway carriage designed to transport the Centurion tanks when they arrived in the 1950’s with no means of transporting them from the delivery ships, the improvised mine clearance M113 from Vietnam, the habits of the EDD Sabre from SMEthe group missed nothing. In the three hours the group spent at AAMME, much was seen and learned but it would be fair to say that only the surface of the museum’s collection was scratched in that time.

The museum is actively seeking material from the post Vietnam years. A Bushmaster, severely damaged by an IED in Afghanistan is about to arrive and at the time of going to press, it is understood Association members are in the process of donating material from a number of humanitarian demining programmes. The museum is open to the public but it is situated within the Holsworthy Military Area. Consequently, visitors need to comply with base security arrangements. If you wish to visit the museum, call first to square away your access.







Below:
Australia's very first locally made dozer at
Australian Army Museum of Military
Engineering.



RAE ASSOCIATION SAPPER MUSTER OAKLEIGH BARRACKS 27th FEBRUARY 2016

After many months of planning and hard work by a dedicated group a reunion was held on 26th February 2016 which continued the theme along WW1 lines. This was the third consecutive reunion held by the Association.

Overall numbers were down on previous years but even so there were over 100 people who attended who enjoyed renewing friendships, ample food and the opportunity of reliving their military service. It wasn't only a night for those who had served as many partners and family also attended.

This night is a very important event for the Association not only for the social and comradery aspect but also it is the major social event on the Association's calendar.

As with all evenings there has to be some formalities and these included a report by the President (LTCOL Colin Bowater (Retd) and the presentation of the RAE Association 2015 awards to the soldiers of 22 Engineer Regiment – because of the tempo of the Regiment it has proved very difficult to complete the presentations to the Outstanding Soldier and NCO. No matter how hard we tried we could still not achieve a perfect score of bringing all the recipients together as SPR William Van Berkel could not attend due to a family commitment.

Colin Bowater made a special presentation to his son CAPT Steven Bowater (RAN) of an Association shirt and gave a brief outline of Steven's military career. Regrettably Steven will be heading to Sydney in 2017 to a new posting. He has been a regular attendee at the function and a great supporter including arranging and allowing the trip to West Head Gunnery Range in 2015. Steven and his wife Juliene will certainly be missed.

The Association Patrol (COL John Wertheimer AO, RFD Retd) made the presentations on behalf of the Association to LCPL Anurag Sharma and LT Simon Duell. The Honour Board has been updated to reflect these awards.

The Patron went on to provide an update on the Corps including the fact that the fifth volume of the RAE Corps history is currently underway. COL Wertheimer also gave an update on the address by the HOC (BRIG Budd) to the Reynolds Dinner which was held in Melbourne on 26th February 2016 – firstly the dinner had been held outside of Canberra.

During his speech COL Wertheimer touched on the previous year and the achievements of the Association – he also went on to mention that BRIG Budd spoke of the ANZAC Trip in 2015 and the Waterloo Dinner held on 18th June 2015.

It transpires that SGT Tom Vallas (PLT SGT Oakleigh) had won an award and was an invited representative of the Corps on the trip and spoke briefly of his award and the outstanding trip that he received.

Regrettably the CO of 22 ER could not attend due to an interstate commitment but her representative (MAJ Dave Bergman OPSO 22 ER) spoke on her behalf and delivered an update on the Regiment and its future. On a lighter side MAJ Bergman took time to thank COL Howard Ellis for saving the career of an Officer Cadet who was having a pretty down time and having this Cadet posted to the Corps of RAE – David was very grateful for COL Ellis's guidance and his career with the RAE.

The function was held in the combined Officers Sgts Mess at the Oakleigh Barracks and special thanks must go to LTCOL **Michelle McCormack** for the use of these facilities along with her staff because without LTCOL McCormack's personal contribution and support this event would not have been possible.

The cooks Ron Willis and Dali did a wonderful job in providing a continuous supply of hot finger foods which was delivered by a smiling and helpful Peter Borzdynski. Duty Officer for the night was SGT Kevin (Axe) Davies (formerly a 39 Const Sqn member). Noel Tipton, his wonderful daughter Amy and Michael Hutchinson looked after the bar to perfection.

Special guests were **the Commanding Officer of HMAS Cerberus, Captain Steve Bowater OAM RAN**. Capt Bowater was invited as the senior Victorian Naval Officer because of the RAE's close links with HMAS Cerberus over the years,

Patron of RAE Association on COL John Wertheimer OA, RFD (Retd) and Mr Geoff and Mrs Laurel Coghlan
representing the President of the Ringwood RSL (David Jamison)

COL COMDT RAE Southern Region (BRIG P.J. (Hutch) Hutchinson, DSC (Retd) was also an apology due to an interstate commitment.

BRIG Kerry McManus and Bob Slater both attended along with a large number of other senior retired personnel both from the Officer and WO/SNCO ranks – COL John Raikes also found time out of a very busy schedule to come along for a couple of hours. COL Raikes is a great supporter of the Association.

The night brought together a good cross section of sappers of various ages and ranks and this was the principal objective of the night. It was good to see a number of currently serving sappers from the Regiment. Most of these had been on a training weekend at Newborough for Ex Jacka and travelled up for the function.

Travelling up from Newborough was the Regiment's senior Sapper in WO1 Tony Luchterhand who assumed the role of RSM at the start of the year. Great to have the support of Tony and the Association looks forward to a very close working relationship with him. Welcome Tony.

Bearing in mind the ages of some of the guests they did a marvellous job to travel to the function and remain there for many hours. The knowledge and amount of service in the room is hard to comprehend.

Lots of stories about the old days, two week Exs, SLR's, M60's, on the job training, and winning many battles and the thought that the soldiers of today would not be able to handle the "old days" but all certainly acknowledged the professional attitude and approach of today's soldiers and this is clearly evident in LCPL Sharma and LT Duell.

Thanks everyone for your support and attendance.










RAE ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

REUNION FUNCTION – "SAPPER MUSTER"

27 February 2016

John Wertheimer
COL. JOHN WERTHEIMER, AM, RFD (Retd)
PATRON
RAE ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC.

John Bowater
CAPTAIN S.J. BOWATER, OAM, RAN
SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER FOR VICTORIA

M. Bergman
MAJ D. BERGMAN
(Representing Commanding Officer 22 Engineer Regiment)

C. J. Bowater
LTCOL C.J. BOWATER, RFD (Retd)
PRESIDENT RAE ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC.

G. Coghlan
MR. G. COGHLAN
(Representing President RSL Ringwood Sub Branch).



50th Anniversary of Battle of Long Tan Feature Rifles and Sub Machine Guns of the Vietnam War

This is the first feature in a series on weapons used in the Vietnam War.

In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, Sapper Summit will run features throughout 2016 that focus on the Vietnam War. Last year, a number of features were run on weapons of the Great War. This is the first in a similar series that will represent some of the rifles and sub machine guns used by the various forces during the Vietnam War. It is not an exhaustive list and is presented to provide readers with an insight into weapons of a conflict that was fought some 50 years ago.



AUSTRALIA

SLR L1A1



Length	1143mm
Calibre	7.62x51 NATO
Weight Loaded	5kg
Magazine	20
Rate of Fire	30-40RPM
Muzzle Velocity	838mps

L2A1



L2A1 automatic rifle

Although Britain decided that an automatic version of the L1A1 was not required, both Australia and Canada developed these versions. Total production was 9,557 rifles

Production of the L2A1 commenced in 1962 and just under 10,000 were manufactured. It featured a heavy barrel, a folding bipod complete with wooden inserts which served as a forewood when the bipod was in the folded position, selector lever for single-shot or automatic fire and a 30 round magazine. The carrying handle was relocated to allow for a different point of balance.

OWEN SMG



Length	813mm
Calibre	9mm
Weight Loaded	4.815kg
Magazine	33
Rate of Fire	700rpm
Muzzle Velocity	430mps

FI SMG



Length	714mm
Calibre	9mm
Weight Loaded	4.3kg
Magazine	34
Rate of Fire	640rpm
Muzzle Velocity	366mps

M16A1



Length	990mm
Calibre	5.56mm
Weight Loaded	3.64kg
Magazine	20-30
Rate of Fire	700-950rpm
Muzzle Velocity	1000mps



M16/M203



M16A1 rifle fitted with M203 40mm grenade launcher. This launcher can propel small spin stabilized grenades up to 350m.

NVA and National Liberation Front Forces
AK47 (USSR)



Length	869mm
Calibre	7.62x39
Weight Loaded	5.13kg
Magazine	30
Rate of Fire	600rpm
Muzzle Velocity	710rpm



TYPE 56 (PRC)



SKS (USSR)



Length	1.021m
Calibre	7.62x39mm
Weight empty	3.85kg
Feed	10 round stripper clip
Rate of Fire	35-40rpm
Muzzle Velocity	735mps

PPSh 41 (USSR)



Length	828mm
Calibre	7.62x25mm Tokarev
Weight Loaded	5.4kg
Magazine	71 drum or 35 round box
Rate of Fire	900rpm
Muzzle Velocity	488mps



PPS43(USSR)



Length	808mm
Calibre	7.62x25mm
Weight Loaded	3.9kg
Magazine	35
Rate of Fire	700rpm
Muzzle Velocity	488mps

Nagant 1938 (USSR)



Length	1.016m
Calibre	7.62x54mm
Weight Loaded	3.47kg
Magazine	5 round
Rate of Fire	variable
Muzzle Velocity	566mps



OTHER ALLIED FORCES

M14 (USA)



Length	1.12m
Calibre	7.62x51mm NATO
Weight	3.88kg
Magazine	20 round box
Rate of Fire	700rpm
Muzzle Velocity	853mps



M1 Carbine (US and ARVN)



Length	904mm
Calibre	.30" Carbine
Weight	2.36kg
Magazine	15 or 30 round box
Rate of Fire	850rpm
Muzzle Velocity	600mps



ARVN soldier (left) holding a US M1 Carbine.



Stoner 63 SYSTEM (USA)



The Stoner 63 System was formed from 17 modular units that could be assembled and arranged to produce a whole series of weapons. It is included here as the basic weapon was a carbine with a folding butt.

Length	1.022m
Calibre	5.56mm
Weight Loaded	4.39kg
Magazine	30 round box-various
Rate of Fire	660rpm
Muzzle Velocity	1000mps

M3A1 (US and ARVN)



Length	760mm
Calibre	.45ACP
Weight	3.70kg
Magazine	30 round box
Rate of Fire	450rpm
Muzzle Velocity	280mps



Right- Common calibres demonstrated.



OLD SAPPERS TO THE RESCUE

By Don Hughes RAE

The worst day of my life was when two of my Sappers, Mozambiquan Deminers, simultaneously stepped on Russian made PMN an personal blast landmines (nicknamed the “black widows”) just outside a remote mine eld in southern Mozambique at 0818 hrs on 16th December 1994. I had been their new boss since 0700 hrs that morning (78 minutes)!

Raphael died of his wounds a few days later. Lucas survived but was missing his le leg, the family jewels and part of his le hand. Lucas was lucky that he also did not lose his eyesight, which is common in these types of incidents!

At this early stage of the new demining program in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) no repatriation or compensation system was in place to look after injured deminers.

Through Colonel Howard Ellis RFD, the Commander of the Logistic Support Force Engineers based in Oakleigh, he was able to contact the Old Sappers Association of Victoria on my behalf to assist.

The Old Sappers replied instantly. Within days, I had \$300 (US) to present to Lucas on behalf of the Old Sappers Association of Victoria. In a country like Mozambique, this is worth an absolute fortune!

I was also able to organise a wheelchair and give Lucas a job as a storeman in the Demining Program Quartermasters Store. For a man with a young family this was so important for his rehabilitation and future wellbeing. It was also crucial that the 400 strong Mozambiquan Demining Team witnessed such great support after their first mine incident.

I am forever grateful that when one of my Sappers needed help – the Old Sappers Association of Victoria were there to help. Not only to support Lucas, but also me and the

whole Demining Team. Thankyou Old Sappers Association of Victoria, your legacy and unfailing support will never be forgotten.

Editor’s Note: At the time of going to press, word has just been received that Consumer Affairs Victoria is issued a notice formally winding up the Old Sappers Association. The OSA had previously resolved to become incorporated into the RAE Association—Victoria. The RAE Association welcomes all OSA members and congratulates the OSA on over 80 years of service to the sapper community.

AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN MOZAMBIQUE:

Little known, hugely successful and greatly appreciated!

Australian Federal Police, Australian Electoral Commission, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and Royal Australian Engineers (RAE)

ONUMOZ/OP CORACLE

Mar 1993- Mar 2002

By Don Hughes

One of the most successful, but little known, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Support Operations for the United Nations conducted by Australia was in Mozambique. The country had endured 15 Years of a nasty, destructive and violent conflict which ceased in 1992.

Mozambique is now a rapidly developing 21st Century African nation with a growing potential related to its booming resource (minerals & gas) and tourism industries. This is in direct comparison to 23 years ago when the country was in a deep quagmire of despair and destruction: a country struggling to survive, let alone prosper!

Australia’s first assistance to this ‘country in distress’ was with two contingents (16 in each) of highly qualified **Australian Federal**

Police (AFP) deployed during the initial stages of the **Peacekeeping Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)**. Their Mission was to render critical Policing and Legal support during the demobilisation, stabilisation, and most importantly, the election phase of the peacekeeping process.

The **AFP** contingents deployed in the periods (Mar- Sep 93 & Sep 93- Dec 94) in two person teams and also individually. Their roles included: Regional or Provincial Commanders, Operation Officers or as Front Line Patrol Officers. This was difficult and exacting work. An office was also deployed to the ONUMOZ Headquarters as an Investigations Officer.

Four Officers from the **Australian Electoral Commission** coupled with 8 Officers from the **Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade** also deployed to help supervise the elections on the 27th & 28th of October 1994. They were not uniformed but were very much Peacekeepers and assisted greatly towards the successful transition of Mozambique from conflict to peace.

At that time ONUMOZ, although successful in many areas, was experiencing a devastatingly risky landmine problem which was restricting the way forward for the whole Country. A solution was needed quickly!

The UN "put out the call" for the best humanitarian landmine clearers around the globe to rectify the problem! **Australian Sappers of the RAE** were amongst a select group of countries asked to "kick start" the mine clearance programme in Mozambique. The Australian Sappers had earned themselves a solid reputation for mine clearance & improvised explosive device (IED) detection in a number of conflicts since Vietnam, Borneo & Malaysia. In particular, the RAE had been intimately involved in Pakistan (UNMCTT – Peshawar), Cambodia (CMAC) and Afghanistan (UNCOA).

Captain Peter Clay (now Brigadier Peter Clay CSC), was appointed the Commander of the 1st Australian Service Contingent (1ASC) to Operation Coracle on 8 August 1994. His team consisted of WO2 Des O' Hanlon, Sgt Gerard "Speedy" Gonzales and Cpl John Kliese. The

team was established at Maxixe in the central Mozambique Tete Province. They conducted basic de-miner training for the de-mobilized soldiers who would ultimately form the vanguard of the demining effort and thereby spearhead the recovery from the horrible devastation of 15 years of civil war in Mozambique.

Promoted during his tour of duty in Mozambique, Major Peter Clay worked out of Maputo, the Mozambique Capital, for the latter part of his deployment. During this time he assisted in the establishment of the United Nations Accelerated Demining Program (UNADP), a mine clearance capability that would become world's best practice over the next decade.

From December 1994 a two person team of Australian Sappers (Don Hughes & Wayne Hay) replaced the first contingent to undertake the roles of Operations Officer and Operations Warrant Officer under the command of ONUMOZ.



At the cessation of the ONUMOZ mandate in February 1995 the conduct of demining operations was transferred to the auspices of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the appointments of OP CORACLE personnel assumed the roles of Chief Instructor and Training Warrant Officer for the UNDP.

The transition period from a Peacekeeping Operation to a humanitarian program in early 1995 was a significant challenge to the demining team. Many new systems, contractors and suppliers had to be found, re-established or created.

This two person rotation continued until March 2002 when a total of 31 RAE Sappers had

contributed to the continuous deployment to the Demining effort in Mozambique. Often in remote and difficult logistical and operational environments, the Sappers of OP CORACLE had to lead their teams with both vision and compassion. They had to maximise scant resources to achieve difficult objectives, and they had to face the constant threat of death or disfigurement by the devastating effects of deviously placed landmines.

A Mozambique Demining Seminar was held in late July 2015 at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital in Melbourne in conjunction with the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and the RAE Association of Victoria. The aim of the seminar was to commence recording the official history of Demining Operations in Mozambique by the AWM.

Associate Professor Bob Breen PhD and the Senior Mozambique Researcher Miesje de Vogel interviewed many of the OP CORACLE participants during the Seminar. They also had the opportunity to visit the Post Traumatic Stress Facility (Ward 17) at the Repatriation Hospital in Heidelberg.



If you feel you may have something to offer the Official History of Mozambique please contact the Senior Researcher, Miesje de Vogel at: miesje.devogel@awm.gov.au. Further contributions are always sought.



Note: A Coracle is a two person round shaped boat made of wicker covered by animal skin used in Wales & western England.



Editor's Note:

Mozambique has recently been declared "landmine free". This outstanding achievement is due in no small part to the dedicated efforts of many Australian sappers. On the following page, you will find a letter of congratulations prepared by RAE Head of Corps, Brigadier Wayne Budd.



Below: PMN1 anti personnel mine.





**HEAD OF CORPS
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS
CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE**

To The People of Mozambique,
(Through Mr Alberto Augusto
Head of the Mozambican National Demining Institute)

It is with much happiness that the world read, in 2015, the declaration by the Foreign Affairs Minister of Mozambique that your country was free of land mines.

Land mines left behind by armed conflict remain a blight on the history of all modern conflicts and the achievement of the people and Government of Mozambique to persist in your many years of de-mining effort is an inspiration to all countries who suffer from a similar threat.

Personnel of the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers, from within the Australian Army participated in the humanitarian landmine clearance program started by the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Mozambique. Following the transfer of the demining program to the United Nations Development Programme in February 1995, the Australian Government continued to commit members of the Royal Australian Engineers to this demining program until early 2002.

At this 19th International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors and United Nations Advisors, the Members of the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers of the Australian Army wish to congratulate you for your achievement and for the example you have set for all nations across the globe, as to what may be achieved when you are committed to the task.

Well done and we wish you a prosperous future.

W.G. BUDD, AM, CSC
Brigadier
Head of Corps
Royal Australian Engineers

12 February 2016

VALE

John (Dusty) Draper



I regret to announce the sad news that we have lost another wonderful sapper in John “Dusty” Draper and whilst I am sure that a vast majority of you would be aware of his tragic passing it would not be fair to John if I did not acknowledge him and send out this message.

I first came across John when he was an ARA SGT Cook at Broadmeadows just before he was to discharge and transfer to the Reserve. After discharge from the ARA he became part of 38 Fd Sqn (7 FER) – John served many years before giving it away but kept up his involvement and close ties with the Newborough boys – he was also Secretary of the Latrobe Valley Sappers Association.

John had not enjoyed the best of health for a while but he always had a cheery “hello” and handshake every time that I came across him.

John’s sister Heather has been a great support to him and I am sure she would have been a great comfort to him over the last weeks of his life.

Goodbye Dusty – I am sorry to say goodbye to you but wish you well on your journey to the Sapper parade ground in the sky where I am

sure you will be cooking up a feast. No need to worry about rain or porridge or anything now.

Jim Davis—Secretary

LTCOL Terry (Helen) BLACKWELL RFD

I am saddened to advise members and readers that LTCOL Terry (Helen) Blackwell passed Thurs 23/4 after a battle with cancer.

Terry was posted to HQ 6 ENG Gp/ 22Const late 80's serving under COL John Wertheimer.

Terry was the last CO of 3Pay (before the implementation of current AFSU structure). And later CO of Defence Force Recruiting (Vic).

RIP Terry

Jim Davis—Secretary

The Heidelberg “Repat” Hospital

During World War II, two military hospitals were located at the Heidelberg site - the 115th Australian General Hospital, operated by the Australian Army, between 13 March 1941 and 19 May 1947, and the 6th RAAF Hospital, operated by the Royal Australian Air Force, between 1942 and 1947.

The Australian Army handed over the military hospital to the Repatriation Commission on 19 May 1947, and the hospital then became known as the *Repatriation General Hospital Heidelberg*. The Repatriation Commission (Department of Veterans' Affairs) operated the hospital until 31 December 1994. In the decade leading up to transfer of the hospital to the state hospital system the name was modified to its current name - *Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital*. The “Repat” continues to provide treatment and support to ADF veterans. Within the complex, a new street name has been allocated:



FROM THE ASSOCIATIONS

There are no Association reports in this edition of Sapper Summit. In their absence, readers may find interest in the attached reader's contribution that covers the units from which some of our fraternal Associations originated.

THE END OF AN ERA 21 and 22 CONSTRUCTION REGIMENTS 1950 - 2013

Dr J. K. Haken

The names of the 21 and 22 Construction Regiments, the original Supplementary Reserve units were lost in 2013 after more than 60 years by amalgamation. While both regiments initially operated under the special Supplementary Reserve conditions, most service was under normal CMF (now Army Reserve) conditions.

After WW11 and demobilisation, the Military Force was almost negligible.

In late 1945 the Cairns Group of the Institution of Engineers recognised the shortage of military persons and suggested involvement of employees of state bodies under special conditions. The Council of the Institution considered a letter dated November 1945 from the Brisbane Division on behalf of the Cairns Group (1). The initial appeal to the Army was rejected, but a modified appeal was accepted. The approach was championed by Major General C. S. Steele, a member of the Council and WW11 Chief Engineer. The Secretary of the Department of Army in an undated letter, received by the Institution on 18 February 1949 approved a Supplementary Reserve of 2 sponsored units, one each in N.S.W. and Victoria (2). The initial history leading to the introduction of the Supplementary Reserve was detailed in 1949 (3) and the units raised have been described (4).

The Victorian Regiment was the 22 Construction Regiment, while the New South Wales was the 21 Construction Regiment. Both were raised in 1950, long after Citizen Military Forces were introduced in 1948 (5).

Both Regiments published brief histories to mark their 50th Anniversary in 2000 (6)(7). The organisational



UNIT HISTORY WRITING PROJECTS

Victorian Engineers: 4 CER & 22 CONST REGT

Brigadier "Hutch" Hutchinson DSC, our Colonel Commandant RAE Sothern Region, is impressed with the enthusiasm displayed towards the Victorian Sapper Regimental history project, thus far! The teams are based on *"CO's Years of Command"* of both of our Regiments and the writing teams are starting to group together well! Stronger teams however, are always desirable & much needed!

The secret of a good history is to get a broad diversity of views and a true assessment from both the Political level to the Sapper on the ground, "blood & guts" level! We welcome diverse input to your history and we encourage the various "eras" to get together and produce your story!

To align both unit histories **Brig "Hutch"** decided to have both the 4CER and 22 Construction Regiment histories follow on from the classic Victorian Sapper History up to 1995, *"The Swan Street Sappers"* written by **Lt Col Rob Youl OAM, RFD (Retd)**. This is a most sensible approach as it includes both Regiments from 1995 until 2013 – including some amazing years for 22 Construction Regiment at both Weipa and Cultana that would have otherwise been excluded if we had only commenced 22 Construction Regt's history from 2000 as previously proposed!

We always need assistance. A suggested template or guide for the project is included at the RAE Victoria Website: <https://www.raevictoria.asn.au/projects-and-events.php>

Any submissions should be directed to: sapper.history.vic@hotmail.com.au

Captain Noel Tipton is looking after the 22 Construction Regiment history whilst Lt Col Don Hughes is monitoring the 4 CER history.

development of both regiments is outlined here.

The 21 Constructio Regiment in New South Wales was raised on 28 August 1950, consisting of 101 Construc on Squadron sponsored by the Department of Main Roads, 102 Construc on Squadron sponsored by the Department of Public Works, 103 Constructio Squadron sponsored by the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board and the 108 Plant Squadron.

109 Construc on Squadron an independent unit administered by the regiment was raised in 1951, sponsored by the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electric Authority.

The regiment in became part of 5 Engineer Group which was raised on 29 July 1952 and on 1 July 1960 it was re-designated 11 Chief Engineer (Works) (). 4-77 109 Construc on Squadron was re-designated 201 Works Sectio in 1972 and became a CMF unit when its sponsor completed the project.

The regiment came under control of 2 Divisional Engineers in 1987.

103Constructio Squadron and 108 Plant Squadron were disbanded in 1987 and reformed as 26 Divisional Engineer Support Squadron.

In 1995 members assumed the same conditio s as the CMF.

The regiment at disbandment consisted of Head-Quarters, 101 and 102 Construc on Squadrons. Li oral and Riverine Survey Squadron and CIMACC Squadron.

On 23 November 2013 the regiment was disbanded, 101 Construc on Squadron and Li oral and Riverine Survey Squadron were transferred to 5 Engineer Regiment, 102 Constructio Squadron was transferred to 8 Engineer Regiment and CIMAC Squadron was transferred to Head-Quarters Staff 2nd Brigade (6)(8).

The 22 Constructio Regiment was raised in Southern Command on 4 August 1950, consisting of 104 Construc on Squadron sponsored by The County Roads Board, the 105 Constructio Squadron sponsored by The State River And Water Supply Commission, 106 Construc on Squadron sponsored by Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and 107 Plant Squadron (Heavy) sponsored by the County Roads Board and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Between 1960 and 1969 the titl Light was substit ted. The regiment was administered by the Chief Engineer's Branch Southern Command but in 1953 with the formati n of 6 Engineer Group command was transferred .

In January 1963, two troops served in New Guinea with 21 Constructio Squadron.

In May 1975 104 Construc on Squadron was disbanded and the regiment consisted of Head—Quarters, 105 and 106 Construc on Squadrons and 107 Pant Squadron (Heavy).

On 1 July 1992, 107 Plant Squadron (Heavy) became 107 Plant troop of 91, later 55 Resources Squadron.

On 3 December 1995, 55 Resources Squadron and 39 Electrical and Mechanical Squadron, joined the regiment together with 105 and 106 Construc on Squadrons. Command transferred to Logisti Support Force in 1993 and to Land Command Engineers on 1 July 2002 (7)(8). At the same ti e the 39 Electrical and Mechanical Squadron was re-designated 39 Construc on Squadron.

In 1997, 106 Construc on Squadron was absorbed by 105 Squadron and in 1999 55 Resources Squadron was also absorbed by 105 Squadron.

In 2011, regiment consisted of Head-Quarters, Works Sec on, 39 Constructio Squadron and 105 Construc on Squadron (9)

Re-designated 22 Engineer Regiment, formed by amalgamatio with 4 Combat Engineer Regiment, e ec ve 1 January 2014 (10).

Consists of Head-Quarters, 8 and 10 Combat Engineer Squadrons and 105 Works Squadron, formerly 105 Construc on Squadron (11).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to Mr B. A Campbell formerly Major (1965-1976) 105 Constructio Squadron for his help.

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WELFARE AND WELLBEING

RINGWOOD RSL President's Column



Support to Serving and Former ADF Members

These are increasingly weird times and we now live in a community where the clash of World Views is becoming increasingly obvious but seemingly not to our elected representatives or most areas of the media. Our World is becoming less stable and the rise of terrorism cannot be ignored. We need to gain a better understanding of the root causes of this instability and violence or we will never overcome them. It seems to me that instead of identifying the causes and developing strategies to combat them, our leaders and the media look at the symptoms and think actions to combat these will provide the answer – wrong! Australia has a reputation for being a tolerant and open society but this is no excuse for allowing people with a different World View to dictate how we should shape it into the future. The very reason so many people try to come here to settle is because of who we are and the freedoms we enjoy. These are hard won; our service personnel have fought to preserve them and we must not let them be eroded because of some momentary blindness, the encroachment of restrictive legislation or imposed social norms advocated by minority but vocal elements. The ADF is not immune from these pressures and at times it seems it is viewed as a vehicle for promoting social and political agendas unrelated to its primary purpose. We mustn't lose sight of the fact that the ADF's core function is to train for and fight wars if necessary to keep the country safe. This involves the development of a highly competent force armed with the best weapons and technology and manned by hardened committed personnel trained to the highest possible standard.



In our role advocating for the men and women of the ADF we support the need for expert training and preparation notwithstanding the fact that there are inherent dangers, but at the same time strongly press for the best support the country can give when a serving or former member suffers injury as part of that service. The efforts of the national leaders of the ex-service organisations have had an effect on government policies and decisions that have led to some improvements over the last 12 months but there is much still to be achieved. DVA policies and processes are in need of an overhaul as evidenced by the many experiences being told by veterans of more recent conflicts where their dealings with the Department have led to adverse consequences rather than their being given the support they need.

The RSL seeks to ensure the general public understand and appreciate the special and unique nature of Service in the Australian Defence Force and the demands this places on ADF members and their families. In an increasingly multicultural community with many later immigrants coming from societies where the military is seen as an agent of state oppression, many national representatives of the Serving and veteran communities believe it is important to take positive

steps to ensure the special relationship as described by a former PM "special compact" is appreciated and understood throughout the community. There is a developing understanding of this among State and Local Council leaders and we are seeing this expressed as a State Veterans Charter in



South Australia, the Victorian Veterans Act and in the last few weeks a proposal for a Defence Community Accord from the Mayor of Townsville. This is a start however there is much work to be done to gain a greater understanding across the nation.

A developing issue which we will be closely following is the ADF's use of mefloquine - more commonly known as Lariam. Soldiers who served in East Timor 15 years ago are demanding a public inquiry, claiming that mefloquine - more commonly known as Lariam - was trialled on them by the Army Malaria Institute (AMI). Up to 2,000 personnel are believed to have been prescribed the drug, including the entire deployment of soldiers who served as peacekeepers in East Timor. The ADF apparently assessed the risks associated with mefloquine as low and that one in 10,000 will experience adverse side effects of mefloquine, that it's more tolerable than the other anti-malarial drugs and that it's the anti-malarial of choice for other countries. Nevertheless hundreds of former ADF members say they are battling a range of

WELFARE and SUPPORT

Sapper Summit recognizes the demands placed on individuals through their military service. Through Sapper Summit, the RAE Association (Vic) aims to provide information to the Sapper Community on support and welfare services available both locally and nationally. The Association also aims to promote welfare, wellbeing awareness and education. **Members have suggested the following support services.**

mental illnesses caused by this anti-malaria medication. I just hope we don't have another "agent orange" situation on our hands and urge the department to take a proactive approach supporting those who are so obviously in need of help.

The welfare of serving and former ADF members is a primary concern for us. The Sub Branch welfare and pension staff and volunteers are there to help. ***If you need advice or assistance, please don't hesitate to call us on 98706604.***

ANZAC Services 2016 (cont p 45)

Alcoholics Anonymous

Specialist Meeting for the Services.

Current & Past members including; Police, Fire, Ambulance, Army, Navy, Air Force, Prison etc; Sappers most welcome!



The Phoenix Group:

Unity, Service, Recovery

Phone: 24 hour help line
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www.aavictoria.org.au

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ANZAC Sunday March & Service (17 April)

The Sub Branch will be conducting two services, the first on ANZAC Sunday the 17th



April. It begins with a march from Target Square on the Maroondah Highway with stop at 1000hrs. This is immediately followed by a service at the Clock Tower Memorial Park. After the service light refreshments will be served at the Sub Branch premises.

ANZAC Day Dawn Service (25 April)

The ANZAC Day Dawn Service will be held at the Ringwood Clock Tower Memorial Park on the 25th April. Assembly will be at 0530hrs with the commemoration service beginning at 0600hrs. This will be followed by breakfast served at the Sub Branch. During the day there will be various activities including live music and Two Up.

Ringwood Sub Branch Club News

We are now expanding the range of activities



we conduct for members. The once a month giant raffles have returned to the last Friday of each month and we have live music on some Sundays afternoons and on most Friday nights. The Bistro has an extensive menu

selection and its kids' play area remains very popular particularly families with younger children so come along with your family and mates and enjoy the hospitality we provide.

David Jamison President Ringwood RSL

THE ANGEL SQUAD



The Angel Squad is continuing its mission to support young Veterans recovering from PTSD -based drug and alcohol issues, and the effectiveness of our program is clearly evident in the improved health and wellbeing of our members. For many, joining the group has been a life-changing experience which has taken them from a feeling of hopelessness and despair to an acknowledgment that they do, indeed, have a life worth living. And for some, joining the group has ensured that they have a life at all.

We are about to award another "one year Star" to a member who has had one full year clean and sober with us, and this is always a special occasion for congratulations and celebrations for the Group, the member, and also the member's family.

Recent social activities of the Group have included a Go-karting day and a pistol shoot at a private range followed by a barbeque. The boys were fortunate enough to be given some highly-expert supervision and assistance in revising their pistol skills whilst having the luxury of using some impressive top-quality equipment.

Anyone wishing to make contact regarding the Group, either for themselves or a loved-one, please contact us on the following email. photoexplorer57@yahoo.com.au

Colleen McKenna.

Founder.

"Angel Squad"

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR – TIMEFRAME

1945–62

French forces returned to Indo-China after the end of World War II to reassert colonial rule. The First Indo-China War began in late 1945. In 1950, Ho Chi Minh declared a Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Australia, following the lead of the US and Great Britain, recognised the French-sponsored government of South Vietnam. As the French withdrew in the early 1950s, American support of South Vietnam increased. During the early 1960s, pressure from the USA for Australian support of South Vietnam increased.

1962

24 May: The Australian Government announces the dispatch of thirty military advisors to South Vietnam.

31 July: Colonel Francis 'Ted' Serong, commander of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), arrives at Saigon.

3 August: The main body of the AATTV arrives at Saigon.

1963

9 May: The first Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) operational mission begins with a Dakota from the Transport Flight of No. 2 Squadron flying in food and medical supplies for refugees.

1 June: The first Australian military death in the war occurs when Sergeant William Hacking of the AATTV is accidentally killed.

1964

8 June: The Australian Government announces expansion of the AATTV, with advisors able to serve in combatant units.

6 July: The first Australian combat death occurs when Warrant Officer Kevin Conway of the AATTV is killed in action at Nam Dong.

8 August: The first RAAF unit is deployed—RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam arrives at Tan Son Nhut with Caribou aircraft. 10 November: The National Service (Conscription) Act is passed to reintroduce national service.

1965

10 March: The first ballot for National Service is drawn.

29 April: The Australian Government announces commitment of an infantry battalion.

3 June: Leading troops of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), land in South Vietnam for deployment to Bien Hoa. This also marks the first use of Qantas charter flights to move troops into (and out of) South Vietnam—they become known as 'skippy flights'.

8 June: The transport ship (converted aircraft carrier) HMAS Sydney, with destroyer escort HMAS Parramatta and HMAS Duchess, arrives at Vung Tau on the first naval logistical support operation.

30 June: The first National Service intake begins recruit training.

17 August: The Australian Government approves an increase of the force in Bien Hoa to a battalion group, with 1RAR to be supported by artillery, additional armoured personnel carriers, engineers, army aviation and further logistical support.

13 November: The first Victoria Cross of the war is awarded to Warrant Officer Kevin 'Dasher' Wheatley of the AATTV, killed in action.

1966

8 March: The Australian Government announces the deployment of a task force of nearly 4500 troops, including two infantry battalions, Special Air Service (SAS) troops and support units, to be deployed in Phuoc Tuy.

May–June: 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) is established at Nui Dat and 1st Australian Logistic Support Group (1ALSG) is established at Vung Tau, Phuoc Tuy.

24 May: The First National Service death on active service and the first death recorded in 1ATF occurs when Private Errol Noack of 5RAR dies of wounds.

30 June: Prime Minister Harold Holt, visiting Washington DC, pledges that Australia would go 'all the way' in support of American policy in Vietnam.

18 August: The Battle of Long Tan is fought as 'D' Company, 6RAR, runs into a much larger enemy force and eighteen Australians (including one of the relief force) are killed. The anniversary has become Vietnam Veterans' Day.

22 December: The Australian Government announces further increases in the military contribution to defence of South Vietnam.



Lebanese pipers played a lament for the dead during the commemorative service held in August 1969, on the site of the Battle of Long Tan, fought by D Company, 6RAR in 1966.

1967

6 February 1967: The first Royal Australian Navy (RAN) unit is deployed 'in country' when the Clearance Diving Team 3 arrives in Vietnam.

15 March: The first Australian warship deployed for service on the gun line, HMAS Hobart, joins the US Seventh Fleet at Subic Bay, The Philippines.

5 May: The first Australian servicewomen sent to Vietnam—four nurses of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps—arrive on posting to the 8th Field Ambulance.

26 May: The first 'Anzac battalion' arrives, with V Company of the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Regiment, attached to 2RAR, forming 2RAR/NZ.

19 June: The first RAAF death occurs when Leading Aircraftman Gaetano La Grasta of Base Support Flight, Vung Tau, is murdered.

18 October: The Australian Government announces a further commitment of forces, including a third infantry battalion and an armoured squadron.

1968

29 January: North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces launch the Tet Offensive, with major attacks across South Vietnam.

1 February: Australian troops clear Baria of enemy forces.

12 February: The Australian Government indicates no further increase in forces to Vietnam.

22 February: The first RAN death occurs when Lieutenant-Commander Patrick John Vickers of RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam dies on a combat flight.

13 May: The Battle of Coral/Balmoral begins with a heavy enemy attack against Fire Support Base Coral; after a second attack on 15 May, Australian casualties are fifteen killed and fifty-six wounded.

26–28 May: Australians defend Fire Support Base Balmoral against attacks.

1969

6 June: The fourth and final Victoria Cross of the war is awarded to Warrant Officer Keith Payne, AATTV.

6 June: Australian troops clear Binh Ba of a strong enemy force.

16 December: With US forces gradually being withdrawn, the Australian Government advises that Australian forces will also be withdrawn.

1970

22 April: The Australian Government announces that automatic replacement of battalions at the

end of their tour will cease.

12 November: 8RAR returns to Australia at the end of its tour—it is the first battalion not replaced, with reduction of 1ATF underway.

1971

30 March: The Australian Government announces further cuts to Australian forces in South Vietnam, including the withdrawal of Canberra bombers.

18 August: The Australian Government announces the withdrawal of the bulk of Australian forces.

21 September: The last Australians are killed in action—Privates Brian Charles Beilken, James Duff, Keith Michael Kingston-Powles, Ralph James Nibley and Roderick James SPRIGG, all of 4RAR.

27 October: The last Australian serviceman to die within Vietnam, Staff Sergeant John Hall of the 12th Field Regiment, is murdered. Some personnel wounded in Vietnam were to die in Australia after this date.

3 November: The only Australian servicewoman to lose her life during the war, Temporary Captain Barbara Frances Black of the 1st Field Hospital, dies in Fitzroy, Victoria.

7 November: The last Australian infantry battalion in Vietnam, 4RAR, departs Nui Dat for home.

1972

June 1967. [AWM GIL/67/0482/VN]

5 March: The last units of 1ALSG depart Vung Tau. Australia's commitment to South Vietnam is now limited to about 150 troops of the AATTV and Australian Army Assistance Group Vietnam (AAAGV).

15 July: The final death of an Australian named on the nation's Roll of Honour for the Vietnam War occurs when Private Arthur John Gibson of 7RAR dies at Liverpool Hospital, NSW.

5 December: Conscription ends.

18 December: The withdrawal of the AATTV and AAAGV marks the end of Australia's military commitment to South Vietnam. Some troops remain to guard the Australian Embassy.

1973

27 January: a ceasefire between North and South Vietnam comes into effect after US President Nixon announces that an agreement has been reached for 'peace with honour'.

March: The last US forces depart Vietnam.

30 June: The last Australian troop based in South Vietnam, the Saigon Embassy Guard Platoon, is withdrawn.

1974

4 January: After violations of the ceasefire by both sides, South Vietnam declares that the war has restarted. Without American support, South Vietnamese forces struggle to contain an enemy offensive.

1975

March: North Vietnamese forces advance on Saigon and Khmer Rouge forces seize control of neighbouring Cambodia.

29 March: RAAF Hercules and Dakota aircraft are dispatched to assist humanitarian efforts in South Vietnam and Cambodia. They deliver Red Cross and United Nations supplies and evacuate embassy officials and their families and also some refugees, including war orphans evacuated from Saigon to Bangkok in Operation Baby Lift.

25 April: Australian military involvement in the war ends with the last RAAF flights out of Saigon.

30 April: North Vietnamese forces capture Saigon, effectively ending the Vietnam War.

Reprinted from www.vietnamroll.gov.au



About the RAE Association (Victoria) Inc

Vision Statement

The Royal Australian Engineers Association (Victoria) Incorporated will be the most relevant and recognized Sapper Association in Victoria with substantial membership and an enhanced profile and standing within the serving and retired sapper community.

Mission Statement

To promote the wellbeing and betterment of our members along with serving and retired sappers by the provision of a collegiate sapper association that values and promotes comradeship, esprit de corps, service identity and traditions.

Objectives

- Increase the Association's membership.
- Develop the capacity of the Association to communicate with the serving and retired sapper community through the enhancement of the Association's journal "Sapper Summit" and through an internet presence.
- Establish and enhance the relevance of the Association to all sappers - serving and retired.
- Undertake the research and recording of sapper history in Victoria.
- Provide sappers with an organized identity for participation in ANZAC Day and other commemorative events.
- Promote the achievements of 22 Engineer Regiment and those of its members.
- Disseminate information relating to sapper events and activities.
- Recognize and acknowledge excellence and achievement within the sapper community.
- Provide and promote awareness of welfare issues and resources relevant to service personnel.
- Promote mateship.
- Promote esprit de corps between all members of the sapper family.
- Maintain and promote the traditions and achievements of the Australian Defence Force in general and the Royal Australian Engineers in particular.
- Seek continual improvement in administrative practices to ensure members receive optimal value for the membership fees and donations.
- Liaise with and develop co-operative working arrangements with like organizations and associations.
- Formally develop succession planning for key appointments within the Association.
- Raise funds to support these objectives and other Association priorities that may arise from time to time

For full details and news about the Association's projects and events, click on:

www.raevictoria.asn.au

Sapper Summit welcomes contributions from readers and friends. Your contributions can be sent to :

Editor Sapper Summit

PO Box 610 HEATHMONT VIC 3135

or email: sappersummit@gmail.com

Join Us—Royal Australian Engineers Association (Vic) Inc

Membership Categories



1. Ordinary Members and Associate Members (members who support the Association but do not meet service membership criteria) who pay their subscriptions by 1st of January receive a receipt.
2. Concessional Life Membership. A member, who upon reaching the age of 65 years (prior to 1st of January of the membership year) may elect to make a one off payment equal to ten times the annual subscription for an Ordinary Member. Such members will be granted Concessional Life Membership with no further fees being payable. They will receive a letter from the Committee to confirm the granting of this category of membership.
3. Complementary Life Membership. A member who has made a significant contribution to the Association either by way of a substantial financial or memorabilia donation, may be awarded a Complementary Life Membership together with a letter from the committee confirming the granting of this membership.
4. Honorary Life Membership. Members over the age of 80 will be awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of their age status and contribution to both the community and the Corps. They will receive a letter from the committee confirming the granting of this membership.
5. Honorary Life Membership. Members who have made an outstanding contribution to the Association will be awarded Honorary Life Membership together with a framed certificate confirming the granting of this membership.

In categories 3 and 5, nominations are to be submitted to the committee with supporting justification and documentation. Nominations will be considered on a case by case basis.

Membership of the RAE Association Victoria costs \$15 per year with subscriptions due on 1 January each year. All members will receive an electronic copy of each issue Sapper Summit, the magazine of the Association. Hard copies will be available to members without email. All members will receive a coloured, hard copy of the post ANZAC Day edition of Sapper Summit along with an electronic copy of that edition.

Applicants over the age of 65 may elect to pay ten times the annual fee to receive life membership. Fees are not required from applicants over the age of 80.



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
RAE ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC
ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP



Jim Davis
Honorary Secretary
28 Ireland Avenue
WANTIRNA SOUTH, Vic 3152 E-mail: jdavis01@bigpond.net.au

SURNAME: _____

GIVEN NAMES: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: / / NAME OF PARTNER/WIFE/NOK: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: (H): _____ (W): _____ (M): _____

E-MAIL: _____

REGIMENTAL/PMKEYS No. _____ RANK: _____

DATES OF ENLISTMENT AND DISCHARGE / / TO / /

AWARDS/DECORATIONS/AWARDS HELD: _____

DETAILS OF SERVICE AND UNITS (*any approximate dates would be useful*)

If more space is needed please use back of form.

OCCUPATION/PROFESSION: _____

SIGNED: _____ / /

Wish to become a member of The Royal Australian Engineers Association of Victoria Incorporated (RAE Association (Vic) Inc. for the time being in force. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to:

1. Support the purposes of the Association.
2. Comply with the rules of the Association.

Note: Under the Application for Membership clause in the Association Rules, a person who wishes to join the Association must submit a signed written application to a committee member, and agree to the two items 1 & 2 listed above.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEE FOR 2015 HAS BEEN SET AT \$15.00 AND IS PAYABLE NOW WITH YOUR APPLICATION. PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY CHEQUE OR DIRECT CREDIT (see below). SHOULD YOU WISH TO MAKE A DONATION, REGARDLESS OF THE AMOUNT, IT WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Electronic Banking: Payment can now be made by electronic transfer. Please use the details below and during the transfer please ensure that you show your full name and write in "subscription" in the reference box. **Show here that you sent subs/donation electronically on / / and amount \$**
Don't forget to post off the original application to the Hon Secretary-address is above.

BANK – Westpac Banking Corp: BSB 033181 - Account No 169032 Account Name RAE Association (Vic) Inc.

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