

2025 ST BARBARA EDITION

RAE CORPS MAGAZINE
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION (Vic) Inc



SAPPER SUMMIT

Once a Sapper, Always a Sapper



**CENTENARY
OF THE ROYAL
CORPS OF
AUSTRALIAN
SIGNALS**

***FORESTS,
FIRES &
FORTIFICATIONS:
NEW HISTORY OF
VICTORIAN
SAPPERS
LAUNCHED***



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SAPPER SUMMIT

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Editor.



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Despatches

from the President's Bunker:



Greetings Fellow Victorian Sappers,

I write this message from my bunker whilst still mourning my constant companion, and our mascot, Zeus.

Zeus touched the lives of many, and I am proud to have been his human.

A fresh Victorian sapper history, *Forests, Fires and Fortifications*, was officially launched on Remembrance Day 2025 at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

It captures the recent operational challenges facing military engineers in Victoria and explores the contribution made by the professional engineering expertise found within the reserve over the last 75 years.

In 2025, 22nd Engineer Regiment (22ER) celebrated its Diamond (75th) Anniversary having been originally raised in 1950 as a result of one of the critical lessons learnt in WW2 by the Engineer in Chief of the Australian Army, Major General Sir Clive Steele:

“Citizen Military Force (CMF) or Supplementary Reserve (SR) is a vital part of the Army, particularly in RAE.”

In essence, this lesson highlighted the need for Army to be able to call upon individuals or sub-units possessing certain skills in short supply.

Current reserve Sapper units help fulfil this need by contributing to an overall enhanced military engineering capability for the nation.

They bring critical civilian skills to the forefront.

As with Sappers from around the country, Victorian Sappers have earned an impressive reputation for “stepping up” to recent challenges and battles with bushfire, flood and other weather events, coupled with the devastating COVID pandemic.

These challenges have highlighted the diversity and array of skills needed by a 21st century Sapper.

The Victorian people are proud, and owe much gratitude, to their Sappers in combating these recent events.

Victorians also enjoy a rich military engineering heritage boasting some of the most elaborate coastal fortifications in the southern hemisphere.

As a result of the gold rushes in the 1850s, and the subsequent Russian threat, Port Philip Bay was known as the *Gibraltar of the South*.

Recording Sapper history and heritage, such as with *Forests, Fires & Fortifications*, along with conducting commemorative and social activities, are the core purposes of the Association.

These underpin, and reinforce, the overall wellbeing of this important national capability.

Please enjoy this Christmas edition of *Sapper Summit*.

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

INTRODUCING 8261378, LTCOL JASON ELTHAM RAE

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Eltham is the Commanding Officer of 22 Engineer Regiment, the senior Engineer Regiment within the 2nd Australian Division. He was commissioned into the Royal Australian Engineers in July 1998 following graduation from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and completed the Royal Australian Engineers Regimental Officer Basic Course in 1999. He brings more than two decades of experience across combat engineering, joint operations, special operations and command in both Regular and Reserve service.



Lieutenant Colonel Eltham's early career was spent in 1st and 3rd Combat Engineer Regiments, including operational service with INTERFET and qualification as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technician. These formative postings established a strong operational foundation in combat engineering, explosive hazards and force protection, shaping a leadership philosophy grounded in technical competence, discipline and credibility under pressure.

As a Captain within the IRR and SOCOMD, he contributed to the development of Counter-Improvised Threat Special Recovery capabilities and provided specialist operational and training support at Special Operations Headquarters. He later deployed to the Middle East as Chief EOD, Headquarters ISAF, delivering critical technical leadership in a complex multinational operational environment.

At the strategic and operational level, he served in Headquarters Joint Operations Command as SO2 Global Operations, earning a Deputy Chief of Joint Operations commendation for exemplary coordination and management across multiple operations, including OP SLIPPER and OP KRUGER. At Army Headquarters, as SO2 Preparedness, he was instrumental in the design and implementation of the system now known as GENESIS. Selected to attend the Indonesian Command and Staff College, Lieutenant Colonel Eltham achieved a top-ten ranking, the first international student to do so.

A strong advocate for disciplined capability delivery, he led the establishment of the Joint Counter-IED Facility at Woomera and deployed as Director CIED, Joint Task Force 633. In this role, he received a Commander JTF 633 commendation for significantly enhancing force protection against improvised threats and chemical hazards.

His most professionally rewarding appointment was as Brigade Major, 4th Brigade, where he also served as J3 for Joint Task Force 646 (OP Bushfire Assist) and Joint Task Group 629.2 (OP COVID Assist). In these appointments, he synchronised complex joint effects and led staff and commanders in support of Australian communities during national emergencies.

Transferring to SERCAT 5 in 2022, Lieutenant Colonel Eltham served as Second-in-Command of Melbourne University Regiment and Deputy Commander Army Cadets Victoria. In these roles he strengthened governance, compliance and organisational culture, while maintaining a strong focus on leadership development, standards and accountability.

As Commanding Officer of 22 Engineer Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Eltham is focused on building a combat-credible, disciplined and resilient Reserve Engineer capability. His command philosophy emphasises warfighting fundamentals, technical mastery, physical robustness, ethical leadership and the delivery of engineer effects under pressure, whether on operations, in domestic response, or in support of joint and combined forces. In his civilian career, Lieutenant Colonel Eltham is a senior program manager and trusted advisor in crisis management, resilience and capability development. He is currently studying a Master of Project Management, reinforcing his commitment to disciplined leadership and the effective delivery of complex capability.

Lieutenant Colonel Eltham is a father of three, Jessica, Victoria and Cooper, and values service, family and community. He remains deeply committed to the profession of arms and to the proud lineage of the Royal Australian Engineers.

UBIQUE – Follow the Sapper

22nd Engineer Regiment

Command Structure and Appointments for 2026

CO	LTCOL Jason Eltham (appointment 01 st January 2026 on CFTS)
RSM	WO1 Clinton Matheson (ARA – appointed 01 st January 2025)
XO/2IC	CAPT John Alekoz
OPSO	MAJ Paul McComb (ARA)
OPS CAPT	CAPT Michael Plant
ADJT	CAPT Halley Barber (ARA)
Chaplain	CAPT Kirsten Linden

SUBUNITS

105 Construction Squadron

OC	MAJ Jake Kilsby
SQN 2IC	LT Ahmed
SSM	WO2 Tim Place

203 Works Section

OC	CAPT M Doolan
Works Supervisor	WO2 Scott White

10 Combat Engineer Squadron

OC	MAJ Martin Stawski
SQN 2IC	CAPT Rob Baillieu
SSM	SGT Scott Eaton

8 Combat Engineer Squadron

OC	MAJ Laura Cook
SQN 2IC	CAPT R Simon
SSM	WO2 David Kelly-Grimshaw.

SENDING SIGNALS FOR A CENTURY

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS



Past and present members of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals (RA Sigs) gathered at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance on 14 February 2025 to mark the Corps' centenary. The event, attended by signallers, their families, veterans and a host of distinguished guests, celebrated a century of service, innovation, and sacrifice.

Since the order was issued to form the Australian Corps of Signals on 14 February 1925, the Corps has played a crucial role in keeping the Australian Army connected, adapting to ever-evolving technology.

Brigadier Deane Limmer CSM, Head of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals, praised the Corps' adaptability and enduring commitment to Defence operations. 'For more than a century, the Corps has been developing and responding to emerging technology, giving the ADF a competitive edge,' Brigadier Limmer said. 'Army signallers have been keeping the Australian Army and the ADF connected, leading the way in technology adoption and advancement at every turn.'

'For a century, families have supported us and made sacrifices, making this year's celebrations a show of gratitude for their part in serving alongside us.'

The Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, reviewed the parade. She reinforced the importance of the signallers' role, carrying messages that can mean the difference between hope and despair.

'On behalf of the people of Victoria, I want to offer our deepest appreciation for your service, for all the new skills and capabilities you are developing that are important for our future security, and the vital role you play each and every day through your service across our country and abroad,' the Governor said.

The Governor was joined by many signallers who are now senior officers in the ADF, including Chief of Army Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC, and Chief of Joint Capabilities Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM.

Signallers have served in every major conflict since the First World War, from the Second World War to Korea, Vietnam, Western Sahara, Somalia, Cambodia and more recent deployments in the Middle East and the Pacific. Their expertise in skills such as electronic warfare, signals intelligence, telecommunications, information technology and cyberspace capabilities has been essential in warlike and humanitarian operations alike.

Beyond the battlefield, signallers have been instrumental in disaster relief, recently deploying to the Pacific to restore communications after natural disasters.

Mr Gavin Lee, President of the RA Sigs Association (Victoria) said he was immensely proud of the support and turnout by signals veterans from the Vietnam War, more recent conflicts and particularly members of the old 3rd Divisional Signals (CMF) and 108 Signal Squadron.

'We are looking forward to an even greater turn out on Anzac Day to commemorate and celebrate the centenary,' Mr Lee said.

For veterans and their families, the parade was more than a ceremony – it was a powerful reminder of their contributions and sacrifices. It also provided a chance to reconnect and reflect on their service.

Celebrations continued later in the year, with a visit from Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, Colonel-in-Chief of RASigs, in November. Her visit to the Defence Force School of Signals at Simpson Barracks included the unveiling of a centenary sculpture.

Australia has the unique distinction of having had the first regularly formed signal unit in the [British Empire](#).

The Corps began in 1869 as a small "torpedo and signals corp", located in New South Wales and Victoria. These units existed until 1882 when they were disbanded. In 1885, a "signalling corps", composed of one officer and twelve other ranks, was created in South Australia and remained active until 1901.



After the inception of the Commonwealth Forces, an "Australian Corps of Signallers" was formed on 12 January 1906. This day is recognised as the Signal Corps' birthday. The Corps remained as a self-contained unit until 1911 when it was merged with the Royal Australian Engineers.

On 1 January 1925, the Australian Corps of Signals was formed, and all Signals units were separated from the Australian Corps of Engineers.

On 10 November 1948, His Majesty King George VI conferred the title "Royal" on the Australian Corps of Signals. The day is recognised as a "Corps Day", and commemorative functions are held on, or as near as possible to, 10 November each year.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY SPIRIT AND JUSTICE

By Des Lambley PhD

This unique story is about William Leggatt, a man who enlisted in the AIF as an Engineer Signaller. As most Engineers would know, the Engineer Signal Service was the antecedent of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. They are celebrating the Centenary of the establishment of their Corps in 2025 and would be proud to claim William Leggatt. He must be shared.

This paper is a recognition of the enduring connection between Engineers and Signallers. Leggatt's military service is reconstructed from a human perspective, providing lessons and remembrance. Like thousands of others, he was a civilian who had volunteered to join the Australian military. They were actors in a horrible melodrama from which they could not honourably escape. Historian, Michael Tyquin says Australians should 'honour its war dead, not as the bronzed Anzac, but by way of an infinitely more complex icon, in men and women who were good and bad, heroic and fragile, and to include the weak and unlucky amongst them'.¹ Some Australian Imperial Force (AIF) men were noticed for their gallant actions, and others for their indiscipline. Sometimes, these opposite character qualities exist in the same man at different times. These men had learned the norms of the civilian society from which they came, but a different set of



standards in the form of military rules and regulations were superimposed upon them in the AIF. Many of the men objected to such a rigid discipline and broke the rules. Men and women who have served in the forces understand that the indiscipline of subordinates would have resulted in stern counselling by their NCOs or Officers, and some would have been awarded minor punishments, perhaps by way of extra duties in the first instance. Repeat offenders or indiscipline regarded as serious might have led to their court-martial. There were some 22,000 courts-martial held for military crimes in the Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANMEF) and the AIF during active service years of World War I.² About 5,000 of this number were repeat offenders.

Most Australians know of the hellish environment that existed on the Western Front. Stress might have led to indiscipline, particularly in the fighting arms. There was constant debilitating work and little opportunity to rest or be given furlough. When they did have some 'downtime', it is no wonder that they washed their bad memories away with excess alcohol or tried to have a good time. They were conscious of their mortality and the prospect of their death on returning to the trenches. To blame them for their errant behaviour seems churlish.

Punishment for five minutes of inappropriate behaviour over years of gallant conduct seems somewhat unjust by modern standards, considering the killing work they were required to do. A soldier's maxim is that the real crime was getting caught, meaning luck was involved. Some had committed a crime but were unobserved doing so or were 'ticked off' informally. This category was unrecorded and is called 'the dark figure of crime' by scholars. Studies have revealed that about two-thirds of the crimes for which Officers were court-martialled

were for drunkenness and absenteeism—the other third involved various trivial and serious ones. Conversely, the many gallantry citations provide a window into the AIF's work and indicate the Australian soldier's character.

William Leggatt was born in December 1894 in the New Hebrides, the son of Thomas Leggatt, a Presbyterian missionary assigned there from Scotland. William finished his education at Geelong College and then at the University of Melbourne, where he gained a BA in 1915. During this time, he served three years in the Citizens Forces. He enlisted in the AIF in Melbourne on 6 August. His father wrote a letter from their residence at Box Hill on 5 August to give his consent for William to enlist, and his mother wrote from Sunbury on 19 August 1915 also to give her consent. This educated young man was 20 years and 8 months old, 175 centimetres tall and weighed 76 kilograms. He had a fresh complexion, blue eyes and fair hair. After basic training at Broadmeadows, he was promoted as a provisional Corporal on 1 November, to Sergeant three weeks later and was allocated to the 5th Divisional Signal Company, Signal Engineers, 2nd Division AIF, and embarked in November 1915 for Egypt. Leggatt was hospitalised with measles there in January 1916 and then moved to France via Marseille with the Company in March. In July, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant.

In July, the 15th Brigade was engaged in the infamous Fromelles debacle. The attacking 59th and 60th Battalions suffered a massive loss of 1450 casualties. The Brigade led by Brigadier 'Pompey' Elliott saw rotating service in the trenches on the Western Front in France and Belgium for the next two and half years. Leggatt was promoted to Lieutenant in March 1917 and granted furlough to London in April and again in August 1917 after which he was hospitalised at Le Havre for 73 days diagnosed with 'VDG'. He then rejoined the 59th and 60th Battalions and then as the specialist Signals Officer at Brigade Headquarters.

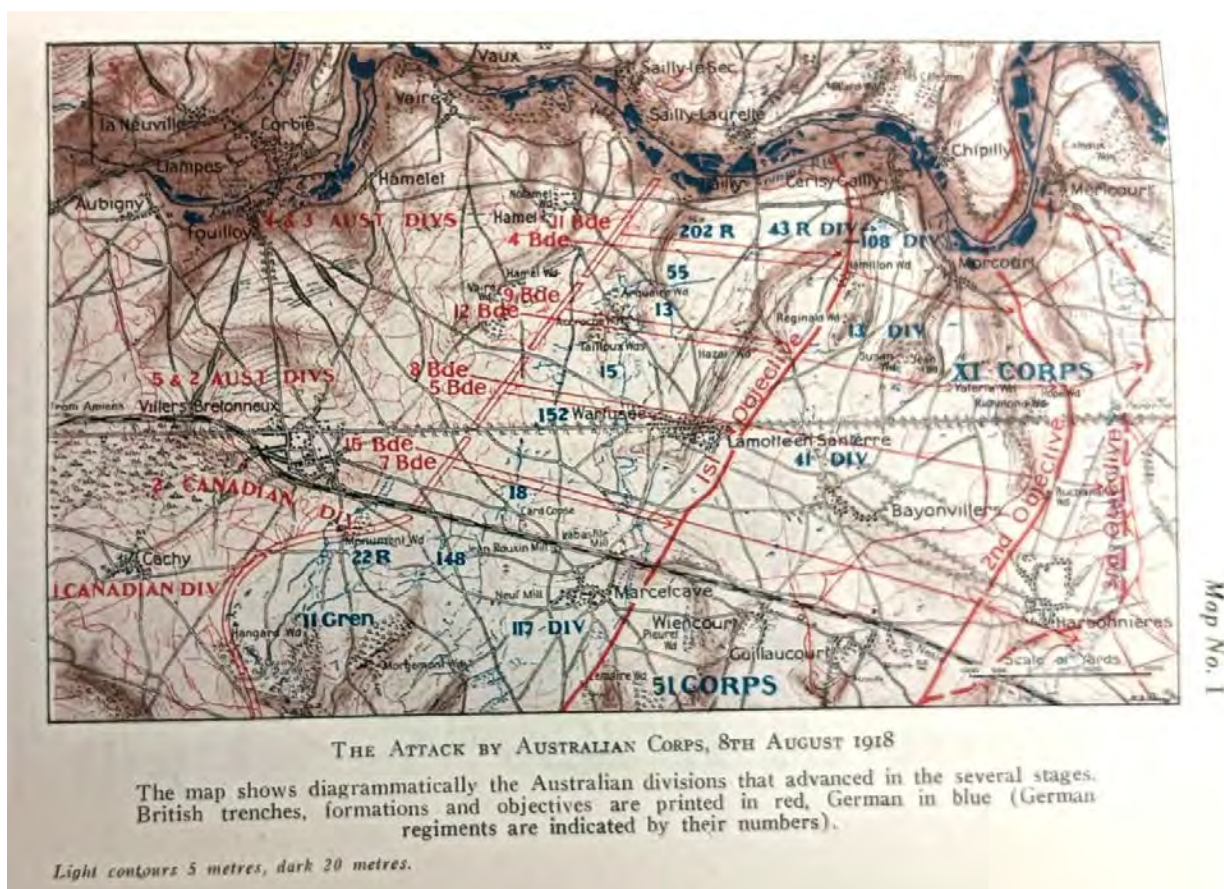
On 24th August 1918, the 59th Battalion was resting near Peronne when it was ordered to amalgamate as two Companies 'C' and 'D' with the 60th Battalion. The 60th was also reformed into 'A' and 'B' Companies. Such was the attrition. Much has been written about the reluctance of depleted Battalions to merge, but a compromise resolved the near mutiny. C.E.W. Bean, Australia's Official War Historian, wrote that refusal by the men was only defused by Elliot's force of character and the respect his subordinates had for him. It was strictly a mutiny but was not treated as such by the Australian or British authorities. They understood the value of morale, esprit de corps and unit loyalty.

Ammunitions were issued for a planned operation on the 28th. The four Companies were tasked to attack a portion of the Hindenburg line near Bellicourt. They were to advance through the US forces leading on this operation, but 100 metres beyond the original jump-off-line they came under unexpected enfilading fire from enemy machine-gun nests that the advancing US forces had failed to mop up. The Companies were held up and suffered many casualties. Two Officers were killed, two more died later from their wounds, and seven Officers including Lieutenant Leggatt were wounded. Fourteen other ranks were killed, 15 later dying from wounds and 177 were injured.⁴ Lieutenant Leggatt had received a gunshot to his right arm and was evacuated to a hospital in London. While there, he was awarded a Military Cross on 3 December 1918 for an action which took place on August 8 1918 (see below), and was declared 'fit' two weeks later and moved back to France for duty. During these final operations on the Hindenburg Line, the Brigade lost a total of 32 Officers and 489 men killed or wounded.

The citation for his gallantry says:

For bravery and devotion to duty. Lieutenant Leggatt is an Officer of 60th Battalion who has been temporarily attached to this Company in charge of No. 4 Section with 15th Australian Infantry Brigade. He organised and prepared Brigade communications in connection with the attack on the Villers Bretonneux front on the morning of 8th August 1918. Half an hour after zero hour on that date he moved forward with a party of the Signal Section and established a relay post in a trench 2000 yards from the starting point. In this trench he discovered and, with his party, captured 1 Officer and 7 other

ranks of the enemy. About two hours after he had to move forward a further 2000 yards and established his forward Brigade signal office in P.34.d. Half an hour later under instruction from the Brigadier he moved his office to near Marcelcave. An hour later he again moved the station forward a further 4000 yards establishing a relay station at V.6.b. and a temporary station at W.8.a. At about noon he moved forward a further 1000 yards and opened his advanced office at W.15.a. From this point communication was established to Battalions and flank brigades. He therefore during the advance moved his forward office on five occasions between the hours of 4 am and 4 pm. This work was accomplished under most strenuous conditions and heavy enemy shellfire. It was entirely due to his courage, perseverance and keen devotion to duty that communications were satisfactorily maintained within his Brigade throughout the advance. He was also responsible for establishing alternate stations.⁵



Map reproduced from C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 - 18, Vol. VI, opp. p 520

In London post-Armistice, while waiting for his return to Australia, Leggatt was apprehended and charged with drunkenness and conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. At about 10.30 pm on 15 December 1918, Civil and Canadian Military Police were conveying a drunken Canadian soldier to the Vine Street, Police Station. An angry mob of soldiers was following them. Leggatt attempted to reason with the Police, but for interfering in the execution of their duty was himself arrested. Revelry by all servicemen might be understood, bearing in mind the war had ceased a month earlier, and they were impatiently waiting for their return home.

At his subsequent court-martial, Lieutenant Leggatt gave evidence claiming the party of Officers with whom he had dined earlier had each consumed a couple of beers and a couple of whiskeys with their meal. Later, at Leicester Square, they went into the Regent Palace Hotel and had coffee. He thought his friend Captain Porter was being arrested by the Police and interceded. However, Porter had been attempting to quell the mob's behaviour, and Leggatt did not know at the time that the Police were arresting a Canadian soldier. Leggatt claimed the Police had unnecessarily bashed them around without provocation in the Charge Room at the

Station and had torn their uniforms. Police Inspector Bailey intervened by entering the room and shouting at the Police that they were beasts, not officers.

The infamous British civilian Doctor Dunn tested Leggatt for drunkenness (medical testing for drunkenness was illegal under military law) and, an hour or so later, was taken into custody by Captain Williams of the Australian Provost Corps. Other research revealed that Doctor Dunn had an arrangement with the local Military Police for call out to determine drunkenness (for which a consulting fee was paid and maybe shared). In his evidence, Williams said that Lieutenant Leggatt was not drunk. However, he had to be placed under open arrest because the Civil Police had made charges against him for drunkenness and resisting arrest. Specialist medical experts testified for the defence, and other evidence was given by the Officers who had attended the dinner earlier in the evening. In summarising the case, the Judge Advocate said it was for the court to say which evidence they preferred. Lieutenant Leggatt was found not guilty on both charges.⁶ The hand-written proceedings of his court-martial total nearly 50 pages. He subsequently returned to Australia, where his AIF commission was terminated in June 1919.

However, Will Watt Leggatt continued military service with the Citizens Military Forces between the wars and was a practising solicitor in Melbourne when World War II began. He again enlisted, was appointed Captain in January 1939, a Major in July 1940, and served in Rabaul as 2IC of the 2nd/40th Battalion. On his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in November 1941, he took command of the Battalion and, with supporting elements, deployed with it to Timor as 'Sparrow Force'. Leggatt had to surrender what was left of his harassing guerrilla fighting force in February 1942, surrounded as they were by many thousands of Japanese troops occupying the island. Sparrow Force was short of supplies and ammunition, without reinforcement and had little chance of extraction. As prisoners of war, they were moved in stages by the Japanese to Changi, where they remained until the war's end.

Biographer Geoff Browne says Leggatt was not of the traditionalist Officer class who exploited the privileges of rank, but a man who retained a sense of dignity as a captive and set a fine example to his fellow prisoners.⁷ He was Mentioned in Despatches for his services whilst POW in Japanese hands and later a Distinguished Service Order for outstanding leadership and courage on Timor and as a POW.

On his repatriation from Changi and back in Melbourne, Leggatt was appointed Officer-in-Charge of war crimes investigations and was elected a Member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1947, holding several portfolios over the years until resigning in 1956. He was appointed the Victorian Agent-General in London and knighted in 1957. William Watt Leggatt died in 1968 at the Repatriation Hospital, Heidelberg. His was an amazing life. He was the man of his time who provided service to Australia and Australians. As an Engineer Signals Officer in World War I, he can be proudly claimed as one of the Royal Australian Engineers and as one of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals.

¹ Michael Tyquin, *Madness and the Military: Australia's experience of the Great War*, Army History Unit, 2006.

² Active service was from 14 August 1914 to midnight 21/22 October 1921.

³ NAA: B883, VX44907; NAA: A471, 18957.

⁴ C.E.W. Bean, *The Australian Imperial Force in France During the Allied Offensive*, 1918, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1942.

⁵ AWM4, 23/76/32, Infantry, AIF War Diaries, 59th Battalion, September 1918.

⁶ AWM28 1/304 Part 2 Recommendations for honours and awards.

⁷ NAA: A471, 18957 LEGGATT William Watt (Lieutenant).

⁸ Geoff Browne, 'Leggatt, Sir William Watt (Bill) (1894–1968)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/leggatt-sir-william-watt-bill-10808/text19171>

REMEMBRANCE DAY AT THE REPAT: OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NEW VICTORIAN SAPPER HISTORY

By Sapper Summit

Forests, Fires and Fortifications, a major history project of LTCOL Don Hughes (Retd), was officially launched at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital on 11 November (Remembrance Day) 2025 by the Chair of the Austin Health Board, Mr Ross Cooke OAM.

The new history marks the 75th anniversary of the 22nd Engineer Regiment and its predecessors, and chronicles the wonderful and significant early military engineering history of Melbourne, that boasted its fortifications made it the most defended port in the southern hemisphere, to more recent times when Army Engineers helped save Victoria from the Black Summer Bushfires.

The new history should become available in 2026.



Mr Peter (Jock) Fallon, Curator of the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital Memorial Gardens, Don Hughes, President RAE Association of Victoria and Mr Ross Cooke OAM, Chair Austin Health Board.

The master of ceremonies, Mr Robert Winther OAM, JP, the Veteran Liaison officer at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, weaved a number of wonderful unveilings and commemorations throughout the well-attended Remembrance Day service.

Exquisite portraits of soldier Cameron Baird VC, MG and nurse Vivian Bullwinkel by renowned veteran artist George Petrou OAM, were unveiled to the delight of an appreciative crowd.

Plaques to honour a new “Nurses Walk” and our “Police Veterans” were also unveiled.

Along with the passing of other Victorian Veterans during the year, the Canine Mascot of the RAE Association of Victoria, Zeus, was honoured during the moving commemorative service.

VIETNAM VETERANS COMMEMORATE THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN



Doncaster RSL 7 August

Vietnam veterans around the state commemorate this significant conflict in August each year – usually on Long Tan Day on the 18th August. Some RSL's and other organisations commemorate to meet local needs of their members.

Under the leadership of Doncaster RSL President, Mr Dennis Clark (RAEME), Vice President, Nevio Piaser and Secretary, Kym Bishop, a wonderful service was conducted on 7th August 2025 at the Doncaster Sub-Branch.



Special guest of honour was Mr Dave Sabben MG, who at age 21 commanded 12 Platoon, Delta Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) at the Battle of Long Tan.

Now living in Mount Eliza he pursues his passion of writing. He has written and co-authored three books about the war in Vietnam.

David was mentioned in dispatches for his actions during Long Tan and later awarded the Medal for Gallantry. The loss of his men, however, remains a heavy burden.

David gave a wonderful talk to the large crowd, of mostly Vietnam veterans, highlighting the need for the Infantry to be well supported by their mates. He particularly highlighted, in the case of Long Tan, the critical support provided by Artillery, Cavalry and Aviation.

After a most informative question and answer session, Kym Bishop presented David the book *“Bridging The Gap”* about the sapper experience in East Timor after he had presented her one of his books whilst touring the Long Tan battlefield in 2024.

The commemoration was attended by the Federal Member for Menzies, Gabriel Ng MP, and the State Member for Warrandyte, Nicole Werner MP. Don Hughes and Zeus represented the RAE Association of Victoria.

A wonderful Vietnamese style luncheon was provided by staff and members of the Doncaster RSL.

THE SOLDIER'S BATTLE

An old drunken man sat silent
On a lonely bar room chair
His clothes were torn and tattered
He had long and shaggy hair

His eyes looked dark and weary
As he sat in sad despair
No one knew of his hardship
And they didn't really care

His story is like many others
Who have seen the taste of war
He cannot erase the memory
Or even up the score

And as he sat in silence
And drank his beer down
He could hear the joy and laughter
Of the patrons all around

And as he sits in silence
Wondering why and what for
He gave up his home life
When he was sent to war

The terror of the battle
The guns firing all around
The screaming of the wounded
He cannot erase the sound



The spraying of Agent Orange
To kill the jungle so green
The poisoning of the troops
The true toll may never be seen

For these are his silent memories
He kept to himself so long
The memories of the battles
And the bond with his mates so strong

Next time you see a drunkard
Sitting silent at the bar
Take the time to pity
For his war-torn mind is scarred

He drinks to hide the memories
That come back day after day
A lonely soldier in battle
Fighting his lonely war

Yes, a lonely soldier in battle
Fighting his lonely war

Colin "Fish" Fraser

ALBURY TO THE SEA OR BUST!

Army engineers' world record

Part one – sowing the seed

Don Hughes

AFTER THE NILE AND AMAZON, the Murray River is the third longest navigable river on the planet. (1)

A well-trained and determined team of Australian Army engineers (sappers) established a world record by paddling the length of the Murray as an adventure training exercise in 1979.

This record journey totalled 2225 Km including crossing the notorious Lake Alexandrina near the mouth.

Nearly half a century later, this world record still stands.

The world record attempt

As chronicled in the wonderful 2017 book, *Murray River Journeys*, (p.157), by Angela and Mike Bremers, *"Michael Wentworth and Ian Dellar, army canoeists both aged 22, paddled a TK2 Kayak down the Murray River from Albury to Goolwa from 3-20 December 1979. In the process they set a record of 16 days 3 hours and 55 minutes for paddling from Albury to Murray Bridge (the previous record was 36 days held by Philip Davis and Robert S. Lodge in 1971) and established a new record of 17 days 6 hours and 50 minutes for Albury to Goolwa."*

This remains the current world record. Angela and Mike go on to explain the enormity of the attempt and some of the challenges they faced.

"They had a support crew of four army vehicles which were in radio contact with the motorboat that followed the canoeists. Another TK2 acted as a pace boat and had a change of crew. In the first three days they averaged 9.2 miles per hour (mph), in the last 6-7 days they averaged 5mph and for the other 7 days they averaged 6mph. They usually paddled from 5am till dark but paddled for 38 hours with only a two-hour break to reach Murray Bridge."

Just to reinforce this amazing effort, paddling a week later from 26-31 December, Michael and Ian also participated in the *Red Cross Murray River Canoe Marathon*.

Albury to the sea or bust!

"Albury to the sea or bust" was the catch cry of the sappers during this adventurous challenge.

Years later, Ian and Michael would comment, *"We did both, we made it to the sea, and we were busted!"*

Critically testing the athletic prowess and endurance of the paddlers, the attempt also highlighted the need to have a well-trained and adaptable support crew.

This proved vital for the team's ultimate success.

Then based at Puckapunyal in central Victoria near Seymour, the team consisted of 12 soldiers (sappers) from the Royal Australian Engineer's 21st Construction Squadron, whose distinctive mascot and unit emblem is the *Red Rooster*.

Enhancing the array of support skills needed for such a challenge, a motor mechanic from Puckapunyal Workshop Company and a medical assistant from 26th Transport Squadron were included in the team.

This hand-picked 14 strong team was organised into land and water-based crews to support the two world record paddlers, Sappers Michael (Willy) Wentworth and Ian (Mort) Dellar.

Willy and Mort had been paddling for just over 12 months when the idea was first hatched. Both however, were gifted athletes, extremely fit and highly motivated. Both had competed in numerous paddling challenges, especially in the gruelling and well organised annual *Red Cross Murray River Canoe Marathon*.

The world record team:

Officer In Charge

Second Lieutenant Don (DC) Hughes

Team Sergeant

Corporal Ian (Leachy) Leach

Record Paddlers

Sapper Michael (Willy) Wentworth

Sapper Ian (Mort) Dellar

Pacer Paddlers/Support Boat

Sapper Allan (Fairy) Fairbrother

Sapper Gordon (Mo) Moses

Sapper Keith (Truck) Laurie

Sapper Michael (Scotty) Scott

Cook

Lance Corporal (Admiral) Knox

Driver

Lance Corporal (Smithy) Smith

Driver/Electrician

Sapper (Pearcy) Pearse

Driver/Check Pointer

Sapper Gary (Eddy) Edwards

Motor Mechanic

(Puckapunyal Workshop Company)

Craftsman (Colly) Collier

Medical

(26 Transport Squadron)

Private (Clarky) Clark



Sowing the seed

Originally held between Boxing Day and New Years Eve each year, the *Red Cross Murray River Canoe Marathon* had humble beginnings in 1969.

It gave many Australian canoeists, including Australian Defence Force (ADF) individuals and teams, the opportunity to compete in various categories in both a challenging and competitive environment.

21st Construction Squadron had become closely involved with the marathon over several years.

Being located inland at Puckapunyal many soldiers felt isolated and yearned access to recreational activities, particularly aquatic pursuits.

Canoeing became a highly desirable after-hours recreational activity for many members of the unit.



The local rivers and creeks, particularly the Goulburn River, attracted sappers of all ranks and trades like a magnet. Sappers also like to build things which resulted in many canoes and kayaks being crafted in the workshops dotted around the workplaces of the Squadron.

Sometime around early 1979, the seed for this gruelling challenge was sown.

Mort recalls that,

“After the success of our first marathon in December 1978, we felt we could maybe do something much bigger. I distinctly remember discussing this with Willy in the accommodation lines. We briefly spoke about paddling around the coast of Victoria. This was quickly dismissed as our kayak was not suitable”.

Out came the Guinness Book of Records (1974 Australian edition).

They saw that there was a record for paddling the Murray River.

“We can do that, let’s do it in half the time”, they both agreed.

They then did some quick calculations and further agreed *“about 16 days seems achievable”*.

The idea was hatched in only a few minutes.

Willy then proceeded to gather as much data, information, river charts and topographical maps to plan for the attempt. At that time, on a rotational picquet basis, the squadron was tasked with providing security at the former RAAF Ammunition Depot located at Ettamogah just north of Albury. Whilst at this ammunition storage facility, which ultimately closed in 1990, Willy managed to procure enough maps for nearly the entire length of the Murray River.

So, the seed was sown, a world class challenge lay ahead.

“We will probably need a support team to help us, and also a better understanding of the river if we are to succeed”, were nearly afterthoughts for these two highly motivated and focused paddlers.

Military training in an Australian environment

Around that time, adventurous military training on Australian territory was highly encouraged.

The ADF had recently ceased combat operations in South Vietnam in 1973.

This period of relative peace elevated the need for Australian soldiers to conduct challenging and adventurous training to gain realistic and practical experience in a wide array of demanding environments.

An increasing focus away from expeditionary style military deployments, as had occurred essentially since Federation in 1901, sharpened the need for conducting training and operations at home to ultimately protect the nation.

Part of that protection included our nation’s natural resources.

Water is one of our most fickle, yet vital, natural resources and is of particular interest to sappers.

The Murray-Darling Basin

The Murray-Darling Basin is the third largest water catchment in the world.

This natural terrain feature extends throughout much of the southeast landmass of Australia stretching from southern Queensland through New South Wales and into Victoria and South Australia.

The water captured ultimately flows into our national river, the Murray, the third longest navigable river in the world that eventually discharges into the Southern Ocean.

Named since colonisation after General Sir George Murray, a Scottish soldier and statesman who became the British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, the Murray River forms part of the border between Victoria and New South Wales.

Australian soldiers need to be familiar with our own terrain and topography. Particularly for sappers, this included our rivers, creeks and waterways.

The Mighty Murray - an ancient heritage

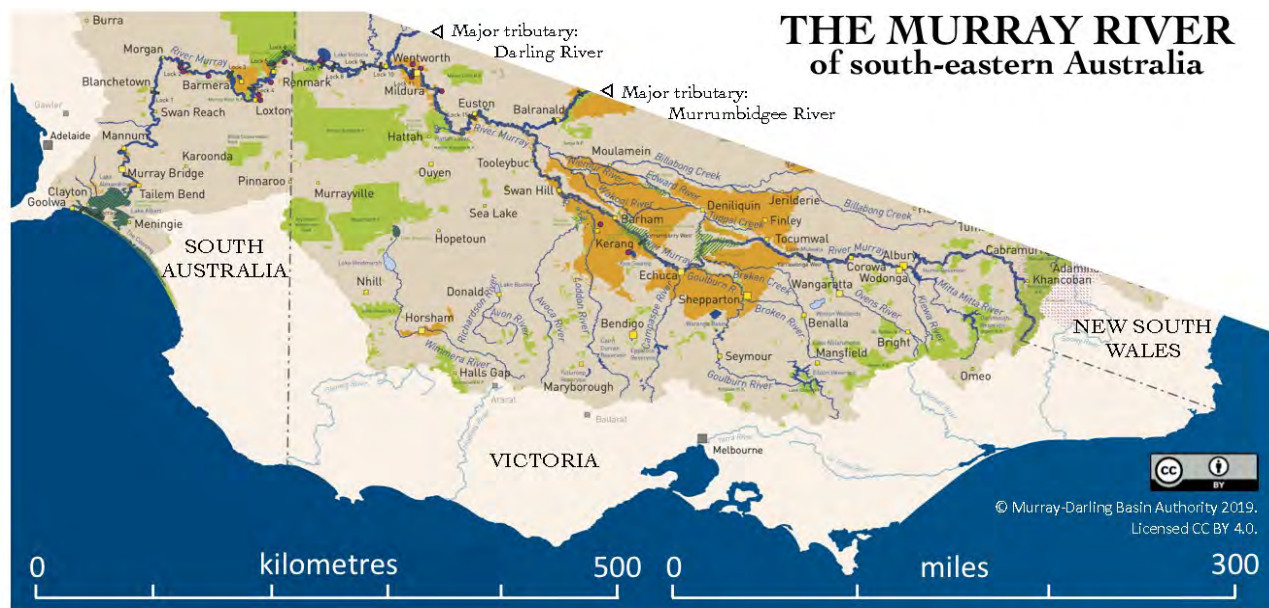
Nostalgically often called the “*Mighty Murray*” it is traditionally known by several local names depending on what indigenous country it flows through, *Dhungala*, *Millewa*, *Tongala* and *Kalara* (meaning big water).

It has an ancient heritage: The overall Murray-Darling basin, once part of an inland sea during the Miocene Period (between 23 and 5 million years ago), extended broadly across to the Nullarbor Plain, and when that old inland sea receded, formed glaciers during the Ice Age carving tracks through fossil-rich marine beds.

Numerous marine fossil specimens, including seashells, shark teeth and whale bones, have been found along the Murray’s banks and cliffs.

In an earlier Jurassic Age, huge lizard-like creatures up to twenty metres long, roamed inland Australia.

Ironically, one of our record paddlers, Michael (Willy) Wentworth, later became passionately involved with palaeontology at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). He was given the honour of having a Miocene marsupial fossil named after him (*Maleodectes wentworthi*) and for his wonderful scientific contribution was awarded the prestigious *Riversleigh Medal* by UNSW.



Source: Murray-Darling Basin Authority (https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/1269-Murray-Darling-Basin-Map-Poster-A1_0.pdf).

The source of the Murray River

The source of the Murray is a mere trickle.

Originating in an alpine meadow spring near Cowombat Flat, this trickle is fed by several runnels from the surrounding high country on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range in Northeast Victoria.

It then enjoys numerous confluences with minor and major tributaries along its 2508km total length.

Meandering through ancient red gum forests and swinging inland through vast brown inland plains the river finally slows as it approaches the delta region of the Coorong and Lake Alexandrina in South Australia.

Eventually, it funnels through the changeable mouth near Goolwa ending its journey in the Southern Ocean.

The impact of European colonisation

Since European settlement many accelerated physical, environmental, social and political influences have impacted heavily on the Murray.

Chris Hamer critically explores these impacts in his well-researched 2010 book, *The River – a journey through the Murray-Darling Basin*.

Interestingly, one of the world's longest structures, *The Dingo Fence*, at 5,614 kilometres in length and completed in 1885, safeguards the interior approaches to the basin.

Flowing through this ancient country the river undertook significant change with European colonisation in the 1800s. The river has faced constant and complex challenges, not only physically, but also regarding its traditional and ancestral ownership.

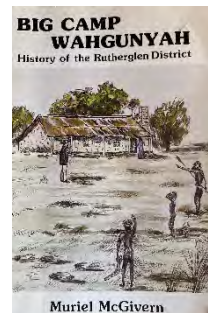
Many towns and settlements established themselves along its course, each with their own story.

Nestled quietly on the southern bank of the river opposite Corowa, Wahgunya is but one example.

Muriel McGivern, in her 1983 history of the Rutherglen District, *Big Camp Wahgunya*, devotes a chapter to the *White Invaders* (Chapter 2) where she highlights the impact early European influence had not only on the ancestral lands, but also the shattering news that these strange white men were not merely on a visit to the country.

For thousands of years the river would have been used extensively for trading goods and as a food source.

A well-established way of life, since the dreamtime, would never be the same.



The warrior exclaimed – Wagunyah!

Colonial explorers, Hume and Hovell, brushed past to the east of the area in 1824.

Captain Charles Sturt (a soldier and surveyor) whilst exploring the Murrumbidgee in 1829-30 by boat, was suddenly shot into the then unknown Murray and taken downstream.

In 1836 Major Thomas Mitchell passed nearby the now well-established township of Rutherglen.

By 1841, as recorded in a Lands Department document, a cattle run was licensed in the Rutherglen area adjacent the Murray to settlers John Crisp and John Foord.

After Foord built a dwelling on the run, a local warrior exclaimed, possibly in comparison to his own dwelling, and perhaps in amazement and fright, "*Wah gunyah!*" (meaning beware a big hut, with *wah* meaning big or astonishing, and *gunyah* meaning a shelter).

The local warrior no doubt thought, "*What is this strange gunyah doing here in our land?*" (McGivern p.2)

Hence the name Wahgunya for the township on the southern bank of the Murray opposite Corowa.

Along its meandering journey the river encounters many "improvements" before reaching the sea.

The ancient river is no longer a wild river.

It was "tamed" by numerous dams, locks, bridges, ports, irrigation systems and weirs.

The Murray remains home to the world's largest red gum forests and ibis hatcheries.

The earliest recorded canoeing attempt was by George (Chinese) Morrison, then aged 18, who navigated the river from Wodonga to its mouth, in 65 days, completing the 1,555-mile (2,503 km) journey in January 1881 (Pearl pp. 11-12).

Philip Davis and Robert S. Lodge paddled the river in their 15.5-foot canoe from Albury to Murray Bridge in 36 days from 28 December 1970 to 1 February 1971 and established their world record published in the 1974 Australian edition of the Guinness Book of Records.

The seed was sown – a new world record awaits

Now the hard work would begin in earnest.

Vigorous physical and skills training for the water-based crew commenced.

Assembling the equipment, people, stores and equipment required for the challenge, so our paddlers could be propelled down the Murray as quickly as humanly possible, kept the land-based crew busy.

Ongoing training, preparation and the actual execution of this amazing world record attempt, will be covered in a future article.

We may also find out the mystery of why every bridge, dam, weir, lock, port and irrigation system has a spray painted red coloured rooster emblazoned on it.

Facimus et Frangimus (Latin for “we make, and we break”)

To be continued.....

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Bremers A. (Angela) and M. (Mike), *Murray River Journeys*, Vivid publishing, 2017.

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Notes:

1. Murray-Darling Basin Authority (www.mdba.gov.au)

CORPS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION JULY 5 2025

UPWEY- BELGRAVE RSL

Well, what a wonderful experience and day for all those who came along to the Upwey-Belgrave RSL to help celebrate the Corps birthday.

This RSL is a little gem tucked away in Upwey and certainly without the glitz and glamour of the bigger RSL's but what it lacked in size it made up in bucket loads with its welcome and hospitality.

The purpose of the lunch is to acknowledge and celebrate the Corps birthday (01st July 2025) and on this occasion we had about 30 people who came together for lunch – our numbers were a bit lower than last year but still it was a good turnout. This RSL is staffed by volunteers who went out of their way to accommodate us.

All birthdays should be celebrated with a cake, and it is no different for the Corps birthday – with the help of Maragret Handte a suitably decorated cake was provided which was cut by Marg. Everyone in attendance (including the RSL staff) were provided with a piece of the cake.

Regrettably Don Hughes (and Zeus) were apologies, so Jim Davis spoke and thanked everyone for coming along and about the significance of the day and acknowledging the reason for our get together.

Following lunch and formalities the RSL opened the museum which houses a wonderful collection of memorabilia.

A most enjoyable day, wonderful venue along with great food which was complemented by the outstanding company. I am sure that everyone would have gone away from the day with a feeling of pride. I can think of no better way to celebrate such an important birthday other than the way we did it today.

Again, thanks to Margaret Handte and Mel Constable for the extra work that they contributed to make the day a success.

Happy birthday

RAE.

UBIQUE.

Jim Davis





THE SIR JOHN HOLLAND RAE GOLF DAY

ROYAL MELBOURNE GOLF CLUB



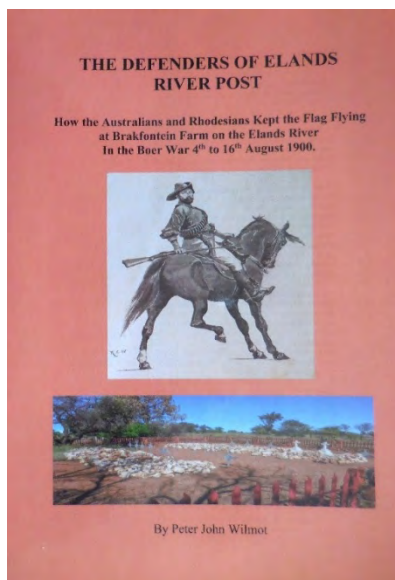
Built Australia GM Vic Paul Ritchie & BRIG Hutch Hutchinson DSC (Retd) present the Sir John Holland Cup for Best individual score to LTCOL Jason Eltham, CO designate 22 ER



Paul Ritchie (Built Australia General Manager Vic) & BRIG Hutch Hutchinson DSC (Retd) along with former CO of SME, COL Dave Rye congratulate the RAE Corps RSM, WO1 Russell Peel on his nearest the pin award 2025 with the Royal Melbourne clubhouse behind them

The Evans-Zoller Trophy is played for each year by RAE and allied forces' officers.

NEW BOER WAR HISTORY BOOK PUBLISHED



Association member Peter Wilmot has published a new book on the 12-day siege of Elands River Post in West Transvaal during August 1900. At 336 pages, it features detailed coverage of the battle, emphasising the trench warfare which was later to be an infamous feature of the Great War.

Around 500 Australian and Rhodesian troops fought against 2500 to 3000 Boers in defence of a vital British supply route.

Eyewitness accounts taken from over 95 letters and diaries, along with previously unpublished documents, plus maps, medals and poems provide a comprehensive account of the battle.

An index, appendices and cross-referencing make this a valuable research tool for military historians, genealogists and medal collectors.

A limited print run, \$45.00 plus \$11.50 postage.

For more information, contact Peter on 0408 137874, or wilmotp2@bigpond.com.

FROM THE REGIMENT: ACTIVITIES FOR 2025

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SGT Ben Thompson

The year 2025 has presented significant challenges and opportunities for the members of the 22nd Engineer Regiment, marked by numerous combined arms activities and internally conducted courses. The year commenced with several personnel returning from Rifle Company Butterworth, others deploying on Transit Security Element, and CAPT Michael Plant participating in an Army History Unit staff ride to Borneo.

In April, the Regiment contributed to the JTG 629.2 exercise EX ARRAS FLASH in Sale, Victoria. Sappers from 22ER executed a range of tasks including cordon and search operations, dismounted and mounted patrols, vehicle checkpoints (VCP), vital asset protection, and urban assaults. The team also collaborated with local law enforcement in the clearance of unoccupied buildings.

In June, the Operations Cell delivered a DMEO course at Dutson Bombing Range, RAAF Sale, for soldiers from 8/7 RVR, 5/6 RVR, 12/40 RTR and 4/19 PWLH. This has qualified members throughout the 4th Brigade so they can safely dispose of Misfires and UXO from their HE weapons.

July saw members from 8 and 10 Combat Engineer Squadrons deploy on EX TALISMAN SABRE in Darwin. Activities included snap VCPs, area searches, vital asset protection and hardening, breaching operations, post-blast incident drills, and camp construction. The exercise culminated at the newly commissioned Enhanced Urban Operations Training Facility (EUOTF).



Sappers from 22ER conducting LUEB drills at PMA

Also in July, the Regiment Training Troop conducted a five-day Field Craft and Battle Craft course at Puckapunyal Military Area (PMA) for ab initio trainees from 22ER, 8 OSU, 2/10 Battery, and 108 Signal SQN. The course entailed big challenges for the trainees, with a number of them have never having slept in a field environment, so 4 days of intense rain made it interesting. This course successfully qualified 24 trainees throughout the 2nd Australian Division.

In August, 22ER hosted its annual Section Competition, featuring multiple sections competing in a series of demanding activities. These included a BFA race, a falling plate shoot on the PMA classification range, tactical navigation legs, search lanes utilizing the FLAIM system, and demolitions fault-finding tasks. After a closely contested event, 6 Section, 2 Troop, 8 CE SQN, led by CPL Benjamin McFadyen, emerged as the winners.



Sappers from 22ER prepping charges to conduct demolition range practices

October involved participation in the Brigade-level exercise EX ARRAS WALKS, which spanned locations across Victoria, including PMA and the Greater Bendigo Shire. 8 and 10 CE Squadrons conducted search operations and provided engineering advice to SRTU 8/7 RVR. 105 Construction Squadron delivered construction capability and field engineering support to the SRTU HQ. This exercise offered an excellent opportunity to collaborate with 4th Brigade counterparts and deliver mobility, survivability, and specialist engineering effects to the JTG.

As the year drew to a close, December was marked by preparations for the stand-down period, the Commanding Officer's Handover-Takeover parade and bringing ESF 22ER online. After two years of leadership, LTCOL Russell Collins handed over command of the Regiment to LTCOL Jason Eltham during a formal parade at Oakleigh Barracks.

FIELDRAFT & BATTLECRAFT COURSE

PUCKAPUNYAL TRAINING AREA

23 – 27 JULY 2025

CPL Simon Haberecht

Training staff from 22 Engineer Regiment, Training Troop, took 23 new soldiers out to Puckapunyal Training Area to complete the in field phase of their Fieldcraft and Battlecraft training from the 23rd July through til the 27th July 2025. This training is the field phase that originally occurred at Kapooka during basic training, however, in recent years was allocated to Regiments to complete internally.



New soldiers mostly from 22nd Engineer Regiment with some extras from 8 OSU, 108 Signal Squadron and 2/10 Battery deployed out into the field behind the National Service Lines and airfield area at Puckapunyal. Being July, weather conditions were cold (getting done to minus 1 degree overnight) wet and wild as well, with a severe weather front tearing through the Troop harbour midway through the week. The weather was a

great test of the resilience and endurance

for the soldiers to learn and hone skills for living in the field.



Troops pack marched up to the harbour and learnt about setting good defensive routines and development of the location. They went through morning and evening and night routines, sending out clearing patrols and practising field signals. Members from 22ER's 8 Squadron assisted with the training, by acting as an oppositional force

(OPFOR) testing the defences of the soldiers and furthering their weapon handling skills. During the day additional lessons were conducted by Training Troops NCOs and soldiers who conducted routine patrols to clear features where the OPFOR had taken up residence. This developed their battlecraft skills in section attacks and fire and movement skills. Soldiers adapted quickly throughout the training period and by the end of the week had improved vastly from their first attempts. Night time activities involved learning to move silently by night and produced



unexpected practice in moving from sleeping quarters to fighting positions as OPFOR probed their position.

After completing all skills required for the course, troops moved back down for some additional training and some well-deserved hot food. Sergeant HOSKEN showed soldiers through support by fire demonstrations utilising the Light Support Weapon, F89 Minimi. This involved four Minimis firing short burst each sequentially to lay down constant suppressive fire towards an enemy position. Everyone was impressed by the display and those on the Minimi were happy to have learnt a new skill.

Throughout the whole week, soldiers bonded well within their sections and developed these core soldier skills and camaraderie which will set them up well for their future soldiering careers. Training staff worked hard to prepare and execute the course in challenging conditions to produce a new batch of qualified soldiers for the Army.



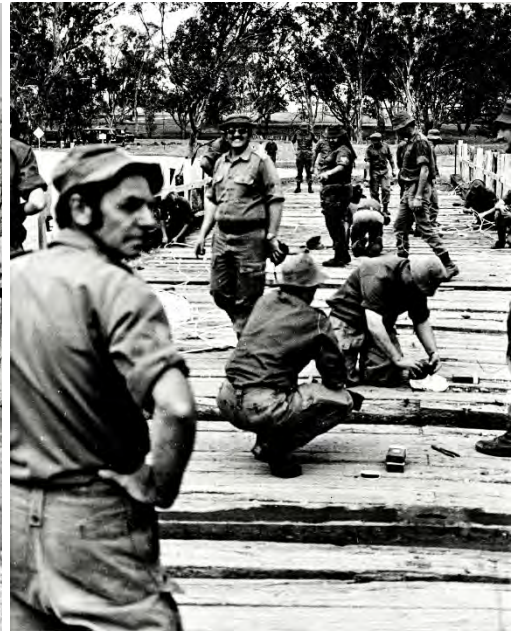
AND HERE'S ONE WE PREPARED (MUCH) EARLIER

Facimus et frangimus – a motto that means what it says.

The Army Reserve has always been willing to help the Forests Commission and rural municipalities blow stuff up.

In November 1976, sappers from the 7th Field Engineer Regiment (7FER) from Ringwood, plus some other engineers from Gippsland, helped the Horsham Shire remove an old wooden bridge on Bulgana Road, east of Stawell.

About 63 kg of plastic explosives, 11 kg of TNT, a bag of ammonium nitrate, 60 detonators and primers, plus several hundred metres of detonating fuse was enough to shatter a 50 m long timber bridge on the Wimmera River.





"The idea was to just chop the bridge down, not scatter it all about the countryside" – CAPT Rob Suggett



It was replaced by a low-level crossing.



**REFERENCE LIST OF ACRONYMS AND
INITIALISMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER IN
SAPPER SUMMIT AND ELSEWHERE:**

CE	Combat Engineer
CIED	Counter Improvised Explosive Device
COMD	Command
DME0	Destruction of Malfunctioned Explosive Ordnance
EUOTF	Enhanced Urban Operations Training Facility
IRR	Incident Response Regiment
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IVO	In the Vicinity Of
JTF	Joint Task Force
LUEB	Light Urban Explosive Breaching
PMA	Puckapunyal Military Area
PWLH	Prince of Wales Light Horse
RCB	Rifle Company Butterworth
RTR	Royal Tasmanian Regiment
RVR	Royal Victorian Regiment

SERCAT	Service Category
SOCOMD	Southern Command
SRTU	Security & Response Task Unit
TCCC	Tactical Combat Casualty Care
TTP	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
TE	Task Element
VAP	Vital Asset Protection
VCP	Vehicle Checkpoint
WRT	With Respect To

Unofficial but important:

GTTWM Going to Toilet Without
Mummy

Note – this list is a work in progress – it will grow as the need arises. If you find other potential entries, please contact Sapper Summit and we'll see what we can do. – Ed.

P.S. We already have all the variations on SNAFU, thanks.



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 Holworthy 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 to confirm timings.

Location:

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

Contact:

Tel: 02 8782 8822 Fax: 02 8782 8842
Email: AAMME.mailbox@defence.gov.au

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

NEWBOROUGH REUNION FUNCTION 2025

This year's function was held on October 3 at the Yallourn-Newborough RSL to thank the Valley members, family, and friends who came along to support the function and the Association. Numbers were certainly down this year with about 28 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 heady days of Yallourn and Newborough depots.

For several years the RAE Association (Vic) Inc has supported this function by providing funding for a light supper of finger food. 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. The Newborough function is to let them know that they are not neglected.

Jim Davis and Mel Constable represented the President (Don Hughes) who was unavailable.

The supper 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 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.

George addressed the gathering thanking all those who attended and asked us to remember those that we had lost. In particular he mentioned Hayden (Slim) Somerville.

This function, which I am sure will continue 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 02nd October 2026 (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.

Many thanks again to Heather and George for all your wonderful work and contribution to this successful function and to all those people who came along to the function and support it. Many thanks also to Duncan Howarth for liaising and coordinating the function. The function would not come together or be the success that it is without your combined efforts.





**The happy crowd
at Newborough.**



**Heather Calder and
Rosemary Carney**

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

By Zeus – roving reporter

On 16th September 1975 Papua New Guinea (PNG) became an independent nation.

Australian sappers have had a long and close association with our nearest neighbour and have played an important role in helping to build this new nation.

50 years later in Melbourne, proudly sponsored by the Victorian State Government and hosted by Peter Bakue the President of the PNG Australia Association Victoria, a joyful celebration of culture, laughter, food and unforgettable family moments celebrated this golden milestone of Independence.



Sylvia Coombe, from the United Pacific Council of Victoria, along with John Lister MP the State Member for Werribee, welcomed the excited and jubilant crowd.

For a canine, I was introduced to many new delights and had a most enjoyable day.

As we celebrated 50 years of PNG Independence it was wonderful to reminisce and hear stories from this important time.

The RAE Association of Victoria was represented by our President, Don Hughes and his wife Michelle, who were both posted to Mendi in the Southern Highlands Province of PNG for 3 years in 1988 with 12th Chief Engineer Works.

Located in Mendi, the capital of this remote Province, both Don & Michelle became actively involved in a range of community activities whilst the unit had enormous responsibilities for building and maintaining roads, airfields, schools and medical facilities and infrastructure throughout the province.

Held in the beautifully maintained Yarraville Gardens close to Melbourne's docklands, the celebrations featured cultural dancing from around all regions of PNG and neighbouring Pacific countries.





Traditional Cooked Meat Featuring two deliciously cooked pigs, the hundreds of visitors and guests were treated to a gastronomic smorgasbord of delights to satisfy even the hungriest wantok.

For the families, a bouncy castle, face painting, a petting zoo and an appearance from a huge Cassowary, who just happened to be in the area, were great favourites for all.

Singing, speeches and great opportunities to purchase traditional crafts and artifacts all added immensely to the celebratory nature of the day.

Still helping PNG today, Australian sappers have undertaken many operational and assistance projects throughout the country since those tumultuous days of WW2.

A permanent construction engineer capability (12 Chief Engineer Works, and its previous designations) was permanently deployed to PNG, originally at Popondetta in



1963 and later Mendi in the Southern Highlands until 1999.

This must be some sort of record for an Australian Army unit permanently deployed overseas.



The President of the PNG/Australia Association Victoria, Mr Peter Bakue, invited Don to tell the story of the time Mr Slim Dusty (and band) were the guests of honour in the Southern Highlands in 1989.

A PNG crowd always loves a good story.

This close friendship and continued army engineer assistance continues today.

Happy 50th Birthday PNG.

Russell McEntyre
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SPECIAL INVITATION

1926 Centenary Anniversary Luncheon 2026

Dear Affiliate Association

The President and Committee Members of the RAE Assoc of WA (Inc) request the pleasure of your members company, to celebrate our Association's Centenary Anniversary:

Date: Tuesday, 22 September 2026 commencing at 1130hrs to 1530hrs

Venue: City of Belmont - Returned Serviceman League Sub-Branch.

22 Leake Street (cnr Great Eastern Hwy), Ascot WA

Luncheon Menu: To be Confirmed. Intended 2 course meal with complimentary drink from the bar upon arrival.

Cost and payments: To be advised on close of RSVP

RSVP: Tuesday, 3 February 2026

Dress: Smart casual with Sports Jacket and if possible, Corp Tie

For further enquires please contact the Secretary: Trevor Jones - 'Secretary'
<raeassocwasec2017@gmail.com> or Russell McEntyre: - raeassoc2024@gmail.com

Warm Regards,

Russell McEntyre
President
RAE Assoc of WA (Inc)
raeassoc2024@gmail.com
0408901841

RAE ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC.

St BARBARA CHRISTMAS FUNCTION 2025.

The Association's annual Christmas Function (now known as St. Barbara Christmas function) was held on the 05th December 2025 at the Croydon RSL. This is the 4th year that we have used the facilities of the Croydon RSL but this year we were hosted in the new premises. The function was without doubt a great success with an estimated 65 – 70 people attending. The purpose and aim of this night is to provide something back to the members of the Association and their families for their loyalty and support.

The function was organised by Duncan Howarth who brought together a successful and enjoyable night ably assisted by the staff of the Croydon RSL.

Catering for this year's function was a little different in that the finger food was provided by Jody (Secretary of the Croydon RSL) meaning that members of the committee did not have to spend hours in the kitchen warming food and then serving it. There was a wonderful array of tasty food particularly great cheese platters and nibbles. In addition, there were also pork rolls and salads. There was ample food for everyone which was well presented and replenished throughout the evening. The variety of food seemed to cater for everyone's needs with no one going away hungry. Everyone who attended is considered a special person and our thanks goes to everyone who came along and supported the night, but I would like to mention that it was wonderful to see BRIG Bob Slater there. Others worthy of a mention are Bob Amos (who was down from Echuca), David and Jenny Stevenson (Kerang), Boots Bryant and Les (Brushy) Clark. We also had some serving members of the Regiment come along (Scott White and Andrew Schnitler) however we could certainly do with more members of the Regiment supporting us (maybe next year). I would also like to acknowledge and thank the partners/wives of the members who came along and supported us such as Sharelle White, Rebecca (Bec) Grayling and children too. It was wonderful to welcome the Association's Honorary Chaplain Kirsten Linden.

Regrettably, due to personal reasons, Don Hughes was an apology, so Duncan completed the formalities on behalf of Don which were certainly kept to a minimum. Duncan thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the Association and in particular thanked the staff of the RSL – John, Jody and Ken.

Once again, a very special thanks must go to Duncan for his efforts here in ensuring the night was a success but I must again reiterate my gratitude and thanks to everyone who came along and supported the night and the Association. Your attendance ensured a successful night.

Jim Davis
Secretary





CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025

As has been the tradition for several years the Association held its annual Christmas lunch where the opportunity is taken of thanking the committee, the many executive members of the Regiment who have supported us throughout the year along with the honorary appointments of the Association.

On 10th December 2025 the Association held its final meeting for 2025 at Club Ringwood where we welcomed John Wertheimer (Patron), Bruce Murray (Colonel Commandant RAE Southern Region), LTCOL Jason Eltham (CO elect 22 ER), WO2 Gordon Daly (Acting RSM), CAPT Ellen (Rosie) Rosengreen (ADJT), Chaplain Kirsten Linden, WO1 Russell Peel (Corps RSM RAE representing the Head of Corps), WO1 Thomas Jesser (RSM elect 3 CER), SGTs Justin Merrett, Ben Thomson (Liaison representative), WO2 Stephen Davis and Matthew (Magic) Magilton. LTCOL Russell Collins (CO 22 ER) was an apology.

Following the completion of formalities and before proceeding into lunch the committee was addressed with valuable updates on the state of the Corps, its focus and direction. We also heard about the Regiment's year ahead along with new CO's vision and expectations. Finally, we heard about the huge changes within the equipment and training for an active, front-line Regiment in the North and the ramifications.

Following the updates WO1 Peel (representing the HOC – BRIG Michael Say) made two presentations - firstly to Thomas Jesser of his 20-year Service Certificate from the Corps and then to our own Michael Potts who received a Head of Corps Commendation for 2025 acknowledging his outstanding contribution to the Association since accepting the role of Editor for Sapper Summit.



We would all be aware of the recent passing of the Association's Mascot Zeus which has had a profound effect on so many but in memory and acknowledgement of Zeus Don Hughes has donated several of Zeus's items to the History Room including his ceremonial jacket and lead which will obviously take a prominent position. Mel Constable then made a presentation to Don of a framed photo of Zeus a copy of which will also be housed in the history room along with his memorabilia.

Congratulations to Pottsy for his award – well deserved Michael.

22 ENGINEER REGIMENT

CHANGE OF COMMAND PARADE AND EOY BBQ

For most of the Regiment the 7th December 2025 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 COs – after 2 years at the helm we are saying goodbye to LTCOL Russell Collins and hello to LTCOL Jason Eltham.



This day was opened to family and friends and there was a good public contingent there to watch the proceedings. For many of those being promoted family members were given the honour of completing the promotion ritual.

Being a family day there was a jumping castle (this time set up in the Gym), along with displays of vehicles and equipment. To add to the day the RAE Association was invited 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, Michael Potts, Kevin Moss, Tony Jackson and Noel Tipton who was assisted by his daughter Kelly and grandson Otis. Mel Constable was also in attendance and opened the History Room. Jim Davis was kept busy taking photos.

The morning commenced with the Acting RSM (WO2 Gordon Daly) calling the parade on at 10.30 am. The parade was not a formal one with dress uniforms and weapons but a more low-key event.



LTCOL Eltham outlined his plans for the Regiment in a detailed address (see over).

On behalf of the Regiment the Association provided the annual awards for the following members

SPR Sean Miller	most outstanding sapper
LCPL Damon Gillan	most outstanding JNCO
LT Rachel Wardell	most outstanding junior officer

Regrettably due to other commitments and duty Sean and Damon were not in attendance so it was only Rachel who received her award – we will have to catch up with the others in 2026. On behalf of

the Regiment Don made the presentation to Rachel.

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 11.30 am there were a lot of people looking for an early lunch which 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 1.30 pm (much earlier than anticipated) - at the start there were certainly some hungry people but everybody went away satisfied even though there may have been some wait times.

Don Hughes presented the outgoing CO (LTCOL Russell Collins) with a plaque from the Association and thanked him for everything that he had done for the Regiment and Association.

There were far too many awards and promotions to individually list but to all those who were acknowledged on the parade the Association send you congratulations.

Thank you to CO and Acting 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.

I would like to mention and thank the SQ SSGT Anne Court for her cooperation and support with providing everything that we needed to make the day a success along with Stephen Rothwell and the GD's who helped us.



Special thanks must go to Michael Potts for his organisation skills with the BBQ – he worked hard to ensure that everything was right and that our catering was up to its usual very high standard. Thanks to all the others who assisted us – what great workers you all are.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS TO 22 ENGINEER REGIMENT BY LTCOL JASON ELTHAM

Thank you, LTCOL Russ Collins, for your leadership of 22 Engineer Regiment and for the trust you have placed in its people. You've handed over a unit that is cohesive, capable, and proud of its identity. The work you've done, often quietly, always professionally, has set the Regiment up for success on operations, in training, and in support of the community. It's a privilege to follow you in command, and I'll do my best to honour the standard you've set for the Sappers of 22 Engineer Regiment.

Sappers of 22 Engineer Regiment,

It is an honour to stand before you as your Commanding Officer. I'll begin plainly:

Yes, we are a Reserve Engineer Regiment, the senior Engineer Regiment in the 2nd Australian Division. But we are not a club, a place to socialise, or a refuge from standards. We are part of a Defence Force that expects combat-credible capability from us. And when the call comes, flood, fire, or war, nobody will care how often we parade. They will care whether we can **fight, build, and enable operations under pressure**. Combat engineers deal with ambiguity, danger, friction, and complexity. We enable manoeuvre by providing: Mobility, Counter-mobility, Protection, Survivability and Engineering effects that shape the battlespace. We don't admire problems from a distance. We break them open, push through them, and fix them under pressure. That identity doesn't change because we're Reservists.

It means we must **earn it with less time, more focus, and a higher level of personal commitment**.

Purpose

Our purpose is simple: To generate engineer capability that commanders can rely on in high-risk environments. That means fit, disciplined, competent sappers, credible leaders and units that integrate, adapt, and deliver under pressure. If we can't do that, someone else must carry the burden for us. I do not accept that. Neither should you.

Expectations

I respect the realities you manage outside this gate, work, family, study, life.

But I will not lower standards to avoid discomfort. Every soldier here must be physically capable, technically competent, confident with weapons and core engineer tasks, reliable, accountable, and trustworthy under pressure. You don't need to be elite athletes or PhD Engineers. But you must be **capable, coachable, and committed**. Combat engineering is unforgiving. Weakness gets people hurt or killed on a job site, in the field, or in a fight.

Training Philosophy

We have less time than our Regular Brigade counterparts, which means we must be: Efficient, Focused, Outcome-driven and Realistic about what matters. Training will prioritise combat fitness, weapons mastery, field engineering under stress, decision-making under friction, integration with manoeuvre forces. I don't expect perfection in every session. I do expect **effort, professionalism, and progress**, in fact, I demand it, and so should you. Training will not always be comfortable, because war is not comfortable, operations are not convenient, and the enemy gets a vote.

Leadership

Leadership in a Reserve Regiment is demanding, I understand that. Civilian commitments don't excuse military shortcomings. If you wear rank, lead, don't supervise, build capability, not excuses, make decisions, not noise, be honest about readiness, own outcomes, good or bad. If you can't enforce standards, don't hold rank. Leadership here is not ornamental. It is consequential.

Culture

Our culture will reflect who we need to be, professional, cohesive, resilient, competent, humble, but not passive. We will be **competitive, not toxic**. We will **hold standards, not grudges**. We will deal with problems **quickly and honestly and with understanding**. This is not a place for fragile egos or fragile ethics.

Capability Under Pressure

We may not always look polished. We do not look pretty, we are Sappers. But when called upon, this Regiment must be, capable, ready, adaptable and hard to break. Our reputation must be built on **competence under pressure**.

Warfighting Mindset

Reserve service is not a shield from war. History has proven this through all major conflicts. Reservist Sappers have bled and died doing engineer work under fire. When it matters, nobody checks your service category. They check your **competence, courage, and reliability**. We must continue to build a Regiment that answers "yes" to that test.

Readiness and Contribution

We may not deploy as often as the Regular Brigades, but when we do, we must be credible from day one. That requires, strong basics, honest self-assessment, realistic training and a willingness to step forward, not step back. If you want low standards, predictability, and comfort, you will find this place difficult. If you want to learn, grow, be tested, and serve with pride, you are in the right Regiment.

My Commitment to You

I will not waste your time. I will not ask you to do pointless work nor will I tolerate some giving their all, while others seek what they might see as an easier road. It won't be. I will push you, develop you, support you, deploy you and represent you. I will demand a lot and give a lot back. I want you to feel pride when you say, **"I serve in 22 Engineer Regiment."**

Final Message

We are Reservists, but we are Combat Engineers. We solve problems others can't. We take risks others avoid. We create opportunity where none exists. When called upon, domestic or overseas, we must show up as **professionals, warfighters, and teammates**. We may not parade every day, but we must **think, train, and act like soldiers every day**. Our task is not to meet minimum standards. Our task is to build capability that matters when the stakes are highest. I am honoured to command you. And I expect this Regiment to become the unit commanders request when the mission is difficult, dangerous, and uncertain.

What I promise you in return is that I will get things wrong, but I will own them. I will listen, learn, and improve the same way I ask each of you to. And I will never ask you to do anything I am not willing to do myself.

UBIQUE "Follow the Sapper"

ADDRESS TO THE VICTORIAN RAE ASSOCIATION BY LTCOL JASON ELTHAM THE FUTURE OF 22 ENGINEER REGIMENT

COL John Wertheimer AM, RFD (Retd), COL Bruce Murray AM, Corps RSM, Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Sappers,

Thank you to the president LTCOL Don Hughes (Rtd) for the invitation to speak today, and for the continued support the Association provides to the Regiment. It is a privilege to address a group of people who have worn the Corps badge with distinction, and who understand what it means to build, fight, and solve problems in the service of others. 22 Engineer Regiment has a proud history in Victoria, a history shaped by service in war and commitment to community in peace. Our challenge now is to honour that legacy while adapting to a Defence environment that is changing faster than at any point in recent memory. Let me offer a view on where the Regiment is going, and how we can continue to work together.

Purpose and Direction

22 Engineer Regiment's purpose remains unchanged: to generate combat engineer capability that commanders can trust in operations. However, the context in which we deliver that capability is shifting. The Army is moving toward Higher readiness, Faster force generation, Greater expectations of Reserve units, Integration with joint and combined, emergency, and civil agencies, New threats and technologies. For us, that means **credible, adaptable capability, not just availability**.

Focus on Foundation Skills

In an age of complexity, the basics matter more than ever. We are prioritising, Combat fitness, Weapons mastery, Field engineering, Survivability and protection, and Leadership under friction. Not because they are glamorous, but because they keep people alive. Our intent is not to train for training's sake, but to train for **relevance when the stakes are high**.

Training Reform for a Reserve Reality

Reserve service will always involve competing pressures, work, family, study, life. We cannot pretend otherwise. What we can do is ensure **the time soldiers give us produces meaningful outcomes**. To that end, training will be, Efficient, Integrated, Outcome-driven and Task-specific. Our goal is simple, Less time wasted, more capability generated.

Leadership and Culture

Good engineering is a function of competence, confidence, and culture. We are building a culture that values Professionalism without ego, Standards without toxicity, Humility without passivity, Character over theatrics. And leadership that is Accountable, Practical, Honest and Capable of developing others. If you wear rank in 22 Engineer Regiment, you will **lead, not supervise**.

Domestic and International Contribution

22 Engineer Regiment has a long history of supporting domestic operations, and that will continue, as Australia faces uncertain times and more frequent natural disasters. But we must also preserve our ability to deploy overseas and contribute to missions that matter. Reservists have done that consistently over history and they will do so again. Our aspiration is not to be a unit that “could” deploy - it is to be a unit **commanders ask for**, because it is credible from day one.

Innovation and Partnerships

We are exploring ways to integrate new technologies, engineering practices, and training opportunities, without abandoning the fundamentals that define combat engineering. Our approach is not change for change’s sake, but **innovation that makes us more capable, safer, and faster**.

What the Association Can Offer the Regiment

Across Defence we talk a lot about capability, equipment, training, resources, but capability is ultimately built by people, supported by families, and strengthened by community. That is where this Association has an enduring and powerful role. Your lived experience, your networks, and your understanding of the costs, and rewards, of service are invaluable to the next generation of sappers and to the families who support them.

There are four areas where the Association can make a tangible and lasting contribution.

Mentorship and stewardship

Sharing experience with junior sappers and emerging leaders. Passing on lessons learned under pressure. Helping young soldiers understand responsibility, not just tasks. Instilling confidence, judgment, and tradecraft that can’t be gained from doctrine alone. Mentorship is not about telling people how things used to be, it’s about equipping them to face what lies ahead.

Connection, identity and history

Preserving the story of Victorian engineers. Recognising service, excellence, and heritage. Hosting events that bring generations of sappers together. Young soldiers need to feel they are part of something bigger than themselves, not just a unit, but a lineage.

Support to families

Service is not carried by soldiers alone. Our soldiers juggle careers, study, parenting, relationships, mortgages, ageing parents, and still turn up to serve. Their families carry much of that load, often quietly and without recognition. The Association can help by: Providing welcoming, inclusive, low-pressure events families can attend. Connecting families to resources and support networks. Offering informal mentoring for partners and parents. Sharing knowledge about navigating Defence life and transition. Celebrating families as part of the engineer community, not spectators to it. When families feel seen, supported, and connected, soldiers endure, persist, and thrive. That is a contribution with real operational consequences.

Support through transition and adversity

Guidance for members navigating career changes, injury, or personal struggle. Early intervention through experience, not bureaucracy. Practical support rooted in empathy and

lived experience. The Association doesn't need massive funding to make a difference, it needs time, conversation, and genuine human connection.

A Partnership, Not a Favour

Let me be clear, this is not about asking the Association to carry burden the Regiment can't. It is about recognising that service is a team effort, and that the people in this room have the experience, perspective, and community to strengthen the Regiment in ways command structures never will. Your engagement creates capability. Your stories build culture. Your support keeps families resilient. And your presence reminds soldiers that their service is part of a long and proud tradition.

Stewardship and Legacy

Every generation inherits a Regiment shaped by those who came before it. We do not own this Regiment. We steward it for those who will follow. Our objective is to ensure that 22 Engineer Regiment remains A credible capability, A proud home for engineers, and a place where good people grow. If we achieve that, we honour the past and protect the future.

What Success Looks Like

In the years ahead, my measure of success is straightforward, Soldiers who are confident, competent, and proud of their service, Leaders who are trusted and effective, Training that prepares people for real demands, A Regiment that is valued by Army, not merely tolerated, A culture that balances humility with professional toughness, If we achieve that, we will have built something worthy of our badge.

In Closing

To the Association, thank you. Your service, experience, and ongoing connection are not just history; they are assets that can continue to shape and strengthen the Regiment. Our mission now is to build capability that stands up when it counts, and to grow a generation of sappers who carry forward the spirit, inventiveness, and resilience that has always defined the Royal Australian Engineers. I am proud to lead 22 Engineer Regiment, and proud of the soldiers who make it real.

UBIQUE "Follow the Sapper"

BRIG MICHAEL SAY DSC - HEAD OF CORPS

TO RAE ASSOCIATIONS 15 DEC 2025



Dear Fellow Sappers,

I wanted to write to pass on my sincere thanks for the work that you continue to undertake as part of the RAE Associations. After 4 years as HOC, I will handover to BRIG Mick Scott in the new year – exact date TBC.

It has been a privilege and highlight to be able to be the HOC.

I am energised by the recent engagement with the Associations and strongly encourage the below opportunity be explored – I believe the Associations can leverage much of each other and a central engagement in Jun/Jul with key trends being provided to the HOC team in Nov is an excellent step forward. I also strongly support a central website that can be utilised as a single medium to link the Associations and serving members.

Also just wanted to close the loop on the point raised during the meeting regarding Sappers being involved in the Australian Antarctic Division. This has been pushed to our LTCOL Engineer who works in the ops of Army HQ. He will look to explore options in the future however this will be balanced against other commitments in the INDO-PACIFIC, of which there are many.

Kind regards

HOC

CAPT JACK SQUIRES SO2 Head of Corps RAE

TO RAE ASSOCIATIONS 09 DEC 2025

Good evening everyone,

Thank you to all who contributed to the recent update from the RAE Associations. Below is a summary of the key matters discussed and endorsed by HOC.

RAE.org.au Domain Secured

The RAE Association of Tasmania has secured the domain rae.org.au, which presents an opportunity to consolidate information across all associations. The intent is to create a central platform that includes up-to-date contact details, a national calendar of association activities, and a streamlined process for purchasing Corps merchandise. This initiative will make it easier for serving and retired members to access information and maintain engagement with the broader Corps community. HOC is supportive of this approach and encourages associations to collaborate to ensure its success.

Annual Associations Teleconference – July 2026

HOC endorsed the proposal for an annual teleconference among associations to improve collaboration and information sharing. The suggested date for the first meeting is July 2026, which allows time for associations to prepare reports for their respective Colonel Commandants prior to the Corps Conference. A summary of outcomes from this teleconference will be provided to the HOC Cell during Sapper Week.

Wellbeing Hubs (DVA Initiative)

DVA is rolling out Wellbeing Hubs in 2026, a key initiative stemming from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. These hubs are expected to operate in partnership with Open Arms and will be designed to liaise with Ex-Service Organisations, providing improved access to support services for veterans and families. Associations are encouraged to make direct contact with their local DVA offices to learn more about the rollout and explore opportunities for engagement. This initiative is still in early stages, and further details will be shared as they become available.

Strengthening Communication

There was a shared commitment to continue improving communication between the HOC Cell and associations. Both the proposed website and the teleconference will serve as important enablers for this goal, ensuring that information flows more effectively across the Corps network.

Thank you again for your continued efforts to strengthen the connection of the Sapper community. Please let us know if you have any additional points or require clarification.

Jack Squires

SO2 Head of Corps RAE

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
c/- 22 Engineer Regiment
56B Dublin Rd
RINGWOOD EAST VIC 3135

MERCHANDISE



2025 Membership Renewal
\$25.00



Mailed hard copy of Sapper Summit
\$25.00



RAE Association Plaques
\$50.00

Merchandise featuring the new badge and cipher will be progressively available as old stocks run down.



Donations—any amount



Apron with RAE logo—\$30.00



Caps Navy/White, Navy/Red or White—\$25.00 ea.



Polo Shirt Navy
\$45.00



Polo Shirt White
\$45.00



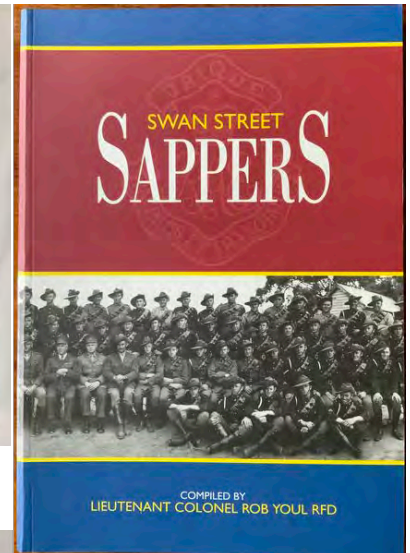
Jumper Navy with RAE Logo
\$80.00



Scarf with RAE Logo
\$20.00



Beanie with RAE Logo
\$20.00



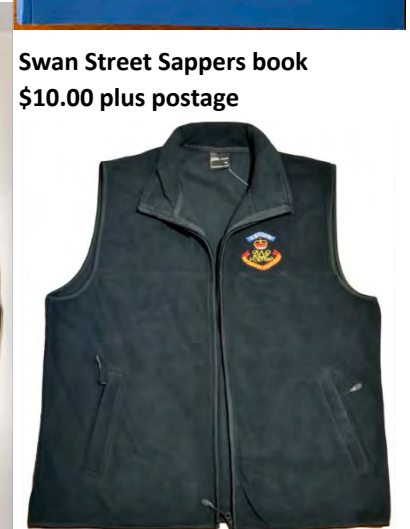
Swan Street Sappers book
\$10.00 plus postage



Jacket—Soft Shell Navy
\$95.00



Jacket—Fleece Top Navy
\$60.00



Jacket— Fleece Top Sleeveless Navy
\$45.00

Association merchandise is constantly evolving. To check our current offerings and to order, visit <https://raevic.tidyhq.com/public/shop/products> .Dress the part at meetings, events and excursions.

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. Complimentary Life Membership. A member who has made a significant contribution to the Association either by way of a substantial financial or memorabilia donation, may be awarded a Complimentary 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 of 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
RAE Association Victoria Inc
c/- 22 Engineer Regiment
56B Dublin Rd
RINGWOOD EAST VIC 3135



RAE Sappers' Fund



RAE Sappers' Fund subscriptions are due 1 Jul each year.

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.

For more information out the Royal Australian Engineers, visit the [Home Page](#).
General enquires: RAE.HOC@defence.gov.au
RAE loans, grants and the Corps subscription: rae.sappersfund@defence.gov.au

SERCAT 7 Sergeant – Officer: \$52.00

SERCAT 7 Other Ranks: \$26.00

SERCAT 2-5 Sergeant – Officer: \$30.00

SERCAT 2-5 Other Ranks: \$20.00

To make your contribution, visit <https://www.trybooking.com/CJRTF>



Follow the Sapper

SOLDIER ON

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/>

Need help now?

Soldier On is not an immediate crisis support charity, but if you do need help right away, there are organisations you can reach out to who are ready to help you.

Emergency
000

Open Arms
1800 011 046

Beyond Blue
1300 224 636

Lifeline
13 11 14

WELFARE and SUPPORT

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

OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families
Counselling

If you have served or are currently
serving in the ADF, you and your
family members can use

OPEN ARMS – VETERANS & FAMILIES COUNSELLING

(formerly VVCS)



To get support or find out more:

1800 011 046

www.OpenArms.gov.au



**24-HOUR FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL
COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT
SERVICES**

» Get Support

Open Arms is a national service which offers:

- + counselling for individuals, couples and families
- + group programs
- + on transition - stepping out and life management skills
- + peer networks to enhance support
- + case management for clients with complex needs
- + suicide prevention training
- + information, education and self-help resources
- + a phone line for people to call and speak to someone 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- + referrals to other services or specialist treatment programs, as needed

» Eligibility

- + Current serving ADF personnel
- + Personnel transitioning to civilian life
- + Ex-serving members
- + Partners and children of serving and ex-serving personnel
- + Ex-partners who are co-parenting
- + Reservists with one day continuous full time service or hazardous service

Where there has been a death of a service person, parents and siblings can also access the service.

» Stay in touch

- + Facebook - @OpenArmsVeteransAndFamiliesCounselling
- + Twitter - @OpenArmsSupport

www.OpenArms.gov.au

*A service founded by Vietnam Veterans,
now for all veterans*

PO3833

RAE OVERWATCH

is a Corps-specific subsidiary of Overwatch Australia, specifically to
support serving and retired Sappers.

Sappers looking out for Sappers in times of need.

No matter how long you've been in or out.

The group Coordinator is Bob Ihlein (robert.ihlein@gmail.com) or phone 0434550556

You can also find them at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RAEOverwatch/>

