"SAPPER SUMMIT"
RAE CORPS NEWSLETTER
APRIL '94 EDITION

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Editorial - Have we still got comms?

by
LTCOL R. Youl

That lovable tyrant, LTCOL Bob Eastick MBE, has asked me to write on communications for this issue of the RAE Victorian newsletter. This is like giving Captain Haddock in *Tin Tin* a bottle of whisky. It seems to me an excuse for a rambling and boring rave, rather than a taut editorial epitomising brevity and pertinence.

Soldiers are generally good communicators. They often have feelings much more elevated than the work they have to do. I'm not sure that Kipling was a soldier but his poems on military life have a mixture of toughness, fatalism, sensitivity and love that I cannot resist.

And in wartime especially they write a lot. My Uncle Horrie, a light horseman who missed the boat to Gallipoli three times and ended up in France doing mounted traffic duty, left me his tattered 'Anzac Book', a miscellany of sketches, skits, stories and sonnets, most from the troops themselves.

Then, after World War II, every household with a returned serviceman, like ours, had 'Khaki and Green', 'Jungle Green', 'Active Service' and so on - the Australian Army's annuals with poems and prose from the

diggers, photos taken in the various theatres, and paintings by war artists as well.

What would we do without war artists? To me the paintings are amongst the best aspects of the Australian War Memorial. Those marvellous artists really can communicate because they often have had the time and the licence to combine many more elements that you can get in a photograph.

Not that much of our best war art wasn't done at great speed, with the bombs blasting and the enemy at the other end of the clearing. It is amazing when you are sketching how the first run of the pencil in your hand usually produces the cleanest, most expressive line.

Hostile fire doubtless accentuates this. In the ten or fifteen years after the War ended, hundreds wrote of their wartime experiences. As a schoolboy I devoured books like 'Wingless Victory', Çockleshell Heroes', 'I Lived with Greek Guerillas', 'White Coolies' and 'Horrie the Wog Dog', written by servicemen and women.

Vietnam also brought out the poetry in many soldiers - largely what was then called 'blank verse' but is not indisputably poetry.

I like to think that there is still room for the written word even though we are an increasingly oral society - newspapers decline in circulation, the telephone call and the scribbled fax have replaced the letter, few commit an opinion to a file anymore, the computer allows you to regurgitate rather than compose anew, television dominates. (But, it seems to me, newsletters like this flourish!)

Thankfully soldiers are still humorous and appreciate a good turn of phrase, and a letter from home when in camp.

As many will know, I am close to finishing 'The Swan Street Sappers'. This has been a great experience in communication and I hope it pleases you all.

However so much of what we do is ephemeral. Our memories are temporary, and so are we! Like is brief for most. The Army even destroys files after a few years.

To avoid cluttering up the house most of us throw out our newsletters, TEWT papers, Freedom of the City programs and Waterloo Dinner menus - but these can be invaluable to the historian. That box in the garage dredged up twenty years later can be a treasure trove, and several hoarders such as Wilton Eady, John Wertheimer and Jim Riley have helped me greatly.

People are happy to recount events but most are still loathe to put on paper what they really feel or felt. Keep a diary and one day your intimate thoughts can perhaps assist and instruct others, and help interpret an era.

What I have enjoyed are the extraordinary stories of ordinary people - Don Coghlan in Ceylon, Ron Stuart escaping from a train en route to Germany and walking from Greece to Turkey, 22 Construction Regiment off to New Guinea to build bridges near Wewak in the early 1960s, Bernie Putt receiving the RFM on his deathbed, Phil Chaplin helping a generation of young officers.

I have also loved reading General McNicoll's corps histories in detail - they are very, very good. No wonder the McNicoll family is distinguished in military and naval affairs and in journalism.

Finally I have come to appreciate a little of what Australia was like before World War II - a simpler, largely Anglo-Saxon society living in compact cities and in 'The Bush, sports-loving, masculine, less educated but with its sophistications too, and not totally unprepared for war - although the Swan Street sappers only got trucks in 1938-39.

Moreover the War left a legacy of positivism, what Americans would call a 'can do' mentality. Whether you were in the services or at home in industry or government during 1939-45, chances are that you had had a lot of responsibility and developed the habit of marking quick decisions and getting on with the job.

Returning to a peactime world you retained this attitude. Australia was growing and there was a tremendous surge in community spirit, and numerous organisations started up - including the post-war version of the CMF. The government departments and authorities widened their horizons and business recruited people in great numbers.

Wartime relationships, forged under duress, were a huge factor in facilitating post-war development.

This infectious mood, this national ethos, took probably three even four decades to dissipate, and it has just about gone now, and we need to revitalise or reinvent many of our institutions.

It amazes me how fast three decades goes - that's how long I've been in the Army. It seems like yesterday when with fifteen other blokes in late September 1965, I bedded down in Hut 46 in the 2RTB lines and reflected on the days journey from Mum at Traralgon, via the demonstrating Mums from the Save Our Sons movement at Swan Street, to a martial Mum, WO II Strutton RAASC at Pucka, our CSM. ♉

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Youl is the current Commanding Officer of the 7th Engineer Support Regiment. In civilian life, Lieutenant Colonel Youl has had a long involvement in the forestry industry and has served as the Officer Commanding 91 Forestry Squadron.

The Editor Says...

OUCH!

A sharp eyed reader (and I hope we have many of them) spotted two instances which offended his sensibilities and brought them to your editor's attention. The first was the fact that the Australian flag on the last page of the Christmas Edition was up side down. Suspecting the work of a Republican, we hastened to the offending page and were relieved to see that it was merely some shoddy artwork. With the rates we pay and the difficulties of getting good labour, we are some-what handicapped. That's my story anyhow! The second instance strikes at the command structure. It is an illustration from The Illustrated Australian News in the same issue. The s.e.r. commented that nobody was paying any attention to the officer. A close scrutiny shows the officer in an agitated state, pointing his cane threateningly.

He has had his O group, given his orders and expecting a productive day followed by a complimentary drink later with his C.O. Promotion perhaps! After a space of 114 years I cannot see anything amiss. Shovels flinging sand, barrows full. Perhaps the gun is pointing the wrong way. The lance corporal, in the middle ground, seems to be a little apprehensive, no doubt expecting a rocket later, perhaps even lose his hardened stripe and the perks that go with it. The Editor, if required to build a coastal battery, would go to another formation. Thank you s.e.r.! ⚐

"Castle Chit Chat"

By Major Don Hughes

Sir Clive Steele

The Inaugral Sir Clive Steele lecture was a fitting way to finish 1993. A well presented expose on the Wau-Bulldog Road, the lecture brought together many sappers of all ranks and trades, and highlighted the need for stout comradeship and teamwork when executing military engineering tasks.

HQ LSF Engrs

In 1994 the HQ LSF team remains well led by COL Howard Ellis. CAPT Mick Renfrey replaces Craig Thorp as the PERS Offr, and we have lost MAJ Mark Shanks to 38 Fd Sqn: I'm sure he will be well looked after in the Valley. WO1 John Printz OAM has joined the HQ to concentrate on training issues. Welcome aboard, your experience is invaluable.

In the Regts, the COs remain stable, LTCOL Bill Ross (22 Const Regt) and LTCOL Robin Youl RFD (7ESR). MAJ Alan Smeaton has settled in well as 2IC 22 and we welcome MAJ Bruce Fenney as 2IC 7ESR.

Overseas LSF Engr Commitments

The Formation continues to be well represented on UN tasks with MAJ Bill Van Ree (and Family) accepting a posting (civilian this time) to Pakistan to assist in mine clearance training. Keep up the good work Bill, "Ol 55" will miss you. LTCOL Spencer remains with the World Bank in the US.

Resources and Training

CAPT Richard Ager has changed 'hats' for 94 and is now the OPS/TRG Offr. His last act as the SO3 LOG was to dispatch the formation's revised equipment tables, and take advantage of some spare funds for much needed equipment. Just on resources, the formation has never looked better with our current allocations. We must keep the momentum going and the management of our resources tight.

Our training program for 1994/95 looks good. Plenty of opportunities to display our talents are available throughout Australia.

Victorian Sapper "Family"

On the broader RAE picture in Victoria, we welcome LTCOL Ian Stewart AM as the JOPS at DC-M. An old SO2 OPS at 5 Engr Gp in Sydney, LTCOL Stewart is an instant member of the Victorian Sapper family. Also in the family, is the new Chief Engineer for Southern Victoria, MAJ Dermot O'Sullivan. A past member of 6 Engr Gp, Dermot has a fondness for the LSF Engrs.

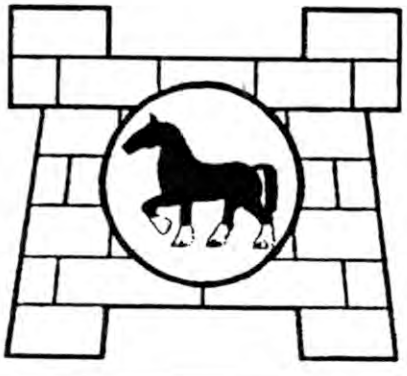
The "year of the family" is this year's theme for LSF Engrs. ***A versatile and capable Formation***, we still need the assistance from all Sappers in Victoria to show our full potential. This includes not only the all too thinly spread ARA Sappers, or the highly skilled but without much spare time GRES members, but also our retired Sappers of all persuasions. We need you all, for the "Victorian Sapper Family".

Sappers ANZAC Day 1994

The historic march of the RAE Banner through Melbourne on ANZAC Day will be a focal point this year for all Victorian Sappers. Through good times and bad, the Sappers have never failed a challenge. Australia needs the odd reminder of this kind of determination in adversity, perhaps the Victorian Sappers can lead the way.

See you all on ANZAC Day.

UBIQUE



SAPPERS ON RABAUL - NEW BRITAIN

1941-42

by
Bill Goodall

Sappers on Rabaul, New Britain during 1941-42 were restricted to members of the Rabaul Fortress Company RAE (with three or four sapper exceptions) commanded by Major W.G. Botham DCM, pictured below, from Fort Queenscliff. (See page 12 for his story).

The Unit was raised at Fort Queenscliff during early 1941 and comprised Sappers of Fortress Companies who were volunteers from all States of the Commonwealth.

The establishment was four officers and about fifty other ranks, Victoria providing approximately 60% of all ranks including three of the officers.

The principal role of the Sappers was to provide illumination by means of powerful searchlights to enable the coastal gunners (Rabaul Heavy Battery also raised at Queenscliff) to engage enemy vessels during hours of darkness and if need be to provide landward artillery support.

The unit was one of the components of 'L' or Lark Force which disembarked at Rabaul on 26 April 1941 (the troopship ZEALANDIA - sunk during Darwin's first enemy air raid of 19 February 1942). This small Force less than 1500 all ranks was centered around the 2/22 Australian Infantry Battalion 23rd Brigade, 8th Division.

The Force Commander, LTCOL H.H. Carr, in his appreciation of 14 April 1941, stated - the objective is:

(a) To secure Rabaul area as a Naval and Air Base

(b) to protect Coast Defences of the Defended Port;

(c) To resist any enemy penetration into other portions of New Guinea (assuming assistance from the New Guinea Volunteer Rifler - a CMF Infantry unit spread very thinly throughout the islands of N.G.)

Such instructions were received verbally by the Force Commander from AHQ also being advised that he would be under Northern Command (Queensland). He visited various HQs in Melbourne to obtain what instructions he could regarding the role, make, equipment and details of his Force.

The D/EinC Colonel Anderson following his visit to 'L' Force at Rabaul 2nd to 3rd May 1941 reported to the EinC a number of

suggestions to strengthen the effectiveness of the Force - including: "That a section of a Field Company RAE be added to the Force". He had noted on Rabaul the lack of preparedness for the placement of permanent obstructions on the upper aerodrome and the unsatisfactory state of the associated defence road to accommodate motorised troops.

Colonel Anderson also reported that the Fortress Sappers were assisting in field works, blasting at basalt boulders to enable a bulldozer to construct the Praed Point Battery Road and that the Fortress Company will not be available for such assistance when it begins to function in its proper role.

Following up this report with Northern Command the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence DMOE reported that "The Force is badly in need of at least one Section of a Field Coy. Since the defence scheme includes demolitions, also Field Engineers will be required if it is intended to render the port facilities useless to an enemy (probably envisaged 50-100 all ranks).

Subsequently Northern Command reported on 8 August 1941 that a Field Section, RAE should be established at a unit of the V.D.C. (Volunteer Defence Corps) or (Dad's Army) at Rabaul however the DMOE advised the Secretary, Military Board on 26 September 1941 that the Commander New Guinea Area CNGA that such proposal was unsuccessful. The CNGA is being requested to give further consideration to this request. A footnote to this letter reads - "Allotment Engrs. AMF under consideration" (It is known that nothing at all eventuated).

Following the massive air assault and the subsequent landing by the large Japanese force, the heroic defence by the very much smaller numbers of 'L' Force, with no arrangements for evacuation of Australian troops from New Britain the order went out - "Every man for himself".

About eight sappers managed to successfully evade the Japanese troops and eventually by boat or plane safely arrive back in Australia. The remainder of the unit including two of the three serving officers were taken prisoner. Following the cessation of hostifies during 1945 these two officers were recovered from Japan.

Regarding the fate of the Sapper POW: - together with all other ORs POW at Rabaul and all civilians - incarcerated at the Malaguna Road Camp; during the early hours of 22 June 1942 they were bundled off with their gear and later leaded on the Montevideo Marc, a passenger cargo ship of 7267 ton. This ship was not escorted and its maximum speed was insufficient to outrun a US submarine. A total of 853 military personnel and 205 civilians were on board. On the 1 July it was sunk by torpedoes fired from the US Submarine STURGEON - the US Navy having no knowledge that the vessel was carrying the POWs. It went down in six minutes.

In his diary 'Thirty Six Days to Freedom", Major Botham made mention of sapper work carried out whilst evacuating from the Raboul area:

> 'The RAE/RAA party joined 'A' Company of the 2/22 Battalion. The end of the lower drome was crated by a RAE demolition party. Other demolition works were carried out particularly at important road intersections, destroying a road grader and motor vehicles making temporary road repairs to keep the escape route passable.'

In retrospect the Rabaul defences provided by the Australian Government were futile and a disgrace, namely a totally inadequate force, in numbers, specialist, armaments and equipment. No naval nor effective air support was provided. No provision for either adequate reinforcements or evacuation were planned. Nothing was achieved - so

many lives both civilian and servicemen were lost in vain.

During January each year members of the Old Sappers Association join with those of the Lark Force Association at the Shrine to pay homage to those Sappers who lost their lives on the Montevideo Menu. Additional Sapper support is always welcome at the Shrine Service. ■

OPERATION TREK-BACK 15-24 OCTOBER 1993 by *Mr J. Jopling (Hon Sec)*

All Veterans and families were welcomed to Trek-Back HQ at 4 Spence Street, Cairns where we were issued with Identity Cards and a complete program of all entertainment covering our 10 day stay.

Approximately 800 to 1,000 returned for the celebrations and it was great to meet so many wearing a puggaree with their unit colours displayed. Everywhere we went the people of Cairns, Gordonvale, Millaa Millaa, Lake Barrine, Malanda Ravenshoe, Millstream, Wondecla, Herberton, Atherton, Tolga, Rocky Creek, Kairi, Mareeba, Kuranda, Mossman and Daintree all made us feel as though we belonged there.

We had many civic receptions and marched quite a few times in Cairns and on the tablelands. On two occasions we boarded a troop train and received a tumultuous welcome when we arrived at our destinations:

a. From Gordonvale to Cairns - 16 Oct 93

b. From Cairns to Mareeba (1st stop lunch) and then to Atherton (2nd stop evening meal) - 22 Oct 93.

The Cairns RSL was a great place to gather in the evenings and many friendships were made there, besides unit reunions being popular also. We had Ecumenical Service at St Monicas Cathedralon on the 17 Oct 93 and it was most impressive.

The Mayors of Villers Britonneux and Bullecourt were present, and we had a Torres Strait Island choir singing. Lieut General Grey AO - CGS ARMY was also present for the reading.

Many plaques were dedicated in all areas where troops had trained. On Saturday 23 Oct 93 a race meeting was held at Tolga, similar to 1942. On Sunday the closing ceremony was held at Wondecla but unfortunately I didn't attend, however I rang the chief at Herberton on Monday 25 Oct 93 and he said it went off real well.

The temperature during our stay was a constant 30 degrees.

PS. Trek-Back are to be congratulated for making our historic return such a memorable one.

All Engineers Officers past and present are reminded of the Southern Region Waterloo Dinner being held at Headquarters Logistic Support Force Engineers, Oakleigh Barracks. This years promises to be bigger and better than last year with an appropriate theme to match.

If you would like to attend and have not previously attended or have just moved to the Southern Region, please contact Captain

Mick Renfrey SO3 PERS/LOG HQ LSF Engrs on (03) 550 3929.

Cost for the function will be $40 a head and bar facilities will be available. All replies are to be forwarded to the Treasurer, RAE Corps Sub-Committee CAPT Al McVilly at Facilities Branch BASC Watsonia, Simpson Barracks MACLEOD VIC 3085 by 3 Jun 94.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 1994

The Colonel Commandant, on behalf of Sappers in the Southern Region, extends his congratulations to the following members who received Australia Day Awards:

Lieutenant General J.M. Sanderson, as Commander, UNTAC
Companion of the Order of Australia (AC)

Colonel G.N. Pearce, Commander, Land Command Engineers
Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

Lieutenant Colonel J.M. Toyne, as Commanding Officer, 2/3 Field Engineer Regiment
Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

Major S.F. Reid, as Chief Instructor WO and SNCO Wing Land Warfare Centre
Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

Warrant Officer Class Two C. Coleman, 2 Combat Engineer Regiment
Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM)

Quick Quips

"Don't be humble; you're not that great!"
Golda Mier.

Only a fool makes the same mistake twice.

Each day I try to make new ones!

Worry is like a rocking chair.
It gives you something to do, but it gets you nowhere.

The man who never made a mistake never made ANYTHING

EXCURSIONS - PAST AND FUTURE IN 1994

BEATING OF THE RETREAT 6 MAR 94

A party from Oakleigh Depot, Gunners and Society of Military Engineering went to witness this years performance, the program of which is reported in this newsletter. As the critic of which, I can only say that it did everybody proud. The performers should be rightly proud of their performance and the onlookers proud that the services are serving them so well.

The band was stirring enough that I nearly joined in the marching, while the parade demonstrated what our dedicated youth can do. The rest of the program rounded out a well balanced evening.

The time prior to the evening was filled with a visit to the Maritime Museum and then a tour of the fort followed by a BBQ at the Queenscliff RSL. Next years event is keenly looked forward to. You will be advised in good time.

WARRNAMBOOL, PORTLAND AND PORT FAIRY, WEEKEND 21-22 MAY 94

A scenic tour ending at the above fortifications starting from the Oakleigh depot at 0800 hrs with a pickup point in the vicinity of Williamstown or Laverton. Bookings will be taken in the order

received to the limit of one bus. Cost will be $100 each and will include dinner, and cost of admittances, and bed and breakfast at a motel with twin share.

Bookings by 30 April 1994 prepaid to:

Engineers:

G. Carlile (03) 890 4848,
W Atkins (059) 961 013

Gunners:

R. Morell (03) 562 9552
Society of Mil Eng John Bitcon (03) 820 3888.

HASTINGS

A one day trip in spring with historical enactment. Details to follow.

CEREMONY OF BEATING RETREAT
at
COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
Fort Queenscliff

Sunday 6th March 1994

7.00 pm Beating Retreat Ceremony performed by the Australian Army Band (Melbourne) and a Guard provided by Deakin University Company.

7.50 pm Intermission.

8.10 pm Band Recital culminating in the 1812 Overture, accompanied by the guns of 38 Battery 2/10 Medium Regiment, and the Military Reenactment Society.

9.00 pm Recital Ends.

ORDER OF CEREMONY

* Military Re-enactment Society Perform in Period Costume
* The Guard and Band March on and form up on the inspection line
* The Commandant of Command and Staff College is received on Parade
* The Reviewing Officer, Councillor L. Irving-Dusting, the Mayor of Queenscliff, is received on parade
* The Reviewing Officer inspects the Guard and Band
* Cadets are commissioned as officers in the Army
* The Guard and Band take up positions for Beating Retreat
* The Band performs a march routine
* The Band troops
* The Guard advances and prepares to fire volleys
* The evening hymn is played and the rear rank of the guard fires three volleys
* The Band plays retreat, the lone piper plays a lament
* The Reviewing Officer Departs
* The Commandant Departs
* The Guard and Band march off
* Brief Intermission
* Band Recital culminating in the 1812 overture, accompanied by the guns of the 2/10 Medium Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, and visual show by the military re-enactment society of Australia

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COMPANY

Commanding Officer: MAJ D. Collins

Adjutant: CAPT J.F.B. Ellwood

Company Sergeant Major: WO2 B. Bartels

The inaugural Deakin University Company (DUC) Parade was held on Monday 20 July 1981 at the 10 Medium Regiment Depot in Geelong. In March 1983, DUC moved to 'Glastonbury', a former orphanage situated in the Colac Road in Belmont.

Official approval to raise a sub unit of company strength was given by the Minister for Defence on 27 September 1983. Headquarters Training Command Issued Instructions to raise the company by December 1983.

2/10 MEDIUM REGIMENT

Commanding Officer: LTCOL P.D. Alkemade

Adjutant: CAPT G.P. Harris

Regimental Sergeant Major: WO1 G.D. Metcalf

Over the years the unit has had many diversified roles including Light Horse Field Artillery, Light and Heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery, and Medium Artillery.

In 1991 the unit was reformed as 2/10 Medium Regiment Royal Australian Artillery with its headquarters in Melbourne.

GEELONG HIGHLAND PIPE BAND

Pipe Major W.H. Spriggins RFD, ED

The Pipe band first participated in this ceremony in 1991. This year the Lament will be played by Pipe Major Mr W. Spriggins.

"The Swan Street Sappers"

A History of the Corps in Victoria

With the closure of our beloved Swan Street Depot it was decided to capture the history with which it was enshrined. So a group of dedicated scribes volunteered to put down for all our benefit the memories of that long stay and make a book entitled The Swan St Sappers for you all. Their labours are drawing to a close and we must face the problem of publishing it. This is I think a task for all of us. The following scheme is now suggested to bridge the period between the publisher and the sales.

Sappers and their associations are invited to provide bridging finance, as a loan at 10%. Each loan would be retired in order of their receipt as funds become available. It is suggested that such loans be in multiples of $500 with a maximum of $10,000 for the total fund. Cheques should be made out to:

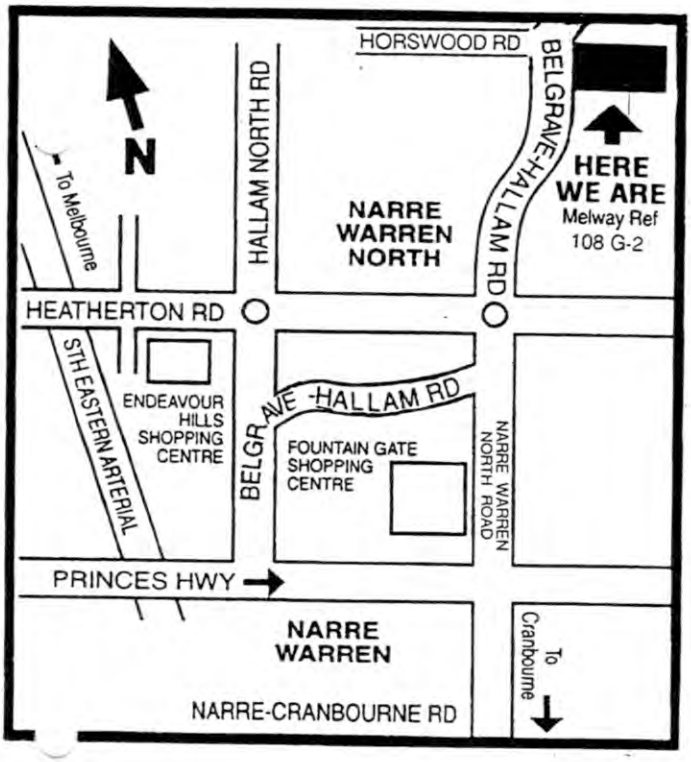
The Treasurer
The Swan Street Sapper Book Fund
C/- History and Heritage Committee

It is proposed to acknowledge those who have assisted financially in the publishing of the book by a suitable acknowledgment within the book itself.

MELBOURNE TANK MUSEUM

456 Belgrave Hallam Road,
NARRE WARREN NORTH VIC 3804
Ph: 796 8216 / 796 8188

Next door to Campbelltown Miniature Railway. Visit both on the same day.



Modern coffee shop with light refreshments and devonshire tea's with seating for 50 plus people.

Disabled people catered for as there are no steps or stairs.

BBQ and picnic facilities available.

Opening Hours

10 am to 5 pm
every Saturday and Sunday
and Public Holidays
except Christmas Day

OAKLEIGH BARRACKS OFFICERS MESS
MESS CALENDAR 1994

25 Mar 94 AGM

08 Apr 94 H-Hour

23 Apr 94 Wine and Cheese Tasting (Mixed All Corps)

06 May 94 H-Hour

03 Jun 94 H-Hour

18 Jun 94 Waterloo Dinner

01 Jul 94 H-Hour

16 Jul 94 Opening of Out Door Training Facy/LSF Units Sth Region (All Corps)

05 Aug 94 H-Hour

21 Aug 94 Ladies Dining-In (All Corps)

02 Sep 94 H-Hour

24 Sep 94 Grand Final Function (Families All Corps)

07 Oct 94 H-Hour

04 Nov 94 H-Hour

02 Dec 94 Clive Steel Memorial Lecture

10 Dec 94 Christmas at Home (All Corps)

'Now is the time for all good men to come to the party.'

MAJOR W.G. BOTHAM, DCM

- SAGA OF A SOLDIER

We are indebted to the Old Sappers for a narrative of the experiences of a remarkable sapper who ended his military career as Major W.G. Botham, DCM, RAE Fortress whose photograph appears on page 5. This article describes Major Botham's service record from the events which led to his award of the DCM as a Lance Corporal (subsequently a Sergeant) in the Bedfordshire Regiment. The writer uses the fictitious name of "Bill Bolton" for the subject of his tale - however we know his true identity.

The following is a precis of the narrative , which is held by the Old Sappers. This concerns Botham's World War I service. Some of his World War II experiences will be reported in a future newsletter.

World War I - The Western Front - April 1917

The writer, in a foreword, comments on the various forms of courage shown by men and women in various circumstances, and suggests that the form of courage aroused by a devotion to duty of any serviceman was exemplified by L/CPL Bill and his mate L/CPL Jerry Maylett.

Their battalion of the Bedfordshires moved up the line on 22 April 1917 to go "over the top" in an attack on part of the Hindenberg Line. As 12 Platoon moved up there was heavy shelling from both sides. SGT Vincent, the platoon commander was the first casualty. CPL Holly now took over, with L/CPLs Bill and Jerry to assist him. Shelling intensified as the communication trench to the front line was negotiated, and here Jolly became a casualty. Bill now had command of 12 Pl, assisted by his junior, L/CPL Jerry.

They found themselves in an unenviable position in a front line trench on ground sloping up to a deeply entrenched enemy some 300 yards away.

The OC during his inspection of the company position was relieved to find the platoon alert under control of LCPL Bill, and gave him his final orders for dawn attack. During a fairly quiet night - for trench warfare - Bill could consider his task.

He had enlisted in early September 1914, advancing his age by two years. His baptism in trench warfare was at Ypres in March 1915. On the eve of his 18th birthday, before steel helmets were provided, he received a head wound which took him back to England for some months. After recovery he served in Egypt for a period, returning with the battalion to France in 1916 for the Somme campaign, to experience again the hardships and horrors of the trenches. So by now he was more or less a veteran.

The attack was to begin at first light on 23 April, and 12 Pl on Bill's orders left the trench to form up on a start line 50 yards forward. Heavy gunfire began, and the platoon advanced behind a creeping barrage.

After some close combat the first objective was taken. Prisoners were sent to the rear. Bill continued the attack with 25 men and a Lewis Gun team, advancing against rifle fire in extended line down the reverse slope to his second objective about 1000 yards ahead overlooking a wooded valley, reached it and dug in with only one casualty. A coloured flare informed an RFC aircraft of his position.

About noon a counter-attack began as enemy reserved moved forward to the valley below. They were stopped by rifle and Lewis Gun fire, but Bill's advanced position was outflanked from the right and pinned down in their shallow new trenches.

A young lieutenant of A Coy dashed across the open to make contact with Bill's force, of C Coy, but was wounded.

During a night of fierce activity by both sides expected attacks on the advanced position did not come, but the Germans occupied the ridge behind them, from which they had advanced.

By full light the next day, 24 April, all was quiet, apart from an occasional German rifle shot. Rations and water were short. About noon, heavy enemy shelling on the long slope behind him, and the appearance of khaki-clad figures on the crest indicated that the enemy had withdrawn from that area, although remaining in force close to his right flank. Bill persuaded the wounded officer that his appreciation was correct, and volunteered to go back for orders regarding possible relief or withdrawal; and Jerry offered to go with him. The officer gave his permission.

Armed only with the Lewis Gunners' revolvers they made a dash in short bursts to reach the trench captured the morning before. The men of the company now in occupation were astonished to hear that some seventy men of A and C Coys were dug in two-thirds of a mile in front. Fortunately the Brigade Major was at the company HQ to hear Bill's report. As the Major studied the map, Bill toyed with the revolver, whereupon he testily ordered him to "put that bloody thing away." He wrote a message, authorising withdrawal, sealed it in an envelope, and ordered Bill and his companion to delivery it to the wounded officer, and to return with the envelope signed by the lieutenant to prove that he had received it.

Without their earlier enthusiasm the young men made their way forward again to the higher trench on the hill and thence down the slope to the advanced position unscathed, to an eager welcome. With the receipt of the message to withdraw after dark, the spirits of the young lieutenant rose considerably after the painful and cramped day spent in the slit trench.

This time Bill and Jerry had to return with rifles and equipment, but managed to reach the battalion lines safely to deliver the signed envelope to the Brigade Major. As the battalion was to be relieved that night, they were allowed to leave forthwith. By sundown they were out of the communication trench weary and battlestained, their only desire to find a place to eat, take off their boots, and sleep.

On 25 May, the battalion paraded to form three sides of a square. In the Centre with the RSM stood Sergeant Bill "Bolton" and Corporal Jerry Maylett. There the Divisional Commander, supported by the Battalion CO, presented each of them with the red and blue ribbon of the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

.....

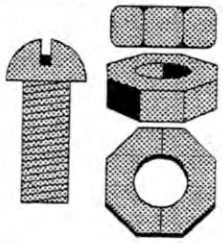
Soon after, Jerry was wounded in action, and later returned to "civvy street", a hero in his municipality.

Bill returned to England in the late autumn of 1917 from the horrors of Paschendaele. He was appointed to Second Lieutenant at 21. He volunteered for pilot training in the RFC, and graduated as a fighter pilot. His service ended with his return home from 80 Sqn, RAF, in November 1919. □

TOOLS AND THEIR USES....

BY

THE LIGHTNING FLASH



In civilian and army organisations, there are tradesmen who can demonstrate quite admirably, the correct use of tools. The list which follows is not a comprehensive one but it gives a guide to the efficiency (or otherwise) of a tradesman.

HAMMER - The most useful tool of the whole lot. Can be used in self-defence and for fitting big-end bearings and other precision work.

CENTRE PUNCH - Used for marking other people's spoons, forks and knives with the three dots which you claim for your own mark of ownership.

OILCAN - Gives an outstanding performance when placed in the ear of an unsuspecting person and pressed gently.

SCREWDRIVER - Used as a piston scraper, it leaves a study in black and white on the piston crown. It was once used quite successfully to remove screws.

SPANNER - This tool is excellent as a valve lifter, tyre lever, and for cracking small nuts. It must always be used so that the jaws stretch the first time and can then be written off.

RING SPANNER - For stealing.

CHISEL - May be used for the removal of gaskets and large nuts for which no spanner is available. Usually used in conjunction with a large hammer. If you find you strike your hand with the hammer, the easiest way of preventing this is to grasp the hammer with both hands.

ADJUSTABLE SPANNER - A very useful tool, mainly used on small brass nuts with then assume a cylindrical shape.

MICROMETER - Its good design and fine workmanship makes it an admirable tool for cracking Brazil nuts and hard toffee. Also used as a leather punch.

FILE - Can be used as a punch, tommy bar, axe, jack handle, dagger and also for filing.

STILLSON - More expensive than a hammer and just as good.

ELECTRICAL DRILL (HAND) - For altering speedometers radically to agree with work tickets.

OUTSIDE CALLIPERS - Used for picking small pieces out of inaccessible places.

ANZAC DAY 1994

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Barracks will open on ANZAC Day at 0500 hrs and will close at 1700 hrs.

The gunfire breakfast will commence at 0515 hrs.

The Dawn service will commence at 0610 hrs.

Breakfast will commence at 0645 hrs.

Buses and Guard will depart for the City at 0800 hrs.

The Buses and Guard will return to the Barracks at approximately 1200 hrs.

The Barracks will be open and the facilities available for use whilst the guard is in town for the march.

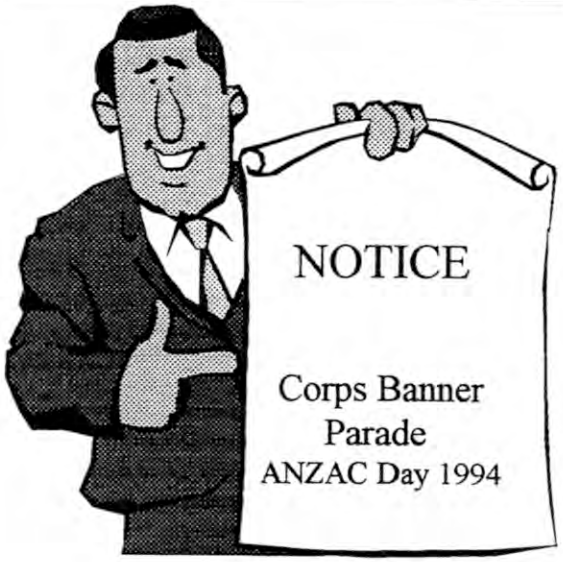
.....

TRANSPORT DETAILS FOR ANZAC DAY 1994

The following transport has been arranged for ANZAC Day. The buses will leave Oakleigh Barracks at 0800 hrs. The buses will then park behind the Shrine and return back to the Barracks between 1130 and 1230 hrs.

There will be only one bus operating in the afternoon and it will depart from Oakleigh Barracks for Spencer Street Station at 1500 hrs.

THERE IS NO OTHER BUS SERVICES OR TIMES



PLEASE READ AND PASS* ON TO ALL *SAPPERS

To assist with the Parading of the Corps Banner on ANZAC Day a parade brief is to be conducted at Oakleigh Barracks for all units, associations and people that are to march behind the Corps Banner:

MODEL ROOM
9 APRIL 1994
1300 HRS

For all those units and people that cannot attend we hope to see you at the corner of FLINDERS Street and RUSSELL Street on 25 April 1994 NLT 0915 hrs.

If any one has any questions, please contact WO1 TONY SMITH RSM HQ LSF ENGRS ON (03) 550 3931.

PLEASE READ AND PASS ON TO ALL SAPPERS.

NEW SAPPER ASSOCIATIONS

BY COL J. RILEY

RAE Association - Ringwood

A preliminary meeting was held last November and was attended by 10 ex sappers including COL Wadeson, COL Riley, CAPT Atkins and 7 former members of the Association. It was agreed that the Association should be reformed and a letter has recently been forwarded to some 70 ex members inviting them to attend an inaugural meeting on the 16 April. Forms inviting nominations for the Committee have also been forwarded and a feature article has been prepared for publication in the local "Leader" newspaper.

91 Forestry Association

MAJ Les Malseed has advised that there are now 60 members and that a very successful get together was held at Gilderoy on 19-20 March.

105 Const Sqn Association

Contact has been made with more recently retired sappers and MAJ Bruce Campbell is confident of increasing the membership.

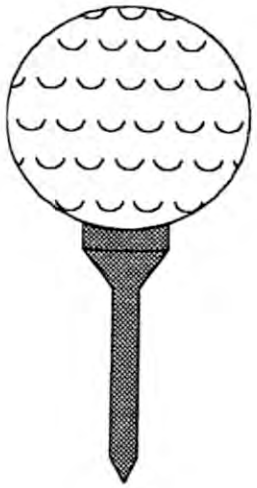
Latrobe Valley

COL Riley and LTCOL Eastick visited 7ESR in camp at Newborough and Dutson recently and were able to observe members of 38 Sqn carrying out construction tasks at those locations. Unfortunately because of time restrictions they were not able to visit 39 E&M Sqn at Sale. They were also seeking information concerning an ex-sapper organisation and were disappointed to find that no group had been formed as anticipated, however they were pleased to note there were good attendances of sappers with some ex sappers at informal get togethers at the Sappers Mess on Sundays. It is intended to make further contact in the near future with the aim of having an association formed.

Thanks to LTCOL Rob Youl, MAJ Mark Shanks and members of their staff for making the visit informative and enjoyable.

SAPPER GOLF DAY 1994

BY COL J. RILEY



At the Sapper Golf Day last November, LTCOL Sir John Holland and LTCOL Ted Zoeller announced that they were to discontinue their involvement in organising the Golf Day but expressed the wish that serving members of the mess would be interested in organising the competition in the future.

Sir John, with the assistance of MAJ Stan Evans, had organised the day at the RMGC for some 30 years and Ted Zoeller had generously donated the trophies for the whole of that period.

The many sapper officers who have participated in the competition over the years are extremely appreciative of the time, effort and expense incurred by the three officers referred to above.

Sadly, both Ted Zoeller and Stan Evans have passed on since that last competition.

It is anticipated that a new Sub-Committee will be announced at the Waterloo Dinner and past players and others interested in playing are advised that Friday 5 November has been selected as a tentative date for the 1994 Sapper Golf Day.

OAKIEIGH BARRACKS SGTS MESS SOCIAL CALENDAR

09 Apr 94 - Members Dining In Night (Farewell to WO2 Ferguson)
25 Apr 94 - ANZAC Day
23 Jul 94 - Mixed Dining In Night
01 Oct 94 - Members Dining In Night
01 Nov 94 - Melbourne Cup Function
27 Nov 94 - Children's Xmas Party
10 Dec 94 - Mess Xmas Party

A **HAPPY HOUR** IS HELD **EVERY PAY DAY FRIDAY** AT 1500 HRS IN THE MESS - ALL RANKS INVITED.

RAFFLE

Map of Australia Raffle - A map of Australia will be divded into sections of Real Estate available for sale during the year. At the end of the year Xmas Party we will draw a certain number of real estate packages and award prizes to the owners. The success of this raffle and the number of prizes available will depend on your support during the year. If you work for a company that is willing to donate its product to us for use as a prize, we will actively promote that company or product in the Mess all year. If you are able to buy products that would make good prizes at special rates, please let the social members know so we can get the most from the money available. If you are a handyman or craftsperson and can make items suitable for prizes, your assistance is also requested.

YOUR MESS SOCIAL MEMBERS

WO2 Dee Davidson	1 Petrl Coy	5503910
WO2 Eli Sleiman	22 Const Regt	5503927
WO2 Bill Myers	105 Fd Wksp	5503924
SGT Jeanette Crosbie	4 Fd Sup Coy	5503902

** ATTENDANCE AT FUNCTIONS**

Be aware that unless you request exemption in the form of a Demi Official letter to the PMC you will be billed for functions you do not attend.

PRINCE OF WALES AWARDS FOR DEFENCE FORCE RESERVES

RESERVES
DEFENCE RESERVES SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Do you know what the Prince of Wales Awards is all about? Basically it is an opportunity for serving ARes personnel from SGT to MAJ to benefit from overseas exchange both in their military lives and civilian work. It involves some research and work on their part and will benefit employers of reserve personnel. If you are interested you can make enquiries through your unit chain of command.

LOGISTIC SUPPORT FORCE ENGINEERS

Telephone

(03) 550 3900

In reply please quote

HEADQUARTERS
Logistic Support Force Engineers
Oakleigh Barracks
North Road
OAKLEIGH SOUTH VIC 3167

30 March 1994

A LETTER TO ALL VICTORIAN SAPPERS

Sappers in Victoria have not looked so healthy for sometime: Both the LSF Engrs and 10 Fd Sqn are in good shape with a considerable increase in resources over previous years. Opportunities abound for Reserve Victorian Sappers on interesting and important Defence tasks throughout Australia.

Our ARA component in the State, although smaller with the move of 21 Const Sqn to Brisbane last year, continues to play key roles within Training Command, Logistic Command, Land Command and ADF units. Welcome to Victoria, for all new ARA Sprs. You are now part of the Victorian Sapper Family.

The various retired Sapper Associations continue to serve the "family" well. Keep up the good work - our young sappers need your guidance and example.

The only weak area continues to be qualified tradespeople (Carpenters, Plumbers, Electricians and Plant Ops) and young professional Engineers in the Reserve Units. I ask you all to ENLIST A SAPPER with these skills. With the new "flexible conditions" the minimum requirement to serve is a continuous period of 7 days after basic training. Please pass the word to family and friends that Australia needs these skills in its defence force and that we pay them tax free.

I hope to meet you all at some stage. See you all on ANZAC Day with the Corps Banner.

UBIQUE.

H.R. ELLIS RFD
Colonel
Commander

1994 WATERLOO DINNER
OAKLEIGH BARRACKS

1. The 1994 Waterloo Dinner is to be held at Oakleigh Barracks on Saturday 18 June 1994. The address is Oakleigh Barracks, 1318 North Road, Oakleigh South 3167

2. It is hoped that all serving and ex serving RAE Officers within Victoria can attend the dinner. The timings for the evening are:

1830 hrs - 1900 hrs	-	arrive Oakleigh Barracks
1900 hrs - 1930 hrs	-	pre dinner drinks/hors d'oeuvres in Officers Mess
1930 hrs	-	move into the dining hall

3. The cost for the dinner is $40 per head. Cheques are to be made payable to the **RAE Corps Sub Committee of Victoria.**

4. All cheques are to be sent to:

Captain A. McVilly - Phone: (03) 450 7901
SO3 WKS, Chief Engineer (Southern Victoria)
Simpson Barracks, MACLEOD VIC 3085

5. If you wish to attend, detach the lower portion of this form and send with a cheque to Captain McVilly by **03 June 1994**. Members are invited to bring guests to the dinner however, because of numbers they are limited to one guest per member and guests should be employed in an engineer related field. Cost is $40.00 per head for guests. P.S. If you know of any officers that have not received an invitation or will be in Melbourne at the time of the dinner, please pass this information on. The more the merrier!

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Telephone: _____

I am/am not attending the 1994 Waterloo Dinner at Oakleigh Barracks.

I do/do not require accommodation at Oakleigh Barracks for the dinner

Please find enclosed a cheque for $_____ for the following members:

_____

_____

RAE CORPS COMMITTEE
SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1993

The Colonel Commandant Colonel J. Wertheimer, at the last Southern Region (SR) RAE Corps Sub Committee Meeting advised that Corps Subsriptions were a vital source of funds to the Corps throughout Australia. It is felt that although all personnel are encouraged to pay Corps Subs there are many who opt out of paying this fee because they saw no benefit from the funds paid.

It was decided by the Corps Committee that this perception belonged in the past and that every effort was to be made to show the state of affairs and the uses made of members funds to encourage members to meet their obligation of contributing to the fund. The Corps Sub Committees' Finances are in good shape, with cash at bank of over $7,500.00; however only $1100.00 was paid in Corps Subscriptions last year. This is dissappointing to say the least; "non payers" know who you are!

Some of the commitments supported by the subscriptions include; purchasing the Corps Sovereign's Banner, printing The Sapper News and Sapper Summit, retirement presentations, achievement awards and prizes for SR courses and general or specific support to Associations and units.

The following prices are the Corps Subscriptions for 1993 which are very overdue from last year. Prices for 94/95 will be issued in the next edition of SAPPER NEWS.

	ARA	*ARES*		*ARA*	*ARES*
SPR	11.31	9.82	CAPT	20.57	16.22
LCPL	11.79	10.24	MAJ	25.32	20.50
CPL	12.28	13.46	LTCOL	28.40	24.14
SGT	17.28	12.53	COL	33.66	28.61
SSGT	18.87	13.88	BRIG	39.90	33.92
WO2	20.61	15.36	MAJGEN	48.52	41.24
WO1	22.51	16.97	LTGEN	62.34	
LT	17.67	13.62	GEN	71.24	

* Subs are based on 20% of daily pay rate. Retired officers, and WO/SNCO's if they choose to contribute, need only pay up to $20.00 and $15.00 respectively. All payments are to be addressed to CAPT A. McVilly, Treasurer, RAE Corps Committee (SR) C/- Chief Engineer (Southern Victoria) Simpson Barracks, Macleod VIC 3085.

Please find enclosed a cheque/s for $_____ for the RAE Corps Subscriptions:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Telephone: _____

EXTRA EXTRA NEWS ON ANZAC DAY

LATEST INFORMATION ON THE BANNER PARADE

LOCATION: ALL UNITS AND ASSOCIATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO FORM UP AT THE CNR OF FLINDERS AND RUSSELL STREET NLT 09015 HRS . LOOK FOR SGT CHRISTIE WHO WILL ASSIST WITH THE UNITS AND ASSOCIATIONS FORMING UP IN THEIR CORRECT ORDER FOR THE MARCH.

VEHICLES: THERE WILL BE 4 X MILITARY VEHICLES AT THE REAR OF THE UNITS AND ASSOCIATIONS FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO MAY REQUIRE THEM.

BUSES: THE BUS TIMETABLE IS LISTED IN THE SAPPER SUMMIT. PLEASE NOTE THERE **WILL NOT BE A** CONTINUOUS BUS SERVICE BACK TO OAKLEIGH BARRACKS AS IN PAST YEARS. THE LAST BUS WILL LEAVE FROM BEHIND THE SHRINE AT 12.30 PM. **LOOK FOR THE BUSES IN DOMAIN ROAD.**

MARCH: ALL UNITS AND ASSOCIATIONS THAT ARE MARCHING BEHIND THE CORPS BANNER SHOULD NOTE THAT AFTER PASSING THE OFFICAL SALUTING POINT THE GUARD WILL DO A RIGHT WHEEL AROUND TO THE RIGHT OF SHRINE.