

RAE CORPS MAGAZINE
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION (Vic) Inc



SAPPER SUMMIT

Once a Sapper, Always a Sapper



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART40746

50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War

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SAPPER SUMMIT

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www.raevictoria.com

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This edition of Sapper Summit contains a diverse range of articles and reports. I thank each contributor for their efforts in providing material that is informative, reflective and thought provoking. Your contributions are vital to keeping this magazine relevant to the serving and retired sapper communities. Editor

Disclaimer: The opinions and comments expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the Editor or of the RAE Association Victoria (Inc) .



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President's Column

Despatches

from the President's Bunker:



Greetings Fellow Victorian Sappers.

With the second Elizabethan era ending, conflict remains in Europe, heightened strategic pressures continue within our region, and the need to support domestic operations is ever increasing.

This just highlights that the importance of a highly capable military engineering capability for Australia remains paramount.

The reraising of 12th Chief Engineer

Works in Queensland and bolstering our sapper capability in the West with the 13th Engineer Regiment vividly demonstrates this importance.

The adage of “*Train to Fight*” has been realigned to “*Fight to Train*” as sappers continually balance the requirements between training for and conducting operations.

The various Sapper Associations around the country help underpin these sometimes-conflicting priorities by providing ceremonial, social and heritage support. These all enhance morale.

Ultimately, good morale is a significant element of combat power. The Associations assist in providing this (sometimes intangible) ingredient to our warfighting toolkit.

The Victorian RAE Association continues to flourish and grow. Now numbering 384 members, we continue to support all serving and retired sappers in the South. A diverse, talented, and devoted committee help navigate this pathway forward. We always need new members.

Please enjoy this Christmas edition of *Sapper Summit*.

***Good Sapping & UBIQUE,
D.C. (Don) Hughes***

From The Regiment



CO 22 Engineer Regiment



- A Final Address -

By
LTCOL Scott A. D'Rozario

I have had the privilege and honour to have been selected to lead the 22nd Engineer Regiment (22ER) for the past 3 years (2021-2023). Over the last 3 years, 22ER has achieved some amazing feats and progressed from strength to strength. 22ER has been able to deploy in support of the Australian Community in times of need, deploy individuals overseas in accordance with the Government's requirements and develop the skills of the Unit through complex training such as:

2021 – COVID Operations

2021 – Led the ADF response to the Severe Weather Event (Jul 2021)

2022 – deployed personnel to the OP Flood Assist 22-1 NSW

2022 – led the ADF response to OP Flood Assist 22-2 Vic (Oct 2022)

2023 – conducted a 16 day construction block and a concurrent 9 day CE FwF exercise with combined Const/CE effects

2022/3 – deployed members to the South West Pacific in support International Engagement Division.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my last 3 years as CO and before this posting, I would have stated that being the OC of both 105 CS and 10 SQN was the best part of ADF my career. I can now unequivocally state that being the CO of this amazing REGT, responsible for steering the unit is my ADF career highlight.

22ER has 3 functional squadrons: 8 and 10 Combat Engineer Squadron and 105 Construction Squadron. Over the past 3 years, I have now come to realise that it also has a 4th cultural Squadron in the RAE Association (Vic).

22ER over the past 3 years has also engaged with the greater community, post the impacts of COVID-19:

- Conducted Anzac Day services open to the community, with post-service activities
- Opened the Yallourn Area All Ranks Club (YAARC) (Newborough) to the community on Anzac Day with a number of previous Corps members attending
- Were represented at the Kapooka Tragedy Memorial in Wagga Wagga
- Were represented at the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service
- Engaged with and Supported Activities with the Worawa Aboriginal College including:
 - Construction Works; and

- Represented at Worawa Sports Events and College Awards Events

None of these accomplishments could have been achieved without the dedication of all the members of the Unit. Specifically, to the Squadron Command teams and to the Regiment HQ Executive including Operations, Logistics, and Personal/Administration, over the last 3 years, thank you for all that you have done.

I'd also like to acknowledge all the families, friends and other special people of the members of the unit. Without the ongoing support of these unit members, the Unit would not have been able to attend and invest the time needed to develop and grow the Unit as much as they have. For me, that support and sacrifice has come from my wife and children – Denise, Bexley and Percy.

As CO, I took the role with a focus to try and develop the Unit to make it better. I hope that I have been able to create an environment where you have been able to achieve that. I leave 22ER for my next posting, exceptionally proud of you all and what you have achieved – thank you

Finally, I wish to welcome the new CO 22ER for 2024, LTCOL Russ COLLINS. LTCOL COLLINS returns to the Unit after some time away in various postings. LTCOL COLLINS will no doubt keep steering the Unit forward moving from strength to strength. I look forward to watching the Unit from the sidelines. A Unit that is truly Committed, Capable and Ready.

Ubique



Warrant Officer Class One Thomas Jesser Regimental Sergeant Major 22 Engineer Regiment



Warrant Officer Jesser was born and educated in Glenelg, South Australia. He enlisted into the Royal Australian Engineer Corps in October 2004. After completing his initial employment training, Warrant Officer Jesser was posted to 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment. During his time in the unit, he served as a Sapper, Lance Corporal and Corporal in 18 Combat Engineer Squadron.

At the end of 2011 Warrant Officer Jesser was promoted to Sergeant and served subsequent postings to the School of Military Engineering as an Operations Sergeant, and the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment in 2013 as a

Troop Sergeant.

In 2015, Warrant Officer Jesser was posted to the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment as the Troop Sergeant for 21 Troop, where he provided Engineer support to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Amphibious Capability Trials. This included joint interoperability activities within a tri-service environment, it also saw numerous engagement activities with the United States Military and other foreign forces.

At the beginning of 2017, Warrant Officer Jesser was posted to the 1st Recruit Training Battalion (1 RTB) on promotion to Warrant Officer Class Two. He fulfilled an appointment as a Company Sergeant Major in a recruit training Company. In his second year at 1 RTB he was employed as the Operations Warrant Officer, where he had a significant involvement in the re-development of the Army Recruit Course curriculum.

Warrant Officer Jesser posted into 18 Engineer Squadron as the Squadron Sergeant Major in 2019 whilst the Squadron transitioned from being a light, dismounted Squadron to a Mechanised Engineer Squadron. Throughout his tenure, he was also fortunate to be involved in the execution of a Combat Engineer Dive Concentration that included a dive team from 22 Engineer Regiment—Royal Engineers. In 2021 Warrant Officer Jesser was posted to the United Kingdom on exchange to the Royal Engineer Warfare Wing, Royal School of Military Engineering as the Sergeant Major Bridging.

In the course of his career, he has been

deployed on operations in Timor Leste, Afghanistan and the Philippines. He has participated in overseas exercises in Malaysia, Singapore, Papua New Guinea and Hawaii. Warrant Officer Jesser has also supported numerous Defence Aid to the Civil Community Operations in response to natural emergencies within Australia.

In 2009 and 2015, Warrant Officer Jesser was awarded Army Bronze Level Commendations for exemplary service. He has been awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for service with the Mentoring Task Force-1 during Operation SLIPPER in Afghanistan and an Australia Day Medallion for his outstanding achievements whilst posted to the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in 2016.

Warrant Officer Jesser is currently appointed as the Regimental Sergeant Major of 22 Engineer Regiment. He is married to Danielle and they have two young boys, Remington and Theodore. His interests include fishing, camping, playing sports and military history. Warrant Officer Jesser has completed a Graduate Certificate in Intelligence Analysis and is planning to commence a Masters of Strategy and Security in the near future.



RAE Association-Vic plaques now available. Orders can be made via our web site.

4TH BRIGADE SKILL AT ARMS COMPETITION

December 2023

Justin Merrett

On the 1st to the 4th of December, the 4th Brigade held their skill at arms competition at HMAS Cerberus William's Rifle Range. 22ER, 5th/6th Battalion RVR, 8th/7th Battalion RVR, 4th/19th Prince of Wales Light Horse & 12th/40th RTR put forward their best shooters to compete in pistols, rifle marksmanship and combat shooting.

The 22ER team consisted of CPL King, LCPL Purcell and SPRs Allisey, Maranon and Le.

Friday began with the arrival of the teams in the morning and camp setup. The engineers clearly had the best setup being the only team to bring a corps flag (and tent, swags, stretches, tables & chairs). The afternoon saw the commencement of the group and zero followed by the beginning of pistol matches 1 & 2 for the RVR teams.

Saturday started with rain and continued to rain throughout the day adding to the challenge of the competition. The remaining teams shot pistol matches 1 & 2, with 22ER placing 3rd. The competition then moved into the rifle matches starting with rifle practice 3A, a three minute shoot from multiple positions ranging from 100 - 300m in supported and unsupported positions. The team scored 894 of 1080 possible points. After its completion the team moved into the applied marksmanship principles shoot to attempt to earn their crossed rifles. This shoot ranged from 100 - 300m with short exposures, rapid serials and moving targets from unsupported firing positions. A second attempt was given to the 9 best AMP shooters, which saw 22ER take up 3 of the 9 lanes.

Sunday saw the teams shoot the long distance rifle practice and then move into the combat shooting rifle matches. 22ER excelled at the

combat shooting finishing in first place, with CPL King obtaining the highest score of 183 / 190.

Monday saw the culmination of the skill at arms competition with a 2km run with rifle in body armour & helmet. Followed immediately by a 2 minute, time limited, 10 rounds load & shoot. 22ER completed the run in just over 14 minutes placing first with a score of 322 / 360. This earned them the Redfern Trophy.

Monday afternoon saw the award presentations by the brigade commander, Brigadier Michelle Campbell, to the teams and individuals. 22ER was awarded the Brigade Shield for the highest RP3A team score, adding themselves to the list of victors dating back to 1890. The team scored 3069 points in the rifle matches earning them 1st place as the best rifle team, along with The Redfern for winning the run and shoot. For individual podium finishes CPL King finished 1st place in combat shooting; 2nd place in best rifle; and 3rd place in best overall individual. Overall the team placed 2nd with 4623 points, just 31 points shy of first place behind 5th/6th Battalion, RVR. An outstanding effort by the team.



SPR Allisey CCS



CPL King CCS



SPR Le, CPL King, LCPL Purcell, SPR Allisey, SPR Maranon



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.

Current, 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 in confirm timings.

Location

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

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Hours

ADF Members and Defence Civilians Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm

General Public

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday Visits commence at 9.45am and 12.45pm Other times can be arranged by appointment





Sapper Profile



CAPTAIN NOEL TIPTON

Half a Century of Sappering

Part Two

Appy, Chippy, Digger & Sapper By Sapper Summit

Captain Noel Tipton's military service had begun as an Army Apprentice carpenter and joiner (28th intake C&J) at Balcombe in 1973.

In the latter decades of the 20th century, Noel gained a unique set of skills that would be critical as the Australian Army entered a period of diverse and tumultuous operations both at home and abroad.

This investment in training would reap a healthy profit. Noel would be at the vanguard of many deployments supporting the nation.

WO1 Tipton transferred from the Australian Regular Army to the 22nd Construction Regiment (22 CR) as a Reservist in 1995. The unit was based at Australia's first multiuser depot (MUD), recently constructed on an old abattoir site in the then Melbourne semi-industrial suburb of Oakleigh.

A Revitalised Army Reserve

The 1990s transformed the Army Reserve particularly for construction sappers in Victoria. The Reserve was being revitalised. The skills brought to the ADF from the civilian community were still in high demand.

The Supplementary Reserve (SR) system was now defunct, and most Army Reserve units were designated Normal Conditions (NC). This generally meant that a sapper paraded one night a week, a weekend a month and one course or exercise each year. Readiness requirements for fitness, medical,

welfare and military competencies were obligatory. This made service in the reserve an attractive part-time employment option for those leaving the Regular Army.

For Noel, he could pursue his trade as a *Chippy* in civilian life, spend more time with his family, and still utilise his vast military experience in an ever increasingly busy Australian Defence Force (ADF). After 23 years as a soldier (including 7 years as a Warrant Officer Class One) Noel was promoted to Captain in January 1996.

Annual Field Exercises

Typically, annual field exercises (AFX) were held at numerous locations around the country undertaking horizontal and vertical construction tasks, combat engineering tasks, and all arms soldier skill training. Noel's skill sets and experience in all these areas were invaluable.

For example, for construction sappers in 1998 at Puckapunyal, extensions and refurbishment of the engineer compound were undertaken. At Monegeeta the driver training facility was extended and upgraded whilst refurbishment work was carried out at the Portsea pier and jetty.

An increasing tempo of operational deployments would soon become a normal feature of reserve units training and focus. Noel's unique skills and training had found an important niche for the ADF.

The Start of Two Busy Decades - Timor Leste

By September 1999, the ADF was strongly focused on its operational commitment to East Timor, lat-

er named Timor Leste.

The need for both construction and combat engineers in Timor along with impending security operations at home for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games (OP GOLD) meant the overall demand for Sappers was extremely high.

This operational vacuum created by Timor, was filled by reserve engineer units such as the 4th Combat Engineer Regiment (4 CER) based at Ringwood East and the 22nd Construction Regiment (22 CR) based at Oakleigh.

The Army had prepared well for these tasks but did not predict that the tempo of operations would remain high for the next two decades. This included not only an ongoing commitment to Timor, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also numerous peacekeeping, security, humanitarian, and domestic operations.

Filling the Vacuum

As regular Royal Australian Engineer (RAE) units and personnel rotated through the extensive Sapper commitment to operations in Timor-Leste, many Reservists were needed to bolster and backfill the multitude of sapper tasks back at home on full time service (FTS).

Reserve sappers were also needed to fill operational roles in support of our national interests. Captain Noel Tipton explains:

"At this time (2001) I was posted to the Resources Officer position within the Squadron Headquarters (SQH) of the 105th Construction Squadron (105 CS). CAPT Matt Sanderson had been posted in as the Australian Regular Army Second in Command (ARA 2IC) along with WO2 Bill Oates as the Operations Warrant Officer (OPS WO). Matt had been there since 2000 and I think Bill had been there from about the time also.

Matt had been trying to obtain an appointment as a United Nations (UN) Observer in East Timor. He was given permission to deploy if he had a backfill plan for his role at 105 CS.

He approached me and I agreed to fill in for him for six months. I consequently was signed up for five months continuous full-time service (CFTS) (15

Jan to 15 Jun) as OC 105 CS with any additional time needed paid under normal Reserve Days.

At this time, the Regiment was still under command of Headquarters Logistics Support Force (HQ LSF). It remained so until 01 Jul 2002. 22 CR then came under command of Commander Land Command Engineers (CLCE)."

Bushfire Assistance - Myrtleford

In 2003 preparations were underway at the Newborough Engineer Training Depot in the Latrobe Valley to commence *Exercise Kick-Start*. This was the first training exercise for that year.

Within 48 hours of receiving a warning order to assist the Victorian State Government with bush fire relief, a team of 100 sappers from both 22 CR and 4 CER deployed to Myrtleford. Captain Noel Tipton explains:

"The Commanding Officer (CO) of 22 CR at the time, Lieutenant Colonel (LTCOL) Bill Van Ree, asked if I would command the first response rotation. I agreed. The first rotation commenced, with a second commanded by 4 CER and the third by 2 CER. 105 CS provided members over the entire three-week period this critical support was needed."

Little did the Sappers know at the time, that many more bushfire deployments would occur. Experienced and capable sappers like Noel Tipton would ultimately be critical at the forefront of these domestic operations.

Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP)

After the bushfires and AFX of 2003, the focus for the construction sappers turned to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community (ATSIC) Army Community Assistance Program (AACAP).

As part of its new role to round out the Regular Army construction squadrons (17 & 21 CS), 22 CR was tasked to complete the construction of a three-bedroom house for AACAP 2003. The task was staged to allow two rotations of four weeks each comprising two teams of around 30 sappers. The Construction agency taking the lead on the project was 17 CS with 22 CR personnel under command.

105 CS provided a significant contribution to this task. The CO 22 CR, LTCOL Bill Van Ree, appointed CAPT Tipton as the detachment commander and charged him with the responsibility of putting together a team with the required skills. CAPT Tipton completed a reconnaissance in April 2003 to confirm the scope of works, with the first rotation deployed on 7 Jul 2003.

2006 Bushfire Support - ERICA

After deploying to Tasmania (Buckland Military Training area and Stoney Head) as part of the 22nd CR AFX in 2005, Captain Noel Tipton recalls that in late 2006,

"As the unit was preparing to stand down for the year the call came once again to support the State government with bushfire relief. This time the location was Erica and the usual suspects from 105 CS volunteered again. I had Christmas at home and deployed late in December".

The support continued over December and into early 2007, this force was known as the **4th Brigade Engineer Support Group** and eventually consisted of members from 22 CR, 4 CER, 8 CER, 13 FD SQN and elements of 9FSB.

2009 Bushfire Assistance (BLACK SATURDAY) - BROADFORD

By 2009, the apparent three year call out was anticipated by most members of the unit. Captain Noel Tipton again provides a detailed recollection.

"Most of 105 CS was ready to go and I was sitting on my back veranda with my gear packed. It was early Sunday morning (8 Feb 2009) when the phone rang. I was told to report to HQ 4 BDE at Simpson Barracks. I arrived within two hours and meet up with 22 CR RSM, WO1 Stewart Rutledge, and a detachment from 108 SIG SQN.

LTCOL Campbell Smith, the CO of 22 CR, asked the 4th Brigade Operations Cell (BDE OPS) to provide details of the mission. Once again, I was to command the first rotation. After a slight delay, I was told to "head north, find the fire, and do good things!"

Luckily, Captain Scott D' Rosario, a Policeman, who later served in the UN Peacekeeping mission in Southern Sudan and as CO 22 ER, was there and gave me a detailed list of his police connections in

the fire affected areas.

After contacting the Senior Police Sergeant at Kilmore and being directed to the Incident Control Centre (ICC) where the emergency response was coordinated, I selected the State Motorcycle complex at Broadford as the main staging area, with the rest of the troops arriving over the next 24 hours.

The first 48 hours provided some interesting moments. CPL Vic Morrow informed me on day one that SPR Harrington was probably dead as he rolled the 155 Komatsu dozer backing it off the Transporter (S'liner). I asked him to confirm the soldier's condition to which he replied after checking, that he had in fact, only bruised his leg!

The dozer was rolled back on its tracks and declared battle worthy. Work continued. A huge amount of work was done by the 105 CS Planties (Plant Operators) in the construction of many kilometres of containment lines. The CE's (Combat Engineers) were invaluable in the removal of dangerous trees and gaining access into fire affected areas to allow searchers to identify casualties".

2010 Construction in the Desert - PUKATJA

Reserve construction sappers were becoming an increasingly valuable resource for the ADF. Noel explains:

"Some interesting events would help shape 105 CS into the future including CAPT Russell Collins (future OC 105 CS and CO 22 ER) returning from East Timor. He took up the role of ADJT 22 CR. WO2 Gary Lewis from 203 WKS was also in East Timor. The Regular Army were continually looking for more Army Reserve assistance on overseas operations.

105 CS had just finished the construction of a Lysaght Hangar for the School of Armour Museum and was setting out the footing for the new Lysaght Hangar in the Engineer Compound (both big jobs).

The previous year permission had been given for 22 CR to take on a discrete works component of AACAP 2010 at Pukatja in SA. Pukatja was a remote community five hours drive south into the desert from Alice Springs. Unlike previous AACAPS, where the support was restricted to the delivery phase only, this AACAP involved the complete user



Nearly done: Sappers add cladding to a building in Pukatja in South Australia.

requirement development, design, and procurement of all materials. 203 Works Section (203 Works) completed this phase with great assistance from 105 CS in the period prior to deployment."

The Construction task for AACAP 2010 was successfully completed by the composite troop mainly consisting of members from 105 CS. Tasks included the complete reconstruction of the football oval including two steel grandstands on each wing, repairs to the school canteen, shade shelters around the school yard and many minor improvements in the general community.



A footy match under way at the Pukatja

21 CS hosted the Victorian sappers at their construction camp just out of town and the OC 21 CS was most impressed with the standard and amount of work completed.

Some of CAPT Noel Tipton's many recollections of the trip include:

"The freezing conditions overnight in the desert had not been anticipated by any of the soldiers. I had placed approximately 20 woollen blankets in one of the shipping containers as a back-up for those who were under prepared. These were in high demand after the first night in camp."

2011 Simpson Barracks and Puckapunyal.

Main tasks for the year included the completion of an access road for the Australian Army Band Melbourne (AABM) at Simpson Barracks, the portal frame erection and roof completion of a Lysaght in the Engineer Compound and the construction of



The Lysaght under construction at Puckapunyal.

an access road from the rock quarry to the borrow pit at Grenade Range 3 at Puckapunyal. A very Young LT Alex Kocovski was one of the young Officers from 105 CS supervising the task and he



wrote an article which appeared in *Sapper Magazine* the following year.

The plant operators of 105 CS received great experience working on both the AABM road and the access road to the quarry.

The end of the year saw the team, selected to deploy to East Timor in 2012, complete the construction of two buildings in the engineer compound as part of their mission rehearsal exercise (MRE). The buildings were named the *Timor Huts*.

2012 TIMOR LESTE – More Construction

CAPT Tipton recalls,

“Unknown to the team who deployed to Timor in early 2012, was the fact that I had been selected in late 2011 to also deploy in 2012. I arrived in time to work for a short time with the team they would be replacing and got to work again with CPL Chris Gray (105 CPL C&J). It was much to the new team’s surprise to be informed that, although under command ANZAC COY, they would be working daily for a Captain Tipton - the Force Engineer”.

The members in the team included some from 4 CER and from 105 CS. A great book was put together by the team and a copy remains at Oakleigh barracks in the combined mess.



Opening the AABM road at Watsonia

Whilst we were away the COMD 4 BDE officially opened the AABM road at Watsonia.

Noel describes the second half of the year:

“We saw a “Renovation Rescue” style upgrade of the HQ building at the Mill Site (Engineer Compound). The work was completed over a compressed 72-hour window which saw the tradespeople of 105 CS come up with some interesting solutions to complete the work within the allocated timeframe.

A wet and windy weekend saw the Squadron complete the construction of a new cricket pitch for the cricket club at Puckapunyal. The initial excavation was filled with water and some interesting drainage solutions were required to enable the concrete to be poured. I remember putting on my nail bag and using some young combat engineers to help me complete the formwork under lights. I was in 203 Works Section then as a Project Engineer (PE).

2013 Last Year as a Construction Regiment

2013 was a significant year in the history of 105 CS. It was to be the last year as part of 22 CR before being incorporated into 22 Engineer Regiment (22 ER). MAJ Scott D’Rozario (OC 105 CS) wrote an excellent article for the Australian *Sapper Magazine* summarising the year.

Tasks this year included the complete refurbishment of the classification range at Puckapunyal at short notice for AASAM (Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting). The B vehicle sneaker range was constructed at Puckapunyal for the Directorate of Training Area Management (DOTAM) plus the construction of a huge 30m long triple storey rock gabion blast wall at grenade range two. In addition, a new toilet block was built for the Engineer Compound to replace the old, corrugated iron (CGI) version that had been used for ever.

The end of this year was quite poignant for Noel, knowing that 22 CR would cease to exist, with 22 ER taking over as at Jan 2014. The good news was that 105 CS would continue as a subunit of 22 ER and be involved with some excellent construction work planned for South Bandiana in 2014.

Noel had served as a Reserve Sapper since 1996. His skill, knowledge and depth of experience had mentored many emerging young sappers and officers. This gave them invaluable learning experiences on real projects and live operations. This created and moulded a whole generation of future sapper leaders.

Captain Noel Tipton gave realistic and accurate advice, not only upwards via the chain of command, but his wise *construction sapper* advice was highly sought after throughout the whole ADF.

2014 The Amalgamation – 22 Engineer Regiment

4 CER and 22 CR amalgamated at a parade at Watsonia Barracks in December 2013 to become the 22nd Engineer Regiment (Victoria's Own Sappers). Sub-units of the newly formed regiment included 8th and 10th Combat Engineer Squadrons, 105th Construction Squadron and 203rd Works Section.



4CER on the left, 22CR on the right at the amalgamation parade at Watsonia barracks, 2013.

Noel's military journey would continue through the next ten years, facing fire, flood and pandemic, and reaching a significant milestone in 2023, when he completed his 50th year of service with the RAE.

PRESENTATION OF 3RD FEDERATION STAR TO CAPT NOEL TIPTON.

On 13th October 2023 several members of the RAE Association (Vic) Inc., were honoured to be invited to attend Oakleigh Barracks to witness Noel Tipton be presented with his 3rd Federation Star by the Chief of Army (LTGEN Simon Stuart, AO, DSC). Accompanying LTGEN Stuart was the Regimental Sergeant Major Army Kim Felmingham, NSC, OAM.

Joining Noel to acknowledge his 50 years of service to Defence were his wife (Maria) and family along with a large contingent from the Regiment. Also in attendance was Commander 4th Brigade (BRIG Michelle Campbell and WO1 Tony Lynch (RSM 4th Brigade).

A wonderful gesture on behalf of the Sappers of the Regiment was a presentation, made to Noel by CPL Trent Rosenberg, of a specially prepared gift box of whisky. The outside of the box featured full details of Noel's postings, promotions, awards, deployments and other relevant information.

Much has been said about Noel and his contribution,

and his experience and knowledge will be difficult to replace. However, as he acknowledges, his time has come to move on. What made this even more of a special occasion was with the Chief of Army making the trip to personally make this very important award to Noel, along with the outstanding presentation from the soldiers of the Regiment which just reinforces the very high respect, regard and admiration that Noel is held in.

It is certain that Noel will not be lost to the RAE and we will continue to see his smiling face from time to time. Noel has indicated that he now may be able to provide some time to the Association and if this is the case we will jump at his kind offer and welcome him with open arms.

Thank you Noel for your contribution to your country, Defence and the Corps of the Royal Australian Engineers and also to your family for allowing you to be part of our family.

Enjoy your retirement.



Noel with his family.



CAPT Tipton with CPL Rosenberg and LTCOL Scott D’Rosario.



Chief of Army LTGEN Simon Stuart, AO, DSC with CAPT Tipton and his wife Maria.



CAPT Tipton with LTGEN Stuart and WO1 Felmingham



LTGEN STUART inspects the Clasp Knife collection.



Chief of Army discusses the memorabilia collection with Curator Mel Constable and Secretary Jim Davis.



A total of more than 80 people attended the presentation at Oakleigh Barracks.

LEGACY LONE PINE PROGRAM

by Major (Ret'd) John Bitcon,

The Legacy Lone Pine Program is about maintaining the proud Anzac tradition and honouring the courage and sacrifice of the Anzacs who fought at Gallipoli through the production and distribution of *Pinus brutia* seedlings that are descended from the original Lone Pine at Gallipoli. This Program is led and administered by Major (Ret'd) John Bitcon, RAE.

Back in August 1915 a single Turkish Pine (known as the Lone Pine) high on 400 Plateau (named for its height above sea level) on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey witnessed some of the fiercest fighting of World War 1. Australian and New Zealand troops attempted to gain control of the Turkish trenches under heavy machine gun and artillery fire. By engaging in brutal hand-to-hand combat they accomplished their mission, but at great cost.

The fighting continued for four days and the six Australian battalions involved lost 2197 men and 80 officers. Between 5,000 and 6,000 Turks were killed in action. There was much heroism on both sides and seven Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australian soldiers.



Photo #1 – The Original Lone Pine on Plateau 400 at Gallipoli (photo taken in 1915)

The Turkish pine tree on 400 Plateau (*Pinus brutia*, also known as a Calabrian Pine, East Mediterranean Pine and Brutia Pine) was destroyed in the fighting but Private (as he was then) Keith McDowell from Wonthaggi, a soldier of the 23rd Battalion, souvenired a cone

from the remains of the 'Lone Pine' and carried it in his haversack until he was sent home due to ill health in October 1916. It wasn't until the late 1920's that he gave the cone to his wife's aunt Mrs Emma Gray of Grassmere (near Warrnambool), who was a keen and proficient gardener and a few years later successfully propagated four seedlings.

The significance of these four seedlings has proved to be substantial and profound.



Photo #2 – Lone Pine at Melbourne's Wattle Park (photo taken in 2021)

The first seedling was planted by the Mayors of Box Hill and Camberwell at Melbourne's Wattle Park on the occasion of the 24th Battalion's Trooping of the Colour on 7th May 1933.



Photo #3 – Lone Pine at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance
(photo taken in 2009)

The second seedling was planted six weeks later on 11th June 1933 at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance by Mrs Gray in honour of the 24th Infantry Battalion with full military honours.

Unfortunately, this tree subsequently contracted a fungal infection known as *Diplodia pinea* (more commonly known as 'blue stains fungus') about 75 years later and had to be cut down and removed on 15 August 2012. A replacement juvenile tree was planted in close proximity to where the original tree stood on 21 April 2017.

The third seedling was planted at the 'The Sisters' Memorial Hall, Terang (near Warrnambool) on 18th June 1933 on a post-WW1 soldier settlement owned by Emma Gray's son, Verner. The fourth seedling was planted in Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as part of a dedication service on the 21st of January 1934.

In 1964 Warrnambool Legacy proposed that Lone Pine seedlings be raised for the 50th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign and planted around Australia in memory of those who paid the supreme sacrifice at the Battle of Lone Pine. The Shrine of Remembrance Trustees gave permission for cones to be taken from the tree planted by Mrs Gray in 1933. From these cones, approximately 150 seedlings were successfully propagated and subsequently planted at various schools, RSL clubs and memorial parks. In 2013 and 2014 more cones were collected from this tree to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign in 2015. This could not have been done without the invaluable assistance of the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture (now the Burnley Campus of The University of Melbourne) which continues to support Legacy's Lone Pine Program to this very day.



Photo #4 – Keith McDowell after his return from the Western Front.



Photo #5 – Mrs Emma Gray of Grassmere

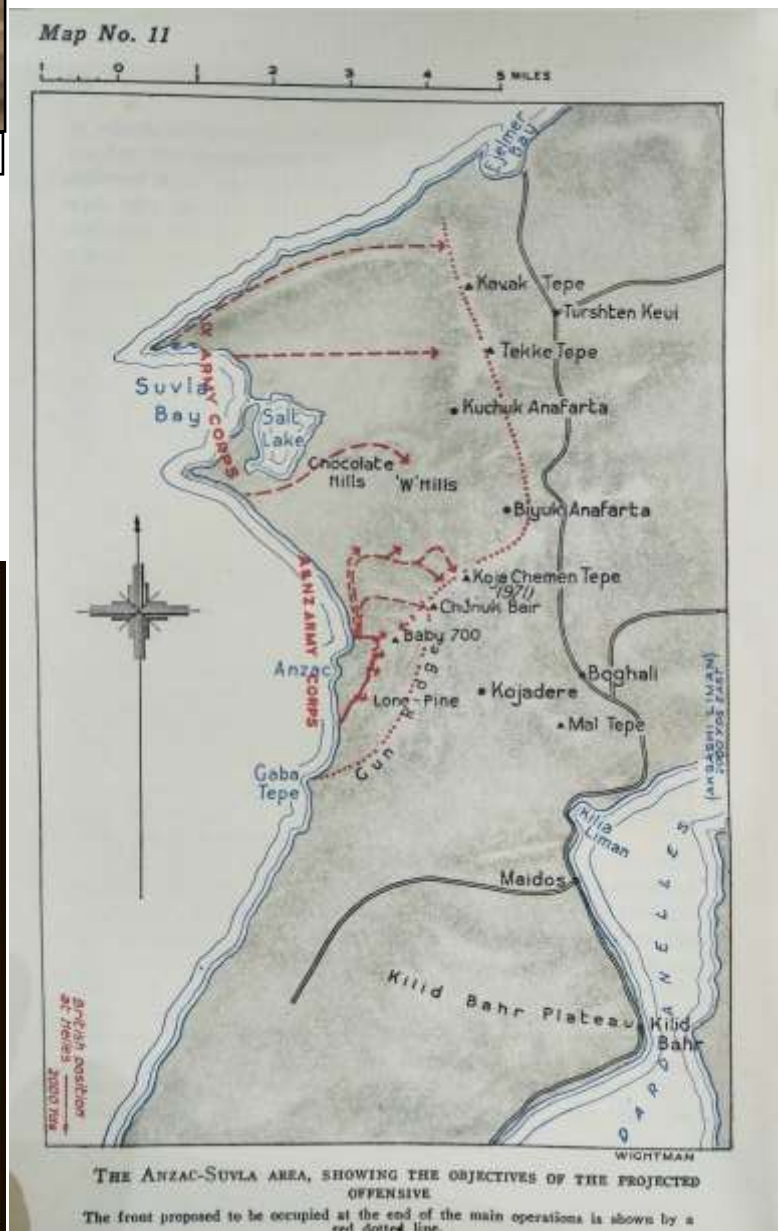
Right: Charles Bean's map of the proposed offensive on August 6, which included Lone Pine. Lone Pine is in the centre of the map. The dotted line shows the objective to be attained.

Below: Lone Pine Cemetery at Gallipoli.



From time to time, young Lone Pine trees are presented by Melbourne Legacy to various schools as well as government, community and ex-service organisations in the hope that they will be cherished as a tangible and living symbol of courage and sacrifice. By continuing to make these presentations, Legacy is helping to keep the memory of the Battle of Lone Pine and the Gallipoli Campaign alive, particularly for the benefit of future generations.

Should any member of the Sapper Community become aware of any school, local government authority or community organisation expressing interest in acquiring a Lone Pine seedling free of charge, it is requested that they please contact John Bitcon (igbitcon@gmail.com) in the first instance.



REMEMBRANCE DAY AND THE POPPY FACTORY

Adapted from the newsletter of the Croydon Military History Group.

November 11 is Remembrance Day.

This is not an Australian day of remembrance, but a day of Remembrance for all Commonwealth nations that was instituted in 1919. In the UK they still have November 11 as Remembrance Day, but on the nearest Sunday they also have Remembrance Sunday, and it is on this Sunday that they have the 2 minute silence at 11am.



In 1920 two British majors, George Howson MC and Jack Cohen MP got a grant of 2000 pounds from the British Legion to employ disabled ex-servicemen. It was a lot of money back then, but they obviously had a huge number of disabled veterans. The majors set up in an old collar factory and soon employed 50 men making remembrance poppies. In 1924 alone they made 27 million! Two years later they outgrew the collar factory and moved into an old brewery in Richmond, London.

In 1933 they were going strong and the brewery was demolished and replaced with the current building (see below).

As well as wreaths for ceremonies they also make the pin badges, and the small Royal British Legion wooden crosses that are common in the UK.



The success of the London enterprise inspired Lady Haig, wife of Field Marshall Douglas Haig to be the driving force behind the establishment of a similar poppy factory in Edinburgh, Scotland. In recent times the disabled ex-servicemen from the Scottish factory have made up to 5 million poppy badges a year, as well as wreaths and other products.



Australian connections:

George Howson was awarded the Military Cross for his actions at the Battle of Passchendaele. He later married Jessie Gibson, whose father owned the Foy & Gibson department stores in Australia. Their son Peter Howson later became an Australian Government minister in the 1960s and 70s.

Jack Cohen was a British Conservative politician, but both his grandfathers were Australian. He was wounded at the Third Battle of Ypres and had both legs amputated above the knee. He became a lifelong campaigner for the rights of the disabled.

REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATIONS 2023

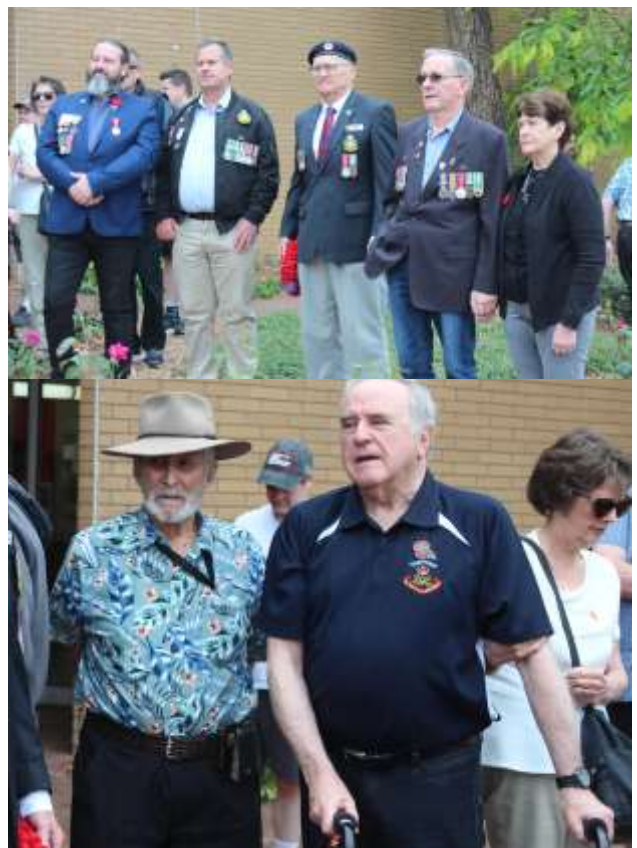
Association members attended several Remembrance Day ceremonies this year. Our President Don Hughes was at Warrandyte RSL (with Zeus, of course), where they were joined by the Warrandyte RSL President David (Rhino) Ryan and RSL Chaplain Madre Kirsten Linden. The Catafalque party was provided by 22 Engineer Regiment.



22ER also provided the ceremonial party for the service at the Ringwood Memorial Clock-tower, where Jock Howatt and Kevin Moss laid a wreath.



Croydon War Memorial was recently relocated from the Croydon Road roundabout to its new site in Civic Square, close to the Library. 2023 was the first ceremony held at the new location, and the crowd in attendance there was estimated at around 250, including several Association members. A wreath was laid by Michael Potts on behalf of the Association.





Air Cadets formed the Catafalque party at the Croydon War Memorial.



Scouts pay their respects.

Details of the relocation process available [HERE](#).

VISIT BY COMMANDER 4th BRIGADE.



The RAE Association has always enjoyed a close working relationship with the 22nd Engineer Regiment. The CO (LTCOL Scott D’Rozario) and the RSM (WO1 Tom Jesser) arranged for the Commander 4th Brigade (BRIG Michelle Campbell) and the RSM 4th Brigade (WO1 Tony Lynch) to visit the Ringwood East depot and spend time with Don Hughes, Jim Davis and Zeus.

The visit provided the Association with an exceptional opportunity to meet with Victoria’s senior soldier and acquaint BRIG Campbell with the Association’s activities, vision and objectives.

We discussed the Association’s goals, specifically, to attract younger serving sappers and to have the Association viewed as an ongoing support resource to the Regiment. Additionally, we discussed the challenges faced by many associations including ours with establishing memorabilia rooms that are accessible to the public.

SIR CLIVE STEELE LECTURE – 2023

13 October at Oakleigh Barracks

By Jim Davis

Hosted by the Commanding Officer (CO) 22nd Engineer Regiment – LTCOL Scott D’Rozario, the 2023 Sir Clive Steele Lecture was held on 13th October at Oakleigh Barracks. The principal organiser was MAJ Laura Cook who brought together the night, arranged the presenters and the supper.

The Sir Clive Steele lecture has been conducted for approximately 30 years and was originally raised as a forum to bring together the RAE components here in Victoria to discuss developments within the Corps. Developed as a forum for OFFR/WO/SNCO training, there were also times when likeminded civilian engineers were also invited. Organisers have arranged both military and civilian engineers to present on topics of interest and value to the RAE community. It is an important event on the Engineer calendar giving the CO the opportunity of bringing together a selection of presenters to inform serving and retired members on developments and updates from within the Regiment and the Corps.

This year’s lecture was open to all ranks bringing together about 50 serving and retired Sappers to experience presentations by two current serving members of the Regiment (105 Construction Squadron) on their recent experiences of deployment.

The presentation commenced with the OC of 105 CONST SQN (MAJ Astrid Hagqvist) giving an overview of the theatre of operations within the Pacific and Australia and the value and importance that the Government places on stability within the region to the North of Australia. MAJ Hagqvist indicated the many areas that the RAE is currently deployed to, or involved with, and in addition showed the vast areas of the responsibility that the Pilbara Regiment, North force and 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment (51 FNQR) have.

CAPT Kelly Williams (SQN 2IC) then went on to talk about her deployment in 2022 to Thursday Island attached to 51 FNQR as Watch Keeper and part of OP Resolute (JTF 639), and her role and responsibilities within the Task Force. Kelly covered some very interesting historical details about the Battalion including its establishment, composition (mainly Tiwi Islanders and Indigenous Australians), role, locations and involvement in the defence of Northern Australia – we think we do it tough down here in Victoria but these indigenous soldiers are remarkable and a wonderful credit to the De-

fence Force. Kelly provided a slide show showing a variety of features associated with her two month deployment and mentioned that as part of her community involvement she used to walk dogs including one called “Arlo” who is now a resident of Victoria and adopted by Kelly.

Next presenter was WO2 Scott White (203 WKS Cell) who spoke about his deployment during Feb-May 2023 as part of 19 CE Works for the Cook and Tiroas Barracks redevelopment in Vanuatu. Vanuatu is an island group in the Southern Pacific Ocean and this project, which is being funded by the Australian Government, was originally considered in 2018. The project involves upgraded facilities which will support the Vanuatu Police Force’s growth and operational capability. Along with much improved facilities a key objective of the Cook Barracks and Tiroas Barracks redevelopment is to bolster local industry and boost commercial activity that will stimulate Vanuatu’s economy. Scott pointed out how the overall costs of this project impacts as a total of the Islands GDP against other countries and it is significant. Scott provided a very detailed presentation on his role as a Works Supervisor and the value that Defence are providing to the project including substantial training that is being provided to the local residents. Not long after his arrival in the area it was battered by two category 4 and 5 hurricanes (within 3 days of each other) which had a major impact on work as raw materials (mainly iron) identified and imported from Australia had to be diverted away from the barracks project to repair the badly damaged Islands infrastructure.

In summary, as a retired sapper, I am always amazed at the depth of knowledge and experience that the members of the Regiment display and tonight was no exception. I was very honoured and proud to be part of their audience. Both presenters were very professional and well versed in their subject, keeping the audience captivated throughout the presentation.

The evening concluded with supper and fellowship in the Combined Mess and Mud Club with the RAE Association (Vic) Inc. (on behalf of the Southern Region Corps Committee (SRCC)) providing the supper. Special thanks must go to MAJ Cook for her work in arranging the wonderful spread and successful night and the retired sappers some of who travelled long distances to attend.

22 ENGINEER REGIMENT

CHANGE OF COMMAND PARADE AND EOY BBQ

For most of the Regiment the 03rd December 2023 was the final parade of the year and to acknowledge the efforts of the members the day included farewells, promotions, awards and the changeover of CO's – after 3 years at the helm we are saying goodbye to LTCOL Scott D'Rozario and hello to LTCOL Russell Collins.



In view of the promotions the day was opened to family and friends and there was a large public contingent there to watch the proceedings. For many of those being promoted family members were given the honour of completing the promotion ritual. For instance LT Cindy Nguyen (being promoted to CAPT) had 14 members of her family in attendance.



Being a family day there was a jumping castle along with displays of vehicles and equipment. To add to the day the RAE Association was in-

vited by the CO to provide a BBQ. This invitation offered the Association the opportunity to be at the forefront and again show the Sappers and their families and friends that we are here to assist. The Association provided a great crew of workers which included Don Hughes (& Zeus), Michael Potts, Kevin Moss, Eric (Jock) Howatt and Tony Jackson.



Mel Constable was also in attendance and opened the Engineer Room. Jim Davis was, as always, very busy taking photos.

The morning commenced early with the RSM calling the parade on at 9.35 am. On behalf of the Regiment the Association provided the annual awards for the following members:



SPR Robyn Baddock: most outstanding sapper



LCPL Kate Moyle: most outstanding JNCO
LT Michael Plant: most outstanding junior Offr.

Regrettably, due to other commitments and duty, Kate and Michael were not in attendance so it was only Robyn who received her award – we will have to catch up with the others in 2024. On behalf of the Regiment Don made the presentation to Robyn.

Following the formalities of the parade it was time to eat and enjoy the day – now the plan was to be eating around noon but with the parade finishing at 10.30 am there were a lot of people looking for an early lunch. This certainly put the cooks under pressure however, being true Sappers, the cooks pulled out all stops to make sure that the hungry crowd was fed early, and in fact cooking finished around 1.00 pm (much earlier than anticipated). At the start there were certainly some hungry people but everybody went away satisfied .



This parade was very significant in that it was the last formal parade that CAPT Noel Tipton



will take part in, as he is retiring from Defence after 50 years' service – Noel even had the opportunity of using the sword that was presented to him by the Regiment members.

Noel will be missed.



Following the formal parade there were several presentations made including by the outgoing CO (LTCOL Scott D'Rozario) who presented 3 murals depicting a platypus (by an Aboriginal artist) with each of the depots to receive one each.



Jock Howatt, representing the Royal Children's Hospital, made 2 presentations to the CO and the Regiment acknowledging the wonderful support that the Regiment has provided over 35 years, along with the substantial amount of money that has been raised.

There were several promotions and awards made as follows:

Promotions:



PTE Jacqueline Matters to LCPL
and SPR Robyn Baddock to LCPL



LCPL Timothy Bowden to CPL



LT Cindy Nguyen to CAPT



LT Mark Jakubowicz to CAPT



LT Gordon Fisher to CAPT



LT Michael Plant to CAPT
(not present on day)



Lt Ogi Jovanovic to CAPT

Awards:

Soldiers Medallion for Exemplary Service:



LCPL Trevor Mays



CPL Daniel Killey

Army Bronze Level Commendation:



SGT Rob Camilleri

Army Silver Level Commendation



CAPT Noel Tipton





Thank you to the CO and RSM for allowing the RAE Association to assist and for giving us the chance to show our faces to the many new people of the Regiment. The Association is here to help and support the Regiment at any time. Special thanks must go to Michael Potts for his organisation skills with the BBQ,

and to his hard working team of experienced barbecuers: Kevin Moss, Eric (Jock) Howatt, Tony Jackson and Don Hughes with the ever efficient Food Detection Dog Zeus.



The slouch hat is an object strongly associated with Australian identity. The word 'slouch' refers to the sloping brim. The hat is made from rabbit-fur felt or wool felt and is always worn with a puggaree. The Army refers to the slouch hat by its official designation - hat khaki fur felt (KFF).

The slouch hat became a famous symbol of the Australian fighting man during World War One and continued to be worn throughout World War Two. Its use since that time has made it a national symbol.

The origins of the slouch hat began with the Victorian Mounted Rifles in 1885. The Victorian hat was an ordinary bush felt hat turned up on the right side to ensure it would not be caught during the drill movement of 'shoulder arms' from 'order arms'.

By 1890, State military commandants had agreed that all Australian forces, except the artillery corps, should wear a looped-up hat of uniform pattern. The hat was turned up on the right side in Victoria and Tasmania, and on the left side in all other States to allow for different drill movements.

The Slouch Hat became standard issue headdress in 1903 and its brim position was mostly standardised.

General Bridges, the first commander of the 1st Australian Imperial Force, (and formerly the first Commandant at RMC Duntroon) was found wearing his slouch hat reversed and the brim down when he was fatally wounded at Gallipoli. As a mark of respect and remembrance for Bridges, when the slouch hat is worn at Duntroon, it has become traditional to wear the chinstrap buckle on the right side of the face and the brim down. This tradition commenced at the Royal Military College in 1932.

Today, Army members wear the slouch hat with the brim down to provide additional protection from the sun when not performing ceremonial duties.

Other branches of the services wear similar felt hats, but without the side turned up.

The Puggaree The term 'puggaree' originates from the Hindu word 'pagri', meaning a turban or thin scarf of muslin. During World War One, a plain khaki cloth band was worn and this practice continued until 1929. In 1930, new puggarees were issued to the Commonwealth Military Force with different coloured folds denoting Arm or Service.

During World War Two, a flat band was issued. Troops who were on active service in the Middle East introduced a folded puggaree as a distinguishing mark of active service.

Later, the Army reverted to various types of plain bands for jungle warfare, however, the official puggaree at the conclusion of World War Two was still the flat band. The current puggaree has seven pleats, one for each state and one for the Australian Territories. It is made from light khaki coloured cotton and is worn on the slouch hat with a unit colour patch sewn on the right side. There are variants for: 1 RAR (olive drab puggaree), Armoured Corps (Emu feathers) and RMC Duntroon (eight pleats in the puggaree).

HEIDELBERG REPATRIATION HOSPITAL VISIT

14th September 2023

Through the personal efforts and endeavours of Don Hughes, a visit to the Repatriation Hospital ("The Repat") was arranged for the 14th September. Don is an avid supporter of The Repat and was anxious for the Association to make a further visit to this outstanding institution. Don does a lot of volunteer work for the Repat. The day was important too as it was Peacekeepers Day and "are you OK day (RUOK)"

The Repat Hospital sits on about 50 acres of land in Heidelberg and from the outside it is impossible to understand the significance of these wonderful facilities and grounds or the invaluable work done there. It is part of the Austin Group of hospitals.

We gathered for a lovely morning tea and received a brief from Don Hughes and Rob Winther on the day and a summary of what the excursion would involve. Rob read out a very touching tribute which was penned by Don. Also helping us with the excursion was Helen (mobility driver), Michael Mosley (Vietnam Veteran and volunteer) along with Jude and Lesley. I cannot speak highly enough of these workers who are a credit to the hospital and so dedicated and passionate about their "Repat".



Rob Winther, recently awarded for his 50 years service at the Repat.

I particularly want to mention Rob Winther who was the principal guide for our tour and along with Don responsible for coordinating and bringing the day together. Rob is a 50-year veteran of the Repat and his obvious knowledge and understanding of the hospital and its facilities is amazing.



The tour started with a visit the memorial gardens, dedicated to the Nurses who lost their lives in Malaya and in the sinking of the hospital ship "Centaur", and at each point we were provided with its history, significance and on-going plans.



The Chapel was our next area of interest. This Chapel is just outstanding and must be visited to really appreciate it. Beautifully rendered painted glass windows feature reproductions

of photographs and documents relating to the Repat and its many patients.



Details (above and left) of the painted windows at the chapel.

Without doubt a highlight of this tour was a visit to Sappers Lane which was instigated and developed through the efforts of Don and supported by 22nd Engineer Regiment. A large rock at the start of the roadway acknowledges the RAE Association, and another details "what is a Sapper". I am not aware of any other roads within the Repat complex dedicated or named after other Corps and this is a real achievement for Don.

Due to the number undertaking the tour it was not possible to physically visit Ward 17 but we went to the front door of the building where there are a number of plaques and in particular one acknowledging the



The Memorials at Sappers Lane

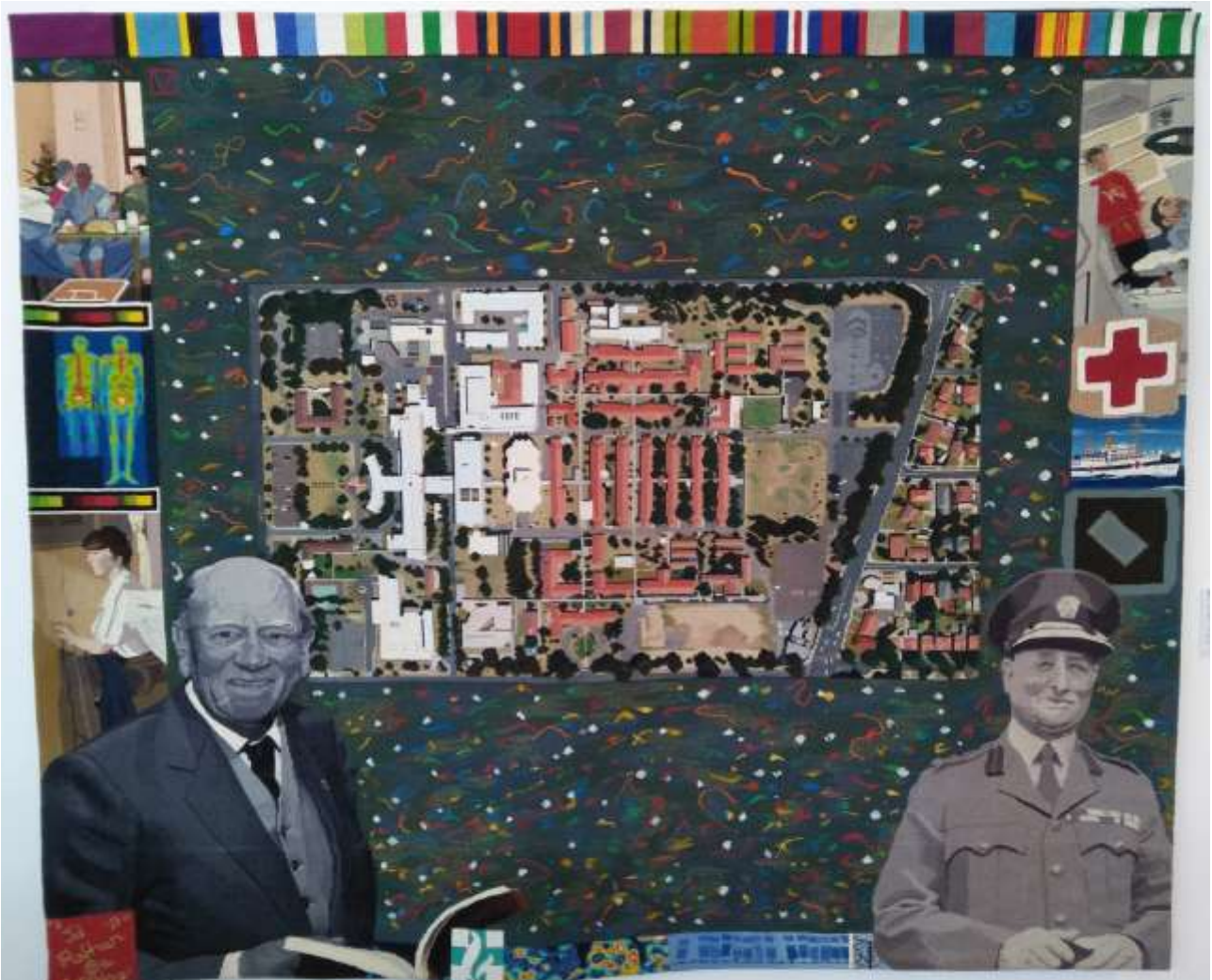
"Peacekeepers and Peacemakers" (Don was responsible for having this plaque produced and installed) and with it being their day Don laid a wreath to commemorate all Peacekeepers. We visited the gym and a couple of other monuments around the site.

Following the excursion we returned to the start point where we enjoyed a light lunch and were given the opportunity to re-visit any points of interest.

This report does not really do full justice to the wonderful work of the Repat or its army of volunteers.



The Gallipoli Touchstone at the Chapel exit.



The tapestry in the Duckboard Function Centre (above)
and another view of the Chapel windows (below).



SUBMARINE MINING IN THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIAL AND COMMONWEALTH ARMIES

Dr J.K. Haken

Naval Historical Society of Australia

Mines and submarine mining are always associated with the Navy, but internationally and locally the early development was with the Army Engineers.

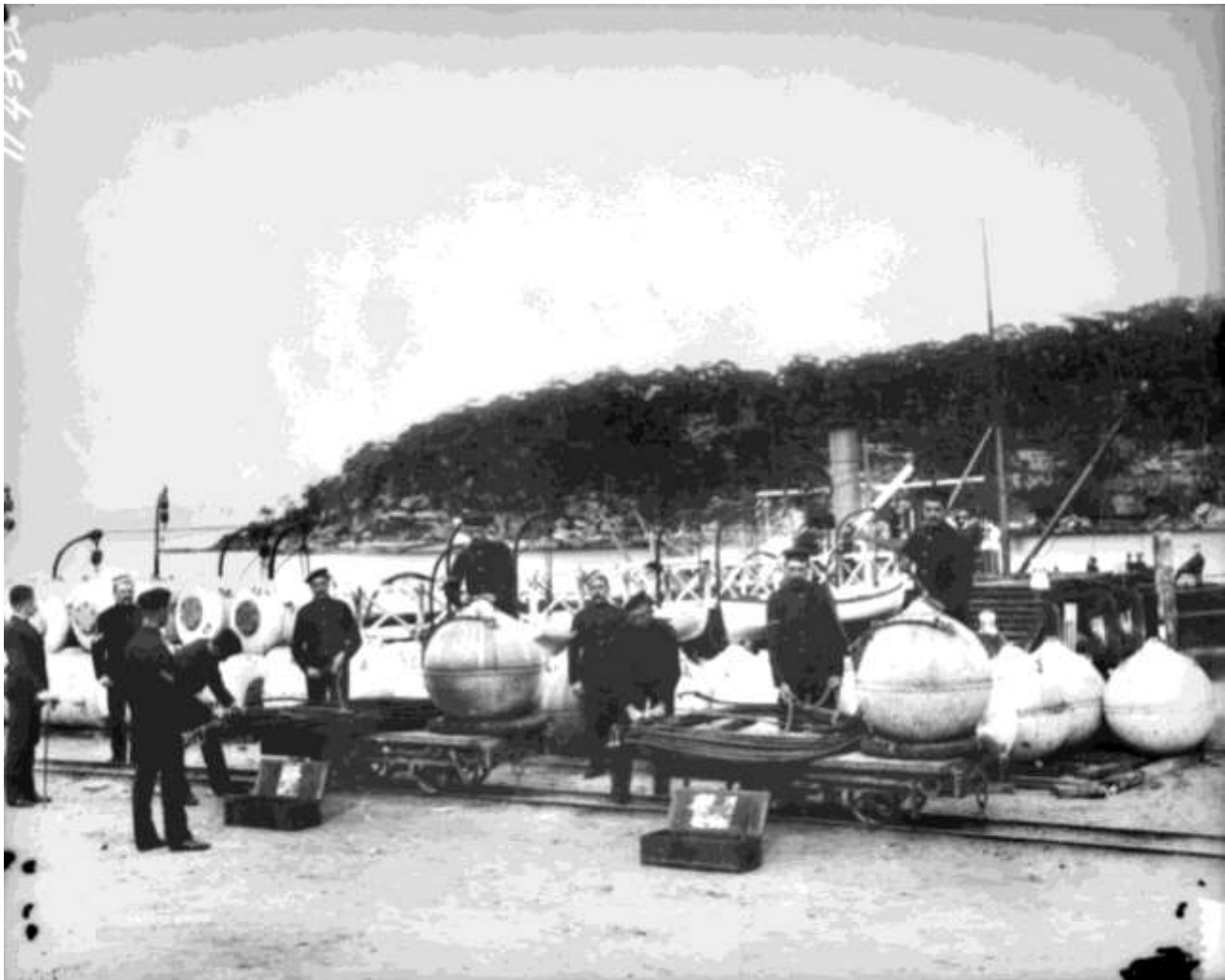
Mines and underwater explosives were developed by the ancient Chinese, but in 1812 Paul Shilling, a Russian engineer, exploded an underwater mine electrically. This formed the basis of submarine mining, where mines protect harbours against attack. British Army staff including Engineers filled many roles in the Colonies and more than half a century passed before local troops eventuated. Victoria was the first of the Australian Colonies to raise an Engineer Corps¹. Rules and Regulations for the Victorian Volunteer Engineers were signed on 9 March 1861 and a Torpedo and Signalling Corps was formed in 1870. The volunteer section was disbanded in July 1882 but the permanent section remained, known as the Permanent Section, Torpedo Corps and later as the Permanent Section, Submarine Miners. In 1886 the Torpedo Corps was renamed the Submarine Miners and was combined with the Engineers².

In New South Wales Engineers were formed on 28 December 1870³. The Torpedo and Signalling Corps was formed in 1873 and was the sixth Company of the NSW Naval Brigade commanded by E.C. Cracknell who transferred to the NSW Military Forces on 8 October 1877⁴. In 1882 part of the Torpedo and Signalling Corps was re-designated as NSW Submarine Miners and became part of the Engineer Corps. At Federation the Submarine miners were No 3 company NSW Engineer Corps⁵. The greatest military disaster that had been experienced at the time occurred on 3 April 1891, when at an official demonstration a fatal explosion resulted in the deaths of four men. A mistake by an experienced RE NCO (on loan to the Colony) resulted in the destruction of the rowing craft and

of nine other boats tethered alongside.

In 1877 a company of Engineers formed in Queensland and disbanded in 1893 before reforming in 1899 as the Brisbane Company of Submarine Miners⁵. In Victoria the Company was located at Swan Island, in New South Wales initially at Berry's Bay and subsequently at Chowder Bay. Chowder Bay remains a military site. Both Swan Island and Chowder Bay are heritage listed. After Federation, the Australian Corps of Engineers was formed on 1 July 1902⁶ and the Submarine Miners consisted of No 1 Company Submarine Miners formerly No 3 Company NSW Corps of Engineers⁷, No 2 Company formed from Field and Submarine Companies, Victorian Engineers^{7,8} and No 3 Company Submarine Miners formerly Brisbane Company of Submarine Miners. No 3 Company was short lived, disbanding in 1909⁹.

In 1912¹⁰ the Engineer Forces were reorganised and many amalgamations occurred. 37 Engineers (Submarine Mining Company) was formed from No 1 Submarine Company while 38 Engineers (Submarine Mining Company) evolved from No 2 Submarine Mining Company. 37 Engineers (Submarine Mining Company) became 37 Engineers (Fortress Company). With reorganisation on 1 July 1913 the name was changed to 37 Fortress Company Engineers¹¹. The Company was assigned to fixed defence on 31 March 1921¹². The 38 Engineer (Submarine Mining) Company became 38 Fortress Company Engineers on 1 July 1913¹¹, it also being assigned to fixed defence in 1921¹². Lieut. Gen. Sir Cyril Brudenell White, the Chief of the General Staff, decided that the submarine mining technique was obsolete¹³ and subsequently all mining activities were transferred to the Royal Australian Navy in August 1922¹⁴.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A04386

SUBMARINE MINING AT CHOWDER BAY ca1890—AWM.

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KOREAN CHALLENGE: By Don Hughes

Often referred to as the “*Forgotten War*”, the Korean conflict (1950-53) was caused by both local issues and tensions amongst the great powers.

Despite 70 years, Korea remains a divided country.

Small numbers of Australians continue to participate in this United Nations Command (UNC) mission including within the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea.

A Gruelling Conflict

Not long after the end of World War II, this conventional, gruelling, and limited war (centred along the 38th Parallel) saw thousands of young Australians deploy into combat operations.

Against a skilful, courageous, and numerically superior enemy, their exploits at the battles of *Kapyong (Gapyeong)* and *Maryang San* were

epic.

The United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) was established at the end of the Korean War in July 1953. Originally, 6 members of the Australian armed forces served in this mission.

The Australian contribution is enduring with personnel committed to the UNC mission, and additional personnel supporting training and operations such as Operation Linesman. A total of 68 have served.

World’s Most Dangerous Strip of Land

Heavily mined and observed by both sides, the zone is considered by some as “*the world’s most dangerous strip of land*”.

Almost forgotten, the hidden remnants of war still lie buried beneath its soil. This includes unexploded ordnance and the remains of fallen soldiers.



Battle of Gapyeong (Kapyong) memorial, dedicated to the Australian Armed Forces, located in vicinity of the Australian defence positions, occupied by 3 RAR. Photograph: Tarni Preston, 2020

Coupled with the ongoing security and diplomatic roles of the UNC, difficult challenges are being tackled by a new generation of peacekeepers.

Operation Linesman

As part of Australia's Operation Linesman today, a small team of Australian Peacekeepers operate in the Demilitarised Zone. They monitor a range of projects including construction, security, clearance of explosives and the recovery and repatriation of human remains.

These projects resulted from the Comprehensive Military Agreement signed by



Flight Lieutenant Joonhee Wang, a RAAF pharmacist. Operation Linesman July 2022. Image, James Oaten, TPI ChinUp magazine, Summer 2022.jpg

both Koreas in September 2018. They provide a good example of the challenging and varied activities facing peacekeepers today.



Part of the Cheorwon Peace area project. Battle of Baengma (white horse) Hill memorial, between the Southern Limit Line and Military Demarcation Line of the Demilitarised Military Zone, facing north. Photograph: Tarni Preston, 2020.

Site of one of the fiercest battles of the Korean war. Gained its name due to the heavy aerial and artillery bombardments, turning it into a bald mountain, which resulted in it looking like a recumbent baengma (white horse) on the aerial images.

For example, Flight Lieutenant Joonhee Wang, a RAAF pharmacist, returned to her birthplace as a member of Operation Linesman in July



Operation Linesman. Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea.
TPI Victoria ChinUp magazine Summer 2022.

2022. Joonhee, now 30, moved to Australia from South Korea as a teenager.

Standing in Korea's Demilitarised Zone, she finally had the chance to ask her grandparents about their wartime experiences: *"It was just unspoken of"* Joonhee said. *"None of my parents heard any of these war stories, it was just*



KOREA. Flight Lieutenant Joonhee Wang flanked by other members of Operation Linesman. Photograph, James Oaten, TPI Victoria ChinUp magazine summer

unspoken of because they didn't want to share their sorrowful history." (Oaten, p.56).

Delicate and Risky Work

Working alongside other Australian Defence Force (ADF) peacekeepers, Joonhee's mission is to uphold the delicate armistice allowing

South Korean troops to enter the Demilita-



KOREA. Mine signage, Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Photograph James Oaten TPI Victoria ChinUp magazine summer 2022.jpg

ised Zone to retrieve the bodies of fallen soldiers.

Landmines and other unexploded ordinance litter the ground and need to be carefully removed. This allows the delicate work to continue. The work is risky. Remnants of the Korean conflict seem - frozen in time.

Captain Tarni Preston, recently the Operations Officer for 22 Engineer Regiment in Victoria, and an explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) technician, also deployed to Korea in 2020. She was given a unique insight to the remnants of this devastating conflict from the middle of last century.

Tarni reflects, *"the DMZ and the activities and conditions associated with it, highlighted how enduring yet temporary the nature of its existence is. Its sobering to experience that the outcomes of the Korean War are still evident and seemingly 'forgotten' only to those who do not inhabit or visit the peninsula"*.

Operation Linesman personnel rotate after

about 5 months. To date, nearly 500 bodies have been recovered. Many still wear identification tags. With an estimated 10,000 bodies still laying silent in the Zone, complete recovery is a daunting task.



Republic of Korean Army (ROKA) soldiers conducting the clearance of explosive remnants of war in vicinity of Arrow Head Hill, in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Photograph: Tarni Preston, 2020

Some 42 Australians remain on the Korean Peninsula recorded as Missing in Action (MIA).

Adaptability

As in numerous deployments both at home and abroad, Australian Peacekeepers invariably find themselves facing fresh challenges, or revisiting old ones. Often, in completely new circumstances.

Whatever the case, the innate training and ethos of the Australian Peacekeeper is to seek

out a solution and adapt it to meet the mission at hand. Sometimes, we can only plant the seed for others to follow.



An example of the types of remnants of war removed by the Ministry of National Defense for Killed in Action Recovery and Identification (MAKRI) team during their human remains recovery and removal tasks in vicinity of Arrow Head Hill, in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Photograph: Tarni Preston, 2020.

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Part of the DMZ Peace trail project within the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), connecting the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), facing north. Photograph: Tarni Preston, 2020

Your local Club Ringwood RSL



VETERAN NEWS

Equine Therapy Program— From the Horse's Mouth

The first of these programs has now been completed. It will now be evaluated but initial impressions reinforce its value to the veterans who were part of the inaugural program.

I wish to thank Cheryl Forrest (one of our Chaplains) for developing the curriculum and conducting it on our behalf.

The next program is scheduled for early 2024 and again will be provided at no cost to veterans. Think this might be for you? Contact reception at the Sub Branch for details.



Located in Bayswater North, From the Horse's Mouth offers a four week introductory course for veterans. FTHM promotes personal wellbeing through equine assisted learning.

From horses, we can learn new ways to understand feelings and practice healthy emotional expression. You will learn how to listen and connect with our horses, Whilst gaining basic horsemanship skills in ground-

Veteran Games - 2023



This modern jamboree brought together Australian Military veteran teams of all ages and fitness levels. Competing in a variety of challenges to claim a trophy and cash prize. The Sub Branch sponsored a team, "The Average Joes" who performed well and exhibited all the qualities that set veterans apart from the general community. They epitomised mateship whilst exhibiting a competitive spirit and have become a small community helping and supporting each other. Along the way they had to overcome challenges from a health and fitness point of view as well seeing some of their compatriots falling by the wayside through accident and illness. Nevertheless all team members, whether making the games or having to drop out, have continued to support each other and are now focussing on maintaining a level of fitness with a view to competing in the 2024 games.

The Sub Branch is a firm supporter of this initiative which has the potential to help veterans build social networks reconnecting those who have served in the ADF with



veterans with shared experiences.

Teams comprise eight veterans or serving members and details can be obtained from the web page:

<https://veterangames.com>

The Veteran Games isn't just about addressing the challenges faced by our veterans, it's a celebration of their victories and achievements and shifts our focus to a more positive perspective on veterans, fostering a healthier, more positive image inspiring future servicemen and servicewomen. It serves as a potent reminder that being a veteran is also about thriving in the present and paving the way for the future.

Ringwood Sub Branch News

Redevelopment of our Premises

From the outside it seems like only limited progress has been made on our redevelopment project, but we have achieved a major milestone with the developer and an independent living provider reaching an agreement for the sale of all the residential units in the planned complex. The pathway to achieving planning approval will now be our main focus on this project.

Coming Sub Branch highlights for 2024 include:

Committee elections for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and three committee members.

The Annual General Meeting 24th March 2024.

ANZAC commemorations, ANZAC Sunday march – 21 April, with the Dawn Service on Thursday 25th April.

Veteran Games in the Gold Coast hinterland, August 17-18, 2024.

Remembrance Day, Monday 11th November.

RSL Veteran Support Services

veteranservices@rslvic.com.au

Tel: 1300MILVET (1300645838)

David Jamison
President
Ringwood Sub Branch



Soldier On is a not-for-profit organisation delivering holistic support services that enable current and former Australian Defence Force personnel, and their families, to lead meaningful civilian lives.

Please consider supporting them in their important work.

<https://soldieron.org.au/>

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

ENGINEER HISTORY ROOM

by Mel Constable



The Royal Australian Engineers Association of Victoria (RAEAV) has the use of a room at the Oakleigh Barracks that was previously occupied by the Old Sappers' Association.



This room was built at the same time as the new depot in Oakleigh and was totally paid for by the Old Sappers' Association for their exclusive use after the Swan St Depot closed and the Regiment relocated to Oakleigh on 3 November 1991.

RAE (Vic) Historical and Heritage committee 1992-2004

RAE (Vic) History and Heritage Association 2004-2014

In early 1991 as they were getting ready for vacating the Swan Street depot, COL Bob Slater, COMD of 6 Engineer Group, asked LTCOL John Slee to pull together a committee to manage this move. The late MAJ Bruce Campbell was a member at that time and the "Corps Newsletters" were the general communication system. The earliest record that can be found is the September 1992 Corps Newsletter which says the "Historical & Heritage Committee" needs help "putting together displays". At this stage (1992) most historical material had been relocated to Oakleigh & the committee had a filing cabinet and a 2-door cabinet in a "garage" type building at Oakleigh.

In 1992, the late LTCOL Bob Eastick MBE decided to resurrect the Historical and Heritage Committee which had operated previously. He recruited a group of ex-reservists and got things going.

Over succeeding years, the committee produced and distributed Sapper Summit, collected and stored memorabilia, arranged Sir Clive Steele Lectures and conducted excursions to engineer related installations. They helped install memorial plaques at the sites of former RAE establishments, such as at the site of the Swan Street Depot. Members also became involved in the writing of several books of RAE history.

Austin Byrne joined in December 2000 & got the job of coordinating the Sapper Summit mailing list. He became Secretary in November 2001, following Eddie Vial's death. Jim Davis took over from Austin on 23 April 2013.

Sir Clive Steele lectures

The inaugural Sir Clive Steele lecture was presented at Oakleigh Barracks on 3 December 1993 and was greeted with a terrific response. An initiative of the Historical and Heritage sub-Committee of the RAE Corps Committee (Southern Region), the annual Memorial Lecture is held around November each year, with notable guest speakers presenting lectures on significant military engineering tasks.

Royal Australian Engineers Association of Victoria (Ringwood) 1977-2007

The composition of the early Committees is largely unrecorded, but one was started at Ringwood in 1977 with a group of 4 CPLs from the OR's mess, Mike Potts, Kevin Coleman, Lindsay George and Mel Constable (PMC). A constitution was drawn up in 1978, and MAJGEN Ken Green OBE agreed to be our Patron. It ran until 2007, albeit with a 9-year hia-



tus. Annual reunions, car rallies and dances were all held and were well attended.

Initially the Historical and Heritage committee was "Oakleigh" focused. Eddie Vial was conscripted to provide a Ringwood representation and he became President of that committee in 1995, at which time it was agreed that the Ringwood Association would cover

the costs of the Sapper Summit magazine for its members.

Royal Australian Engineers Association of Victoria 2014-

The Old Sappers' Association had served the Victorian Engineers for 80 years from 1934 - 2014 but their numbers were starting to dwindle and the members decided to amalgamate into the Royal Australian Engineers Association (Vic) Inc. in 2014.

The RAEAV, as part of its objectives, undertakes the research and recording of Sapper history in Victoria, and maintaining and promoting the traditions and achievements of the Australian Defence Force in general and the Royal Australian Engineers in particular. To this end a curator was nominated as part of the committee of management to control and coordinate these activities.

In early 2017 the RAEAV decided that the old unit flags that were hanging in the drill hall at the Oakleigh depot were in desperate need of restoration. This project involved removing each flag from the wall then from its frame and remounting them on a suitable backing material in a new frame. This backing material helps hold the shape of the flag, so it won't sag. The frame then has a non-reflective, UV protected, acrylic sheet placed on top and in



September 2017 they were rehung back on the wall.

The Old Sappers' room had not been used as a bar and meeting place for Old Sappers' members since they amalgamated in 2014. The room was only used for bi-monthly RAEAV committee of management meetings. The RAEAV also had a small office upstairs near



the Orderly room for storage, but it was very small and its use was limited.

After the flags were completed, it was thought that as we had a lot of memorabilia, we should look at utilising the Old Sappers' Room for storage and the display of the items. In October 2017 renovations began and the Engineer History room was born.

The bar area was demolished, floor tiles from that area removed and carpet extended, sink

and plumbing disconnected and a general cleanup was done. Display cabinets were donated and bookcases purchased to make room for the contents of the upstairs office to move in.

As the items were placed in the showcases each item was given a number then photographed and all the details were recorded on computer to be later uploaded to our Web page (raevictoria.com) for general viewing. The cataloging was broken down into sections that included: Documents, Banners and Flags, Badges and Medals, Books and Publications, Display Case items, PAMs, Photos, Plaques and Awards, Shields and Trophies, Weapons and Ammunition, Uniforms and Clothing and finally Filing Cabinet items.

As more people became aware of our history room, they recognised it as *their* History room, and items are consistently being donated to make our collection now quite sizeable. Some items are very special and rare, for example the Association was fortunate to be able to secure the purchase of Sir Peter Scratchley's Sword - he helped start the Victorian Engineers in 1860. Recently we took procession of, by donation, a Waterloo medal and a Crimean Medal. We also have possibly the largest collection of Australian Military Clasp knives from pre-federation to



present time with 17 different knives. It has now become necessary to source further storage room for our ever-growing collection.

The RAEAV and its Engineer History room supports all the messes and their memorabilia in Oakleigh, Ringwood and Newborough depots with the supply of display cases for their own collections. The RAEAV is cataloguing their items also, this then helps to keep a record of each unit's own local Engineer history, that complements an already comprehensive collection of Victorian Engineer memorabilia.

Another aspect of history recording is the RAEAV History Trail. This comprises of posts being installed with a plaque on top at nominated locations, for example a bridge, explaining the details of what was constructed or demolished at that particular site. The plaque has a brief run down of the site and includes a QR code that can be scanned and shows further details and photos about the site, being displayed to the reader on their mobile phone.



In October we were very proud to have Chief of Army, LTGEN Simon Stuart, AO, DSC and RSM Army, Kim Felmingham, NSC, OAM along with the Commander 4th Brigade, BRIG Michelle Campbell and RSM 4th Brigade, WO1 Tony Lynch, to visit our history room and their comments were very favourable.



LTGEN Stuart inspecting part of the Association's Memorabilia collection.

If anyone is looking for a place to store memorabilia that you have collected during your time spent in the Engineers, to be preserved for future generations of Sappers and others to admire, please contact us via the details below.





Tours to the room can also be organised by contacting the Royal Australian Engineers Association of Victoria, again details below.

Mel Constable, Curator

curator@raevictoria.com

0412 403 043

RAEAV

<https://raevictoria.com/>







POSTSCRIPT: History Room Renovations

With the help of 22 Engineer Regiment, the Royal Australian Engineers Association Vic were able to continue their renovations to the History and Heritage room. Inside the room, the works included the demolition of the old sink, bench and hot water service on the back wall, moving power to different outlets and the installation of an air conditioner that the Association had purchased.

On the outside, a verandah was built over a concrete slab to protect the back door from the weather and stopping further water damage inside.



The Association would like to thank Carl Seccull and Scott White together with the boys from 22ER for their work and coordination.

Mel Constable
Curator



The addition of the air conditioner is part of the preservation works required to protect our collection from deterioration due to the extremes of temperature and humidity that can damage sensitive items, this unit now maintains the room at a constant temperature.



From The Archives:

3 Division Country Club

Lake Eppalock

By Redcap, who was there.

On February 2nd of this year, a Heritage Trail Marker was installed near the shore of Lake Eppalock, not far from Bendigo. It commemorates a bold project which began in the mid 1960s, and which might now have largely have faded from memory, despite having involved more than 300 Sappers.

BACKGROUND

Lake Eppalock was constructed between 1960 and 1964, by damming the Campaspe and Coliban rivers. It stands about 130 km from Melbourne, between Bendigo and Heathcote. It serves as a water supply for those population centres, as a source of irrigation water, and as a sports and recreation facility.

It has a capacity of more than 300 Gigalitres, and a maximum surface area of more than 30 km².

The late MAJ Bruce Campbell (OC 105 Construction Squadron) was involved in the design and construction of the project, in his capacity as a Surveyor with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

Following the completion of the project, a number of foreshore areas on the Western border of the lake were leased to Clubs and other organisations (most of the Eastern foreshore is leased as grazing land).

Between 1963 and 1964 the Bendigo Citizens Association (later known as the Bendigo CMF Welfare Association) made formal approaches to HQ 3 Div to take an active part in their development of a recreational site at Eppalock for CMF members, and in 1964 HQ 3Div took over the project from the Bendigo Citizens Association.

A Management Committee was formed (Captain Bill Atkins representing 3 Div) and a 15 year lease was obtained on a 5 acre (2 hectares) site (later increased to 20 acres (8 Hectares)) at Low Head in the Kimbolton Recreational area, adjacent to Sometime Island. As the name suggests, the island is periodically part of the mainland when the water level in the reservoir is low.



Development of the site began in earnest in March 1967, when 335 sappers from RAE 3 Division occupied the site over a 16 day period. Plans devised by the Third Division Country Club Committee involved the following constructions:

- a timber footbridge to Sometime Island
- a concrete boat launching ramp
- access and circuit roads including culverts, guide posts and entrance gate
- toilet block and associated works
- picnic area including barbecues and furniture

The above work was to be carried out by the Sappers of 8, 10, and 16 Field Squadrons, 15 Corps Field Park Squadron and 29 Plant Squadron (Light), less their recruits.

So what were the recruits doing? 2 Field Squadron was the recruit training squadron for the Ringwood Squadrons (8, 10 and 16) while the Swan St squadrons (15 and 29) trained their own recruits. All these recruits carried out normal infantry basic training through the duration of the camp.

GETTING STARTED

An advance party arrived before the main body, having collected stores from various depots. They set up communal facilities including mess marquees and admin tents, as well as establishing a water supply and taking delivery of stores from contractors.



Accommodation tents were erected by the main body of troops after arrival on March 4th.

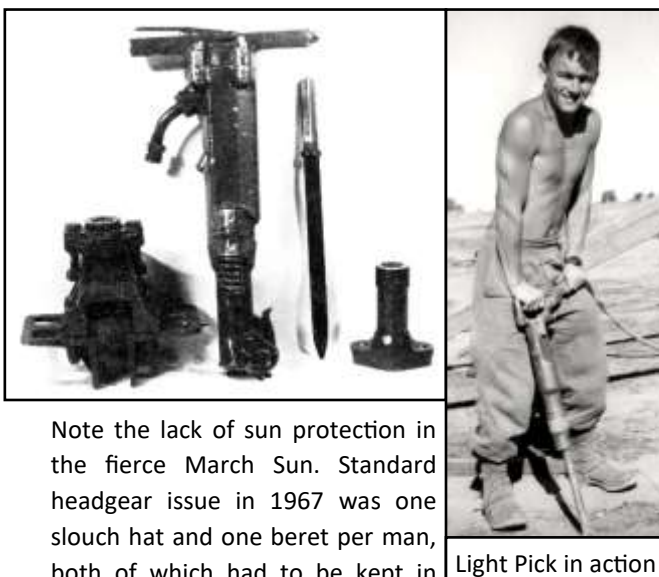
On day 2 the work began:

FOOTBRIDGE TO SOMETIME ISLAND

Having marked out the site of the footbridge, 10 Squadron began excavating footings for bridge piers. The soil was shallow, so pneumatic tools made the job easier through the moderately hard sedimentary rock. All bridge work was carried out on dry land as the water level was low.



The Light Pick (left) and the Heavy Breaker (Below) were powered by an Ingersoll - Rand compressor.



Note the lack of sun protection in the fierce March Sun. Standard headgear issue in 1967 was one slouch hat and one beret per man, both of which had to be kept in Parade condition, so were rarely used where they might be stained or damaged. Officers are in hats as they had no chance of getting dirty.



Bridge superstructure was added progressively as piers were completed. In total 14 spans of 15 feet (4.6 m) made up the total length of around 64 metres. On completion of the main structure, bankseats were added and filled with rubble.

Progress on this and other projects was delayed somewhat by an outbreak of gastric upset which affected 27 ORs and hospitalised seven in Bendigo. Dealing with this was made more complicated as there were no standing communications and no adequate transport available. Stricter hygiene procedures were implemented for the rest of the Camp.

BOAT LAUNCH RAMP

Close to the footbridge, 8 Squadron had begun the boat ramp. 128 ft x 12 ft (50m x 3.6m) of ramp was formed and poured in situ, taking the ramp down to the much reduced waterline. This was followed by another 40ft (12m) of concrete planks (preformed on site) and placed below the waterline by crane.



Pouring the main ramp section.



Placing the precast concrete planks.

A further 10ft (3m) of planks were left on site ready for placement later.

Finally, guideposts were added at the head of the ramp.

ACCESS AND CIRCUIT ROADS

This work included 1.2 miles (1.5km) of 24 ft (7m) wide formed road from Twin Rivers Road to the Country Club entrance gate, plus a one way circuit road through the Club area, all including culverts, signposts and guideposts where required.



ACCESS TO BOAT LAUNCHING RAMP

A one way access road from the main circuit road to the ramp, plus a turning area and a parking area.

TOILET BLOCK AREA

Toilet block and associated plumbing almost complete, site prepared for water tank to service the toilet block.



The toilet block in 2023, water tank at left.

DAY PICNIC AREA

Three barbecues, a picnic table and an all weather shelter completed.

MISCELLANEOUS WORK

Entrance gateway.

Reconnaissance and other preparatory work for future access roads.

HIGH (AND LOW) LIGHTS OF THE CAMP

The Gastro outbreak has been mentioned earlier, but another significant incident was the Great Fire of Epalock, which occurred while the generator was being refuelled at about 2200. A small spillage occurred, which ignited. In his enthusiasm, one of those in the party threw a bucket of water on the fire, causing it to spread to the nearby marquee, and resulting in the loss of the dining marquee, including all the tableware, tables and forms, a Coke machine and , if rumours are to be believed, 22 typewriters, assorted hand tools, an Austin Champ jeep and everything else that had gone missing in the last few years!

While the designated Fire Team were going about their work, all others were to report to their SSMs for roll call. WO2 the late Jack McCracken, as he watched the conflagration, was heard to utter the words: "throw some more petrol on it, get the bastard going properly!".

OPSO the late MAJ Bruce Wadeson led the investigation into the fire and, beginning in the wee small hours following the incident, interviewed every man in the camp, a process which concluded some 12 hours after the fire.

The middle weekend was quite hot, so it was decided a swim parade was in order on the Saturday afternoon. No argument there, but hardly anyone had bathers in their kit. Not to worry, all had been using communal

showers for a week, so in they went, some in their Y-fronts, most out of them. Improvised rafts were devised, and the water was cold. A couple of hundred Sappers starters in the water, and there was the sound of a car engine. A station wagon appeared and crossed the dry gap to Sometime Island. A family got out and set themselves up for a nice bush picnic, taking little notice of the swimmers visible only from the waist up. Just as well the water was so cold, because there was not much to see as they all exited the lake.

The next day was visitors day, and family, friends and significant others made the long drive to see what their men were up to. It was a welcome change of pace, and a definite high point.

The following year another camp was held at Eppalock, which may be the subject of another story.

The Army relinquished its lease on the Low Head site in the 1970s, and at a later date the area was leased to the St Vincents Hospital Social Club as a holiday camp. Further improvements were made during their tenure, including a house and workshop.

In 1997 the Low Head Fishing Club moved in and established a semi-permanent village of caravans and relocatables. More facilities were upgraded, including a further extension of the boat ramp. However the bridge, having been neglected for decades, was decrepit and a hazard to boating. It was demolished and converted to firewood.

THEN AND NOW:



1967: hard at work.

The members of the club were interested in the history of the site, and were more than happy to have the Plaque installed outside their gate, even assisting with digging the post hole (without the use of machinery!):



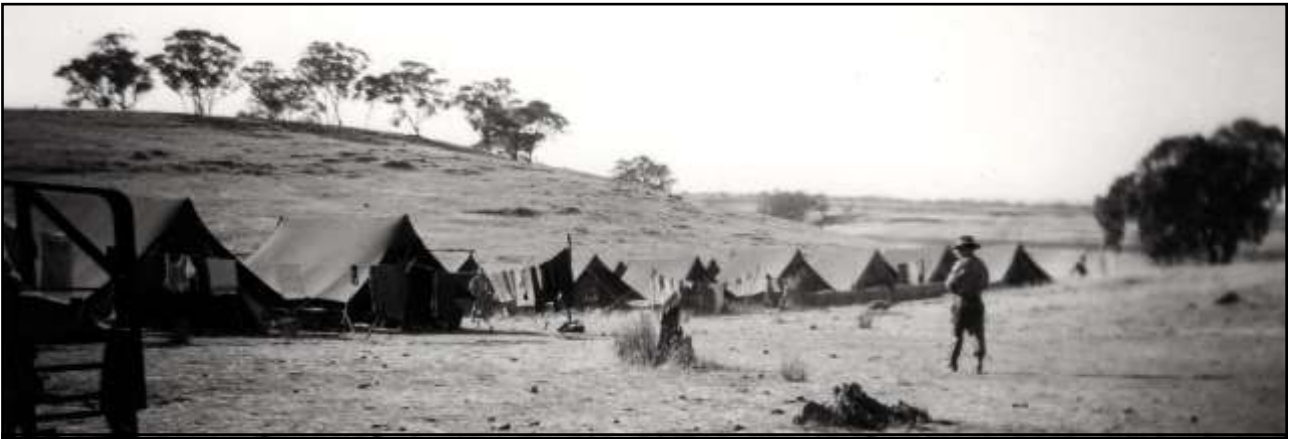
2023: Installing the post and Heritage Trail plaque



Boat ramp in good shape in 1970 (above), and in 2023.



Remains of the bridge bankseat in 2023, with Sometime Island in the background.



The camp site in 1967 (top) and 2023 (below).



Entrance to the Fishing Club 2023



Aerial photo of the Club area



Plenty of local interest from the Bendigo Advertiser

PRESENTATION TO 31 ACU BANNER PARTY

AUGUST 2023

Six Cadets from 31 ACU assisted the RAE Association by acting as Banner Party for the 2023 Melbourne ANZAC Day march. President Don Hughes presented them with a framed photo as a token of appreciation. Thanks to Ben Geddes for the photos.



NEWBOROUGH REUNION FUNCTION 06th OCTOBER 2023

For the second consecutive year a function was arranged to be held at the Yallourn-Newborough RSL to thank the Valley members, family, and friends for their support to the Association.

On the night there was a good turn up with about 35 people attending and whilst many were not members of the Association this function gave everyone the chance to come together and catch up and relive the days of Yallourn and Newborough. There were several current serving members of the Regiment in attendance.

The main reason for the Association funding this gathering is that we manage to put on activities in Melbourne but in many cases attendance at these city functions for the Valley people is very difficult either due to travel distance or medical restrictions and the Newborough function is to let them know that they are not neglected.

Jim Davis and Duncan Howarth represented the President (Don Hughes) who was unavailable.

The Association provides a light finger food supper which is put together by an old friend in Heather Calder (nee Draper) who is assisted by Ricka from the RSL Club. The theme of the night can be summed up by saying it is when the "city comes to the country" and typical of the country hospitality there is plenty of food available.



George Harris (above, right) is the main driver behind the night and gets the word out to the very strong sapper family in the Valley. George is a great ambassador for the Valley Sappers and the Association and arranges a gathering at the RSL on the 1st Friday of each month.

This function, which I am sure will go on to be a regular fixture on our calendar, is a great night out and the "city folk" are certainly made very welcome by the Valley sappers and everyone should take the opportunity of attending next year's function. The date has already been set for 04th October 2024 (Friday) night.

As with most things age is catching up with many of the Valley Sappers who served but those who come along

are certainly very passionate about their service and the proud tradition of being a sapper.

Without reunions and gatherings like this so much of





the Corps Victorian history would be lost along with the characters and people who have helped shape and develop the strong traditions of the RAE.



Thank you again Heather and George for all your wonderful work and contribution to this function and to all those people who came along to the function.





COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Between 1962–1973 almost 60,000 Australians, including ground troops and air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam. During this time 523 lost their lives, and 2,400 were wounded in a bid to halt the spread of the North's Communist regime into South Vietnam. This toll doesn't account for the enormous psychological scars which burdened many who returned to an unsympathetic and, at times, hostile environment.

It was a war unlike others in that it did not have broad public support. In 1964 a compulsory national service introduced for 20-year-old males fuelled an already growing anti-war movement which created a high degree of political tension. As a result, many of our returning Vietnam veterans were not greeted with the respect and honour they deserved for their efforts and service. RSL Australia acknowledges this and notes that veterans from all conflicts are welcome within the RSL and always will be.

Every year on the 18th of August, we commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day. The date is significant because that day in 1966 Australian troops had their first significant battle against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops near the village of Long Tan. 2023 is a special Anniversary as it marks 50 years since the end of Australia's combat commitment to South Vietnam, which ended on the 11th of January 1973.

A commemorative program of events marking the 50th anniversary was held across Australia, culminating in the national commemorative service in Canberra on 18 August 2023. You can view the official broadcast of the service at :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycRy72ZzBTM>

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has produced a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration.

The medallion and certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour the service of our Vietnam Veterans and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home.



The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War.

The medallion is free of charge for any veteran who served in the Vietnam War. Applications are made online at dva.gov.au/vietnam50. Please note that you will need to know your service number, or the service number of the veteran you are applying on behalf of, in order to apply.

If you require support to apply, please phone 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) between 9am and 5pm AEST Monday to Friday, and say the word 'medallions' when prompted.

AUSTRALIA IN THE VIETNAM WAR 1962—1975

A brief history

Text and Images courtesy of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra



Iroquois helicopters land to take members of 7RAR back to Nui Dat after completion of Operation Ulmarra, August 1967.

The arrival of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) in South Vietnam during July and August 1962 was the beginning of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Australia's participation in the war was formally declared at an end when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973. The only combat troops remaining in Vietnam were a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon, which was withdrawn in June 1973.

The Australian commitment consisted predominantly of army personnel, but significant numbers of air force and navy personnel and some civilians also took part.

Overview

From the time of the arrival of the first members of the Team in 1962 over 60,000 Australians, including ground troops and air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam; 523 died as a result of the war and almost 2,400 were wounded. The war was the cause of the greatest social and political dissent in Australia since the conscription referendums of the First World War. Many draft resisters, conscientious objectors, and protesters were fined

or jailed, while some soldiers met a hostile reception on their return home.

Australian support for South Vietnam in the early 1960s was in keeping with the policies of other nations, particularly the United States, to stem the spread of communism in Europe and Asia. In 1961 and 1962 Ngo Dinh Diem, leader of the government in South Vietnam, repeatedly requested security assistance from the US and its allies. Australia eventually responded with 30 military advisers, dispatched as the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), also known as "the Team". Their arrival in South Vietnam during July and August 1962 was the beginning of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. In August 1964 the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) also sent a flight of Caribou transports to the port of Vung Tau.

By early 1965, when it had become clear that South Vietnam could not stave off the communist insurgents and their North Vietnamese comrades for more than a few months, the US commenced a major escalation of the war. By the end of the year it had committed 200,000 troops to the conflict. As part of the build-up, the US government requested further support from friendly countries in the region, including Australia. The Australian government dispatched the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), in June 1965 to serve alongside the US 173rd Airborne Brigade in Bien Hoa province.

The following year the Australian government felt that Australia's involvement in the conflict should be both strong and identifiable. In March 1966 the government announced the dispatch of a taskforce to replace 1RAR, consisting of two battalions and support services (including a RAAF squadron of Iroquois helicopters), to be based at Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy



Vung Tau, Vietnam: door-gunner from No. 9 Squadron, RAAF, using twin-mounted M60 machine-guns.

province. Unlike 1RAR, the taskforce was assigned its own area of operations and included conscripts who had been called up under the National Service Scheme, introduced in 1964. All nine RAR battalions served in the taskforce at one time or another, before it was withdrawn in 1971; at the height of the Australian involvement it numbered some 8,500 troops. In July 1966, RAAF fighter pilots began serving as airborne forward air controllers (FACs) flying USAF aircraft supporting allied ground forces by directing strike aircraft against enemy targets on the ground. Thirty-six Australian FACs served between 1966 and 1971. A third RAAF squadron (of Canberra jet bombers) was also committed in 1967, and destroyers of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) joined US patrols off the North Vietnamese coast. The RAN also contributed a clearance diving team and a helicopter detachment that operated with the US Army from October 1967.

In August 1966 a company of 6RAR was engaged in one of Australia's heaviest actions of the war, in a rubber plantation near Long Tan village. The 108 soldiers of D Coy held off an enemy force, estimated at over 2000, for four hours in the middle of a tropical downpour. They were greatly assisted by a timely ammunition resupply by RAAF helicopters, close fire support from Australian artillery, and the arrival of reinforcements in APCs as night fell. The armoured vehicles had been delayed because they had to 'swim' across a flooded creek and

fight through groups of enemy on the way.¹ When the Viet Cong withdrew at nightfall they left behind 245 dead, but carried away many more casualties.² Seventeen Australians were killed and 25 wounded, with one dying of wounds several days later.



A wounded digger, hurt in a booby-trap explosion, is evacuated to Vung Tau.

The year 1968 began with a major offensive by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, launched during the Vietnamese lunar new year holiday period, known as "Tet". Not only the timing but the scale of the offensive came as a complete surprise, taking in cities, towns, and military installations throughout South Vietnam. While the "Tet Offensive" ultimately ended in military defeat for the communists, it was propaganda victory. US military planners began to question if a decisive victory could ever be achieved and the offensive stimulated US public opposition to the war. For Australian troops, the effects of the offensive were felt around their base at Nui Dat, where a Viet Cong attack on targets around Ba Ria, the provincial capital, was repulsed with few casualties.

By 1969 anti-war protests were gathering momentum in Australia. Opposition to conscription mounted, as more people came to believe the war could not be won. A "Don't register" campaign to dissuade young men from registering for conscription gained increasing support and some of the protests grew violent. The US government began to implement

a policy of "Vietnamisation", the term coined for a gradual withdrawal of US forces that would leave the war in the hands of the South Vietnamese. With the start of the phased withdrawals, the emphasis of the activities of the Australians in Phuoc Tuy province shifted to the provision of training to the South Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces.

At the end of April 1970 US and South Vietnamese troops were ordered to cross the border into Cambodia. While the invasion succeeded in capturing large quantities of North Vietnamese arms, destroying bunkers and sanctuaries, and killing enemy soldiers, it ultimately proved disastrous. By bringing combat



Phuoc Tuy province, South Vietnam, November 1966: 6RAR soldiers follow an armoured personnel carrier (APC) during Operation Ingham, a "search and destroy" mission.

into Cambodia, the invasion drove many people to join the underground opposition, the Khmer Rouge, irreparably weakening the Cambodian government. When the Khmer Rouge came to power in April 1975, it imposed a cruel and repressive regime that killed several million Cambodians and left the country with internal conflict that continues today. The extension of the war into a sovereign state, formally neutral, inflamed anti-war sentiment in the United States and provided the impetus for further anti-war demonstrations in Australia. In the well-known Moratorium marches of 1970 and 1971, more than 200,000 people gathered to protest against the war, in cities and towns throughout the country.

By late 1970 Australia had also begun to wind

down its military effort in Vietnam. The 8th Battalion departed in November (and was not replaced), but, to make up for the decrease in troop numbers, the Team's strength was increased and its efforts became concentrated in Phuoc Tuy province. The withdrawal of



Vietnam, 1966: Australians patrol near the village of Tan Phu, near Bien Hoa Air Base.

troops and all air units continued throughout 1971 – the last battalion left Nui Dat on 7 November, while a handful of advisers belonging to the Team remained in Vietnam the following year. In December 1972 they became the last Australian troops to come home, with their unit having seen continuous service in South Vietnam for ten and a half years. Australia's participation in the war was formally declared at an end when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973. The only combat troops remaining in Vietnam were a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon (this was withdrawn in June 1973).

Editor's note:

1. There is some dispute as to the reason for the delayed arrival of the APCs.
2. North Vietnamese documents recovered some time after the battle state more than 800 dead and 1500 wounded.

See Dave Sabben's book "Mentions in Despatches" and Harry Smith's "Long Tan" for further details.

RAE ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC. – CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

01st December 2023

The Association was once again able to organise its annual “Christmas Function” night which was held at the Croydon RSL. This is the second year we have used the facilities at the Croydon RSL and it was without doubt a success with an estimated 75 people attending. Now Croydon RSL does not have all the up-market facilities that the bigger RSLs have but what it lacks in modern equipment it is made up by the friendly atmosphere and helpful staff.

The purpose of this night is to provide something back to the members of the Association and their families for their loyalty and support. No night like this would be a success without the hard work of some and in this case, it was Michael Potts, Jock Howatt, Mel Constable and Margaret Handte who came to the front and provided that support. Croydon RSL has a kitchen but does not offer staff to assist in the preparation of the food so this very challenging task was left to Michael and Margaret who acquitted themselves very well – in addition there were many others who jumped in helped get the food out. Supper was finger food and nibbles and no one went away hungry.



Everyone who attended is considered a special person and our thanks goes to everyone who

came along and supported the night but in particular I would like to mention that it was wonderful to see the Association’s Patron John Wertheimer and Padre John Raike come along and support us. Some others like Gary Lewis (ex WO1) who lives in Tasmania and was in Melbourne joined us as did David and Jenny Stevenson who travelled from Kerang. We also had some serving members of the Regiment – we could certainly do with more members of the Regiment supporting us (maybe next year).



Formalities were certainly kept to a minimum but Don Hughes addressed the gathering and thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the Association and welcomed the newest member of the Association in Jim Paxton.



Don also acknowledged the wonderful efforts of Jock Howatt and his fund raising efforts for the Royal Children's Hospital. Don also provided a quick summary of other activities along with a brief look at the future ahead.

Once again a very special thanks must go to the ever reliable Michael Potts, Jock Howatt and Marg Handte for their tireless effort here. Their personal contribution to this activity made it the success it was – Michael Potts was the main driving force for the night and brought the night together and we are so appreciative.

Don is keen to give this activity a more fitting name – “Christmas Nibbles or Christmas Function” are such bland titles and just do not do the night justice – maybe by the time 2024 function arrives it may be renamed. (See note below) Looking ahead to 2024 we may have to investigate alternative venues as the RSL facilities may be impacted by the upcoming Community Hub development. It would be a shame after enjoying the last 2 years there in such a good venue.

Secretary
Jim Davis

Editor's note: Bearing in mind that Saint Barbara is the patron Saint of Military Engineers (among others), if you can think of a catchy name for the end of year function, please pass it on to Jim or Don for consideration.













Editor's Note:

The RAE Association—Victoria has received significant support from the Ringwood RSL. Members have benefited from the club's services including its welfare support service. The association thanks the sub branch for its ongoing support and I especially thank the President for his support of this magazine.

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, well being awareness and education.

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- + Current serving ADF personnel
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MERCHANDISE



Fleece jackets \$50 and matching beanies \$15 now available.



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MERCHANDISE

RAE Association—Victoria merchandise is constantly changing. To check our current offerings and to order, please visit our web site: www.raevictoria.com

With many events and excursions planned in the near future, dress the part in your association's shirts, caps and jackets.

Association Shirts & Caps Available to Order



"Soft Shell" jackets and white Association caps are now in stock. Check the merchandise page on our web site. (model not included)
Jackets \$90





ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS SAPPERS' FUND



Why subscribe?

Subscriptions to Sappers' Funds provide the income that allows us to care for our heritage and foster Esprit-de-Corps.

The Corps of Royal Australian Engineers has a collective responsibility to our predecessors and ourselves to ensure we preserve, protect and develop our heritage as well as continue to build our identity into the future.

Your contribution, along with all the other serving and retired members of the Royal Australian Engineers making a similar commitment, is extremely important. This ensures your Corps Committee can support the fostering of our esprit-de-corps and the unique 'Sapper identity' remains a fundamental part of Army's culture and traditions.

What is the cost?

The annual cost of subscriptions is as follows:

ARA Officers - Sergeant: \$52 per annum (\$2 per fortnight)
ARA Corporal - Sapper: \$26 per annum (\$1 per fortnight)
ARes Officers: \$30 per annum
ARes ORs: \$20 per annum
Ex-Service Officers: \$30 per annum
Ex-Service ORs: \$20 per annum
RAE ex-service Association: Annual Donation

For further information or to request support from the Fund, contact the RAE Head of Corps Cell via email at: rae.hoc@defence.gov.au

What is the benefit?

Individuals may benefit from Sappers' Funds, either directly or indirectly. The Sappers' Fund provides financial support to:

- Corps sporting events, teams and tours
- Corps adventure training activities
- individual and team engineer awards and prizes including Battle Field Tour
- publication of Corps and unit histories
- RAE Association Victoria heritage and history trail plaques
- establishment and upgrade of RAE Memorials
- purchase of wreaths for funerals and remembrance of serving members
- assistance to Army History Unit to manage historical items relevant to the RAE
- RMC graduation prize

Individuals, groups and sub-units/units of the Royal Australian Engineers and affiliated Associations can apply for support from the fund at any time.

How do I subscribe?

Subscriptions can be made by electronic transfer / direct debit to the following account:

- Australian Military Bank BSB No: 642-170
- Account Number: 100001677
- Name of Account: RAE Sappers' Funds

Please include your PMKeys number and surname with your payment.

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, or to download an application form click on:

www.raevictoria.com

You can request an application form from:

The Secretary
RAE Association Victoria Inc
P.O. Box 246
RINGWOOD EAST VIC 3135

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, maybe 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 \$25 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. Members can choose to receive coloured, hard copies in addition to their e-copies for an additional subscription fee. Contact the Secretary for details.

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

To apply for membership, visit **raevictoria.com** and follow the prompts, or contact the Secretary at **P.O. Box 246 Ringwood East 3135**.

