

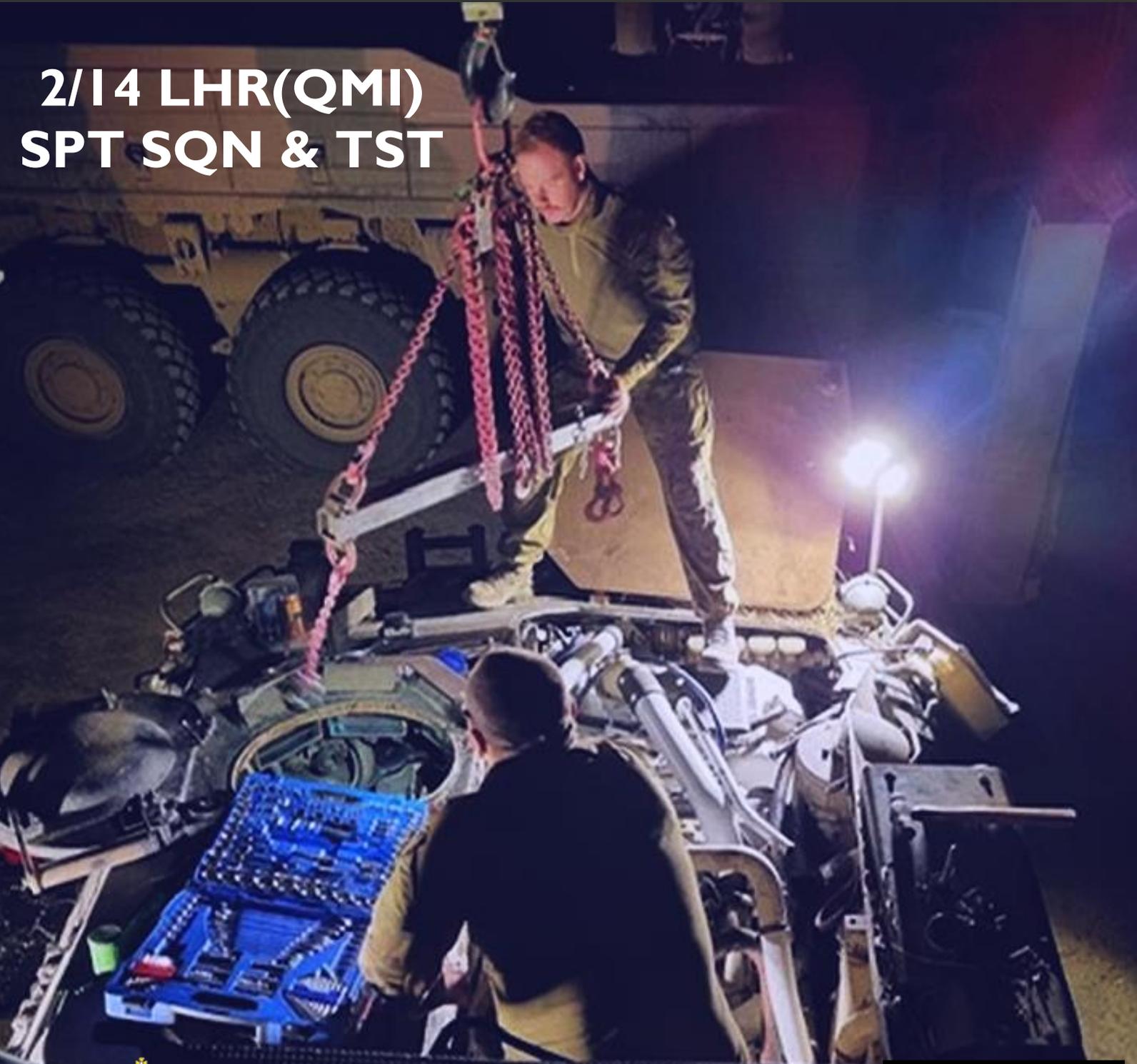
EDITION 1-22

SPANNER NEWS

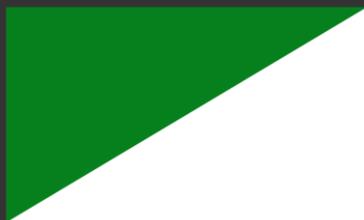
NEWSLETTER OF THE RAEME ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND INC

MARCH 2022

2/14 LHR(QMI) SPT SQN & TST



“Forward”



Edition 1-22

31 Mar 22



Spanner News

Published three times per year, "Spanner News" is the Official Newsletter of the RAEME Association Queensland Inc

Front Cover: V28 pack lift by night in Wide Bay Training Area - 2/14 LHR (QMI)



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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome Spanners, to the first Spanner News of 2022. The RAQ Committee is working towards ensuring we plan effectively for all activities we support, or advocate for, and we make the best of every opportunity across Queensland. This year it looks as though we may return to some sort of normality, with hopefully no more lockdowns and a significant reduction in mask wearing.

At the close of 2021, it was pleasing to note we were very fortunate to have held every planned function, and especially pleased to see these functions were well supported - perhaps not to pre-Covid levels, but well supported indeed. Thank you for the vote of confidence in our hardworking team.

In March, Townsville and Darling Downs held early get togethers which went off well – thank you to the organisers in Townsville and Toowoomba. I ask folks in all local areas to continue to spread the word locally and support your organisers. Set a goal to bring at least one new friend when you attend each function.

Unfortunately, the month of March also saw SE QLD and NSW on the receiving end of massive rainfall events causing devastation and heartbreak to many communities. I would like to express my sincere condolences to those who lost so much; further I would like to thank the ADF members in our respective regions who have been working tirelessly to aid various communities.

ANZAC Day is our next scheduled gathering – in Brisbane the RAQ will gather at the Port Office Hotel for our annual post-march function. Spanners and their friends and families will gather from 1100 hrs; and in Townsville, RAQ NQ and local folks will kick off early at Flynn's Hotel for a Gun Fire Breakfast - [See the RAQ Webpage and Friday Files for all details of these event.](#)

The RAQ Committee elections are due this year and we already know that our Secretary Gary Sargent will step aside after completing yet another invaluable term as Secretary. There are certain committee positions that must be filled for the RAQ to meeting the Requirements of our Constitution and the Office of Fair Trading and having a secretary is a critical one. The RAQ needs willing and capable members to step forward and nominate for a committee position. – please consider volunteering.

I look forward to a busy and successful year for the RAQ and catching up with you at our many and varied events.

Arte et Marte

Jeff Maurice
Chairman RAQ
chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



RAEME Association Queensland – What we are about?

The purpose of the RAEME Association Queensland is to promote and reinforce the spirit, reputation and image of the Corps through its past, present and future members.

The goals of the RAEME Association Queensland locally are to:

- promote the Corps' identity and reputation.
- recognise and celebrate achievements of members of the Corps; and
- provide a focal point for Corps activities.

To gain RAQ membership benefits, join for \$10/year, or upgrade to Life Subscription for \$100. All proceeds support and promote the goals of the Association.

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF CORPS RAEME – BRIG JAMES ALLEN

2022 is already proving to be a busy year for Army, with RAEME doing its fair share of heavy lifting in the numerous activities and operations. Similarly, 2022 will continue with last year's theme of significant changes and modernisation. I see these changes as overwhelmingly positive as they prepare our Army and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for the future – as a Corps, we must embrace these changes and ready ourselves too.

To prepare for this changing environment we should be informed by the past but not anchored to it. As a Corps, we need to be adaptive and evolve. We need to be purposeful, bold and creative. We need to be aligned, and part of the wider ADF and national approach. Clearly, we must be part of an “Army in Motion”, and to do so successfully and collaboratively, we must be a Corps that balances and transitions between the present and future as individuals and teams, with sound support concepts and the way we conduct equipment maintenance. This is the mantra of the Chief of Army and I know it resonates with us all.

I want to just tease out a little more about what I think “Future Ready” means for the Corps. It means we will need to be more joint and integrated, more ready and able to upscale as well as change form in response to the strategic context. The Army's 55-billion-dollar investment in land capabilities has been triggered by government and we are well into the delivery stages with RAEME at the centre of acquisitions, trials, introduction into service activities and employment of the new equipment.

These capabilities include larger and more capable watercraft, short range air defence and long-range fires, Apache helicopters, armoured fighting vehicles, soldier systems and an increasing array of robotic and autonomous systems. Our approach to acquiring new capabilities must ensure that each one contributes to a more connected, protected, lethal, and enabled land force. Capabilities which as part of a bigger system, and underpinned by Australian industry, will enable us to generate land power as a critical and enduring element of military power.

Australia, and with the unique support provided by all RAEME personnel, has transitioned well out of our longest involvement in war in our nation's history. Yet now, more than ever, we face an uncertain future with recent developments within our immediate region and the clear instability currently unfolding in Europe. There is no greater need than to continue ensuring we provide the essential RAEME support to assure Australia's military capability, and our nation's security. We must also expertly and efficiently acclimatise to our new and emerging capabilities in a timely and measured way.

On a more sombre note, I have been liaising with my UK counterpart regarding REME's intentions for the replacement of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh with a new Commander in Chief. I have also been in touch with Army HQ about the matter and seeking guidance from the Chief of Army. We have not formed a view as yet, but it is one of my priorities going into 2022.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage with the RNN and all associations in this newsletter.

Arte et Marte

James Allen
BRIG
HOC



MESSAGE FROM COL COMDT QLD – STEVE EVANS

Gday Spanners, well hasn't 2022 started with a rush? Even with the overarching presence of Covid and the impact it is having on all facets of society, many other challenges have been thrown at us lately with floods, tsunamis and now a major international conflict routinely occupying our minds. I hope that any of the extended RAEME family who have been personally impacted are over the worst of it and remind you that you are not alone. The RAEME tribe is tight knit and it is during times of crisis that our best qualities come to the fore. If you are experiencing difficulty then reach out to a RAEME brother or sister through your local association and you will find some of your burden lifted.

I was delighted to read Friday Files recently and find that another of our founding members had turned 100. Congratulations to Claude Johnstone! I hope to meet up with you in the very near future.

Some of you will have noted the announcement late last year by the Minister for Defence that he was looking at an option of replacing our NH90 Multi Role Helicopters with UH60M Black Hawks. This is not a “done deal” as yet, but it does show a clear pivot by Government to be more aligned to the USA. The announcement by the Prime Minister of the AUKUS alliance also being testament to our strengthening ties with the US and Britain. We are certainly experiencing uncertain times with the Russian / Ukrainian conflict showing how quickly a conflict can escalate.

I wish everyone the best for forthcoming ANZAC day commemoration activities and remind you all that RAEME turns 80 this year. Stay safe and busy.

Arte et Marte

Steve Evans
COL COMDT – QLD
steve.evans@defence.gov.au



CONGRATULATIONS – RAEME PEOPLE HONOURED ON AUSTRALIA DAY.

IN THE MILITARY DIVISION

Brigadier Edward John SMEATON, DSM. For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Deputy Branch Head Operational Sustainment. Resolute Support Mission and Commander Task Group Afghanistan from December 2019 to October 2020. Brigadier Smeaton displayed exceptional dedication to the Afghan Defence and Security Forces through expert provision of combat supplies across the nation at critical points in the military campaign. Through these actions he made a significant contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's mission and greatly enhanced the reputation of the Australian Defence Force.

Warrant Officer Class One David Carl POULSEN, OAM. (42ND VM). For meritorious service as the Artificer Sergeant Major of the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion and Artificer Sergeant Major for the Land Maintenance System within the Directorate of Technical Regulation and Evaluation - Army. WO1 Poulsen consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership, innovation, initiative and devotion to duty, enhancing the land maintenance system across the joint land force. His contributions to maintenance planning, equipment management and strategic guidance ensures that the future maintenance system will deliver a transformational step change for technical maintenance, enhancing Defence capability.

Warrant Officer Class One Lee MALONEY, OAM. For meritorious service in support of the Australian Army CH-47 Chinook capability. WO1 Maloney has made an outstanding contribution to the Australian Army Chinook capability. He is the Australian Army's most experienced Aircrewman Technician recognised for his dedication across aviation maintenance, instructional, operational, and commercial appointments. He has demonstrated exceptional courage, deep technical expertise and commercial acumen to enable and enhance the Australian Chinook capability during an extremely demanding period of continuous operations and aircraft type transition.

Lieutenant Colonel David Laurence MARSHALL, CSM. For meritorious devotion to duty in engineering and airworthiness management for the MRH90 helicopter at the Army Aviation Systems Program Office. As the MRH90 Chief Engineer within the Army Aviation Systems Program Office, his inspirational leadership and extraordinary level of engineering expertise enabled the expansion of the MRH90 capability to support special operations, while also guiding airworthiness remediation activities. He is an exceptional officer who has displayed an exemplary level of personal accountability and perseverance under difficult and challenging conditions.

Warrant Officer Class Two David Andrew OWEN, CSM. For meritorious devotion to duty as the Artificer Sergeant Major of the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. WO2 Owen has made an outstanding contribution to the maintenance program during the pandemic which enabled an unprecedented level of vehicle, howitzer and equipment serviceability for the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. His consummate professionalism, inspirational leadership and meritorious devotion to duty have brought great credit upon himself and the Australian Army and are in the finest traditions of the Australian Defence Force.

IN THE GENERAL DIVISION:

Mr Brian John MILNER, OAM. For service to veterans and their families, through his service to West Gippsland Veterans Welfare Centre, Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia; Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia; Member, Latrobe Valley Veterans Welfare Centre; Regional Implementation (Brian now resides in Brisbane).

100th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS FOR AN OLD SOLDIER (VX104343, VI58035, 337556) BRIG (RETD) HERBERT "BERT" WHEATLEY BARKER – 13 DEC 21.



BRIG Bert Barker (Retd) celebrated his 100th birthday on 13 Dec 2021 with an afternoon tea at Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads with family members (who all travelled from Melbourne and Sydney) and friends. Prior to the afternoon tea, he took a call from the Deputy Chief of the Army, MAJ GEN Tony Rawlins, who spoke to him for quite some time about his service and being an inaugural member of RAEME.

During his afternoon tea celebrations, MAJ Barry Skinner (Retd) presented Bert with a Unit Commanders Flag on behalf of COL COMDT QLD, COL Steve Evans, as Bert was unable to attend the Corps Birthday luncheon at the Port Hotel in Brisbane on 28 Nov 21.

Barry also presented Bert with a signed John Laws Christmas Pudding after speaking to the radio Icon about Bert's 100th birthday and extensive military career. Now that COVID restriction are slowly being lifted on aged care facilities, Barry Skinner can report that Bert is doing really well, still driving and attending his regular weekly coffee with Barry.



100th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS FOR ANOTHER OLD SOLDIER (QX47883, Q8053) CPL (RETD) CLAUDE BENNONI JOHNSTONE.

We have very recently become aware of another old digger who celebrated his 100th Birthday in March – congratulations to Claude Johnstone who lives in Toowoomba and served in a number of Corps but most notably RAEME during WW2.



Darling Downs veteran, Claude Johnstone has celebrated his 100th birthday

Name	JOHNSTONE, CLAUDE BENNONI
Service	Australian Army
Service Number	QX47883 (Q8053)
Date of Birth	16 Mar 1922
Place of Birth	INGLEWOOD, QLD
Date of Enlistment	22 Dec 1941
Place of Enlistment	GATTON, QLD
Date of Discharge	13 Nov 1945
Rank	Corporal
Posting at Discharge	11 AUST ADV W/SHOPS (AEME)

Learn more about Claude's most interesting life at this link from Channel 7 News:

<https://fb.watch/bO1pVYz4wT/>

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RAQ MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The RAQ strategic plan sets out our membership targets, so it is timely to look at how the Association is doing.

Membership offers the following advantages:

- Remain abreast of what happening in RAEME across Australia and overseas via Friday Files every week and Spanner News three times a year.
- Obtain subsidised tickets to functions such as ANZAC Day post-march, North and South Coast and North Queensland Luncheons and events.
- Timely advice of coming functions, which provide an opportunity to catch up with friends you may not have seen for a while.
- Discounts on purchases from the RAQ online shop.
- Life Membership to Mermaid Beach (AEME) SLSC, on application through RAQ Membership Member).

Membership is open to all RAEME personnel, whether Regular or Reserve, serving or retired including friends & family of RAEME. It is available in two categories –

- Annual Subscription \$10 per year due 1st July; or
- a one-off Life Subscription at \$100.

You may find this yearly wrap interesting:

- Membership grew in 2021 by 49 members.
- This growth amounts to an annual rate of 8.8%, which sits within our medium growth projection of 5%-10% in our Strategic Plan.
- Life Subscription continues to be the preferred option for our members, with 91% of total subscriptions.
- Since 2016 the Association has grown by 247 Members.

In summary, 2021 membership results are shown below:

- Active Subscriptions at years end = 606 - (2020 = 557).
- Life Subscribers = 551 (91%) – (2020 was 510 = 92%)
- Annual Subscribers = 55 (9%) – (2020 was 47 = 8%)
- Annual Growth of 49 members = 8.80% - (2020 up 53 = 10.52%).



We encourage all current members to share the good news with your friends, who aren't members, and encourage them to join in 2022 the Corps 80th year.

RAEME Association Queensland Inc

FEATURING 2/14 LHR (QMI) – 2021-2022

Introduction (MAJ Ryan – OC SPT SQN). The 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) (2/14 LHR (QMI)) is the Army's oldest Regiment at 162 years of age this year. It was formed on 27 February 1860 when the first Governor of Queensland, Sir George Ferguson Bowen proclaimed and approved the Rules and Regulations of the Brisbane Mounted Rifles, which later became the 2/14 LHR (QMI) of today. RAEME, as they would come to be known, were fixing horses, saddles, weapons and ensuring wagons were ready to roll just as we are doing now.

The modern Armoured Cavalry Regiment (ACR) is home to 66 RAEME personnel – 33 of whom service the combat squadrons: A SQN - Boxer, B SQN - ASLAV and Hawkei, C SQN – MIAI MBT. The remaining 33 personnel and three General Dynamics Land Systems Australia (GDSL) FSRs make up SPT SQN TST and SHQ, providing reinforcing support to the combat squadrons and integral support to the ASLAV mounted BG HQ. Despite significant vacancies over the past two years our RAEME team continues to perform amazing feats well beyond what is expected. I am proud of every one of them.

TST 2021 (CAPT Payne – 2021 TST LDR, 2022 SPT SQN 2IC). 2021 was challenging. Spanners of the 2/14 LHR (QMI) worked hard throughout the year coping with significant vacancies in the A1 and A2 echelons. Regardless, they achieved everything expected of them and more. The resilience displayed by the team despite the broader challenges of 2021 was exemplary and inspiring. In the wake of the tragedy in Townsville the RAEME personnel were able to come together in a marvellous way to support each other and the families of our deceased friends. We all understand the risks associated with military service, but we never truly believe that the worst can happen to us or our mates. We took a heavy blow when we lost WO2 Ryan Leslie and CFN Brendon Payne. They live on in our memories through stories and conversations, often with a beer in hand.



Ex Diamond Dawn – Prep for B SQN ASLAV Recovery – Crew WO2 Leslie and CFN Tjong

Ending 2021, 2/14 LHR once again won the Spanner (Billy) Cart Race on RAEME birthday. We will aim for another win in 2022 to cement our place in billy cart

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racing history as the all-time greatest team. A big thanks goes to Mr Lee Savage for his billy cart engineering prowess.



2/14 LHR winning the spanner billy cart birthday race again

TST 2022 (CAPT Wood – 2022 TST LDR). I am privileged to take the reins and lead the TST for 2022, a notable challenge following a time of mourning and the ongoing uncertainty resulting from various external situations. Already, the TST and Light Horse have been impacted by COVID, natural disasters including subsequent DACC Operations, and workforce challenges including transitions to retirement, unfilled vacancies, driver and maintenance training. This year we will continue to adapt to these pressures while focussing on opportunities to train and develop as a team. Part of this will include the development of TST identity and improved standard operating procedures in support of the ACR. In doing so, I aim to promote a safe, effective and sustainable TST as we prepare for Ex TS23.



A few years of experience – dragging a Boxer 50 metres – WO2 Leslie, SGT White, CFN Hughes

V18 (WO2 Penna – VI ASM). 2021 saw the last of our beloved ASLAV fleet disestablished from the mighty A SQN 2/14 LHR (QMI) with introduction of Boxer to replace these ageing platform. With introduction came numerous hurdles and a steep learning curve for all those involved. At the end of the year, ASM - WO2 Bob Mitchell handed over the reins of V18 to SGT John 'JOC' O'Connor causing him to age visibly at least four years in as many months!

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The first opportunity to deploy and test the Boxer in the tactical field environment was at TFTA during a BDE level exercise. This was not a typical AI arrangement, but worked well with Rheinmetall Defence Australia (RDA) conducting maintenance of Boxer at a deployable workshop setup and V18 being lead (astray) by the ATTMO-SQ SGT Tim Penna.



1st Ever V18 Boxer - EX Diamond Dagger (OT&E) Sep 2021

The final big exercise of the year was definitely one to remember and sadly, for the wrong reasons. ‘Spanners’ of the REGT will remain proud of who they are and use the lessons of the past to build resilience and contribute to their character.



V18 Rolling in – EX Diamond Dagger (OT&E) Sep 2021

2022 has seen an entirely new AI Ech posted to V18 with only a couple of experienced and dedicated ‘Crafties’ maintaining continuity within the SQN. CFN Moro and CFN Newman are regarded as Boxer SMEs within the SQN, as newcomers try to wrap their heads around the beast that is Land 400 Phase 2 – Boxer Block 1.

WO2 Tim Penna has taken the seat in the Aces’ office and with a helping hand from SGT Dan Rocca, they are trying to keep the tradies occupied whilst figuring out how to get their spanners swinging competently on the Boxers. CPL Chris Potroz has managed to dig his heels into the soil of Gallipoli Barracks for another posting tenure, alongside CFN Jose Marabong, who we managed to swindle his way across from SPT SQN because of the

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intricacies of Boxer’s electronic architecture. Also new to the SQN, but not the REGT, are LCPL Luke Warman, CFN Jake Turnbull and erstwhile Recov Mech, CFN Jake Hughes, all keen to get amongst the action. Should be a good year!

V28 (WO2 Reilly – V2 ASM). 2021 was another busy year for B SQN with a full schedule of operational commitments, courses and exercises. Non-RAAC driver’s and crew commanders courses are usually the first hurdle for the year and saw our ‘Crafties’ get behind the wheel to test their skills and the structural integrity of our LAV F and R. From there, we moved straight into EX DAMASCUS at Wide Bay where we applied our newly learned driving/crewing skills – ‘Radar’ still gets lost using a GPS, others inflict cosmetic damage to our poor cars - thanks ‘Benno’.



‘Crafties’ pushing the limits on non-RAAC CRV Dvrs Course

Third quarter 2021 saw the majority of the SQN deploy to Tasmania as part of OP COVID ASSIST. Thankfully the AI ECH remained in Brisbane and seized the opportunity to give the ever-reliable ASLAV fleet some much needed TLC. This set us up well moving into EX DIAMOND WALK in which the troopers eagerly set about reversing all of our good work.



**V28 suspension tuning on Ex-Diamond Walk 21
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Due to the SQN deployment to Tasmania, we missed the exercise in Townsville where we lost our friends Ryan and Brandon. Luckily, the boss managed to sneak one in and we deployed to Wide Bay at the end of November just in time to miss RAEME Birthday. It may have been providence, because first quarter 2022 saw the REGT deploy on OP FLOOD ASSIST and cancellation of planned courses and exercises.



T38 scrubbed-up and looking smart in their Service Dress

This started well with the first action of the year being ATL2 at WBTA where the machinery and the troops achieved the aim and destroyed everything that popped up, even the RAEME element had time to turn reasonably expensive munitions into brass, always good for moral. On RTU, and refurbishment of equipment and machinery, we concluded with the annual TAE MBT engine removal and internal inspection.



V28 pack lift by night in Wide Bay Training Area

The SQN initially deployed to Gatton and later Brisbane, in LI21 vehicles, and a troop of (borrowed) Hawkei. In addition to the rewarding work of assisting the community, it was a good opportunity to test our vehicles in a non-field environment. According to our resident Hawkei “pilot”, Zane Becke, the vehicles performed well and our favourite recov mech, “Briggo”, proved he was willing and able to ply his trade in any vehicle except the M88. (See 7 Bde Facebook page at):

<https://www.facebook.com/7thBrigade>.

As I write this column the SQN is standing down from OP FLOOD ASSIST and preparing to switch focus to training and governance. B SQN AI ECH, as always, stands ready, pointed sticks in hand, for the call to move “FORWARD!” and continue to push the proverbial runny stuff up the hill.

T38 (WO2 Lemmon – T3 ASM). For C Squadron, the year 2021 started as did many previous years with a relatively well seasoned crew of enthusiastic, ambitious young (well some are) tradesman with one thought in mind, to uphold the C SQN tradition of providing the “Heavy Fighting Force” of 2/14 LHR (QMI) with the machinery it requires to “... close with and destroy the enemy using, fire power, manoeuvre, and shock action.”



T38 and crew surge to repair an MIAI by night on Exercise Diamond Dagger in TFTA

The next major event for C SQN was the fateful exercise in TFTA in which activities were sadly curtailed due to the unfortunate and devastating accident which saw two of our very own “good men taken early”.

After RTU, and a very difficult few weeks, life at C SQN settled down and continued with another round of exhausting refurbishment, followed by the traditional main battle tank parade around the barracks. This event, formally known as the “Cambrai Parade”, but now known as the “Buna-Gona Parade”, saw C SQN tradesmen provide the operational troops with all of their tracked equipment – “Hurrah and Hussar” – and the celebrations went on, didn’t they!

After a well-earned Christmas break a new look and even fitter section returned to work, sleeker, slimmer and minus a few outstanding and difficult-to-replace tradesman. These included CPL Alex Warsing, LCPL Dom Barri, CFN Tim Gurney, CFN Jack Fitzgerald, CFN Nathan Novak and CFN Max Greene-Galloway.



Christmas stand down off to a good start for T38

The year 2022 has been, and will continue to be, a trying one, with reduced manning levels across all sections and the added impost of training the new section members, complicated by COVID 19 and DACC tasks. It is not likely to settle down soon, but the spirit to succeed will prevail.



C SQN TST on Parade – M88 COLOSSUS pushing all the other tanks around.

Memorial – Loss of two outstanding soldiers of the Corps (WO1 Boland – RASM). 2021 was a sad year for all at the Light Horse and the Corps with the loss of WO2 Ryan Leslie and CFN Brendon Payne, both Recov Mechs, whilst on exercise at TFTA in Sep 21.

The REGT did them both proud during their funerals; and a big thanks is given to the CO and RSM for their wonderful support during this difficult period. A special thanks must also go to those personnel from 2/14 LHR (QMI) and 7 CSSB, who were involved in, and formed, the marching parties, catafalque parties, bearer parties as well as many others gave these fine members of the Corps a fitting the send-off. The following – WO2s Daniel Reilly, Jason Lehmann and Jachir O'Brien – from external units, who volunteered to be part of Ryan's Bearer party are also to be commended. Jachir, in particular completed 14 days COVID isolation so he could carry his brother Ryan to his rest.

Thank you to all Corps members, serving and retired, for their offers of support and help during the days

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immediately after the accident – it was amazing how much support was offered. If we did not contact you after your offers, it was because we were overwhelmed and really did not know where to start.



Padre giving words of comfort – soldiers from different 7 Bde Units at the accident site.

Permanent Memorial. Temporary memorials were created as shown above from 7 CSSB and 2/14 LHR to honour the deceased. The unit is progressing towards installing a permanent memorial at the location, with plans being presented to the local council for approval. This will be an area where all can gather and show their respects. We will update the Corps as this task progresses.



7 CSSB and 2/14 LHR Memorials respectively– Great work by our brothers and sisters.

Arte et Marte

Justin Ryan
MAJOR
OC Support Squadron
2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment
(Queensland Mounted Infantry)



UNIT ACTIVITIES

RAMS Report. I'd like to provide an update of training underway at the Aircraft Maintenance School. I will get to that, but firstly, I'd like to let you know about a 2017 DGPERS initiated review into small aviation trades and the subsequent loss to the Corps, of some important trades, about which you may not be aware.

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Army trades with small numbers of personnel and/or niche capabilities have been the subject of recent reviews to determine future viability. This “Houston Review” identified the following two trades as problematic:

- ECN 153 ASTFITT, who is a soldier responsible for inspecting, testing, repair, manufacturing, assembly, refurbishment and modification of Army aircraft metal and composite structures; and
- ECN 154 ALSFITT, who is a soldier responsible for inspecting, testing, repair, manufacturing, assembly, refurbishment and modification of Army aircraft safety and survival equipment.

The review concluded that Army was not best placed to continue sponsoring these trades, and a subsequent agreement between the Chief of Army and Chief of Air Force determined that these trades would transfer to the RAAF over a six-year period. This decision effected 37 ECN 153 personnel and 54 ECN 154 personnel from CFN to WO2. Although some soldiers have elected to transfer to a new trade in RAEME, or another Corps in Army, the majority will be wearing RAAF uniforms – it is very strange seeing one of our previous WO2s as a FSGT!



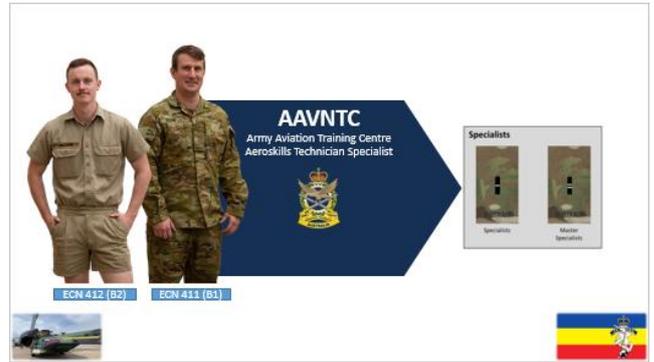
Same but different

We all know that we belong to the organisation with the best esprit-de-corps across the ADF, so I am sure you can relate, when I say, I really feel for personnel leaving our Corps. I also feel confident you will join me in wishing all previous ECN 153 and 154 personnel the best for their future endeavours: You may no longer be in RAEME but you will always be a “Spanner”.

Secondly, the third iteration of Aeroskills Technician Specialist (ATS) training commenced on 28 Mar 22. This round of training has six soldiers from 16 Avn Bde, and a civilian recruited under Army’s new bespoke recruitment process undertaking the training. These seven soldiers will undergo additional training to qualify in their opposite trade – Aircraft to Avionics – with the intent they will be granted a licence to certify work across both trades. The theory training is being conducted by Aviation Australia, and in this iteration, we will use the fantastic facilities and training aids at RAMS to ensure these personnel complete their required OJT in a short timeframe.

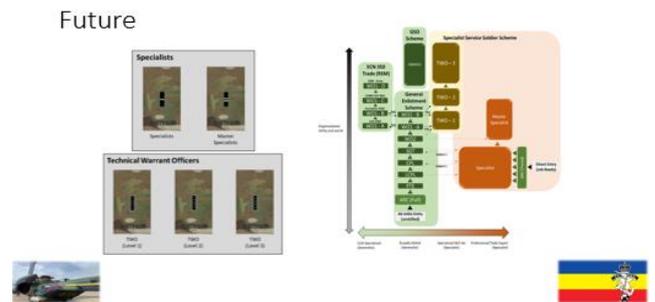
This critical training is being coordinated by the Workforce and Training Branch of the Aviation Training Centre, and its success is due in no small part to the work of two RAEME stalwarts: MAJ Dave Durbidge and WO1 Torsten Chudziak – great work Durbz and “Twisty”!

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RAEME Specialist

The success of the ATS is also contributing to the Army’s Specialist Service Soldier Trial, and thus the seven soldiers will be reclassified as Specialists on completion of their cross-trade training. Not only are these soldiers delivering capability to Army through increased trade specialisation, but they are also helping Army to build new workforce transformation initiatives as part of the Workforce 2028 Campaign Plan. In the future you will (may) see Master Specialists and Technical Warrant Officers as new ways to serve – watch this space.



Future of RAEME?

Finally I’d like to report on last Year’s RAEME Birthday Dinner. While any time we get together is always a great night, it was with great excitement that RAMS was able to host an ex-Apprentice / RAEME soldier made good – Mr Steve Baxter. Steve needs little introduction and you may recognise him as one of Australia’s most successful tech entrepreneurs, or one the “Sharks” from “Shark Tank” – look him up on stevebaxter.com.au.



Mr Steve Baxter and LT George (Wham!) Michael

You can probably imagine that Steve gets asked for his time regularly, thus we were very honoured he agreed

to be our guest of speaker and regale us with words on what it takes to operate at the top end of town. Steve's address didn't disappoint and was consequently met with a thunderous reception, mostly by Mother Nature, as a storm that literally drowned out any other sound. Steve, thank you so much for sharing the Birthday Dinner with us – we look forward to seeing you at this year's dinner.

The night also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of a number of teams and individuals. I would like to make special mention of the Trainee of the Year, CFN Bryce Venturin. CFN Venturin is an aircraft technician now posted to the 5th AVN REGT working on the CH-47 Chinook. He was awarded the CFN Shannon Nicholas Memorial Award for his outstanding academic results, superior teamwork, and leadership during his time under training at RAMS. While Bryce won the accolade special mentions must also go to CFNs Thomas and Zachary Green, who also performed exceptionally well during training. However, aside from the previously mentioned qualities displayed by CFN Venturin it was his resilience and good humour, especially evident after his display of negative buoyancy whilst wearing a weight vest, that "cemented him" to the bottom of the Oakey pool. Unfortunately with COVID still impacting the ability of some guests to travel, Janet Nicholas, who sponsors an award to the best performing trainee, was unable to be with us, so we asked COL Tony Borg, former COL COMDT QLD to assist. Tony, thank you for stepping into the breach at the last minute and giving the occasion the elevation it deserved.



COL (Retd) Tony Borg and CFN Bryce (Sinker) Venturin

Although the attendees were excited to hear Steve, and revelled in the achievements of our tradies, the highlight of the night was undoubtedly the RAEME Corps Birthday cake fashioned into a facsimile of the Prince Philip Banner. It was fashioned by RAMS' very own baker extraordinaire: SGT Phillipa Finlay. Not only is Pip an awesome human, fantastic instructor, and great tradesperson, but she also channels Steven Segal and can "also cook". Well done, Pip! PS we miss your Monday morning treats.

Finally, I'd like to leave you with a quote from the late 20th Century American poet W.E. Houston that sums up what we do at RAMS, but is perhaps equally applicable to all of us:



Arte et Marte

**Trent Groves CSC
LTCOL
CO/CI
RAMS**



C-Sqn TST prepares for Op Tonga Assist. The 5th AVN REGT was tasked to provide Rotary Winged support to our friends in need in the South Pacific. Task Unit (TU) Brahman, consisting of three CH-47F helicopters, embarked on HMAS Adelaide as part of Joint Task Group (JTG) 637.6.4 humanitarian assistance mission for Operation Tonga Assist. This mission thoroughly tested the responsiveness of the Technical Support Troop (TST), in particular the short Notice to Move (NTM) over the Reduced Tempo Period (RTP), while navigating the threat of COVID. Additionally, there was the added complication of understanding and planning around the effects of volcanic ash which would inevitably damage the aircraft as it was ingested into the engines.



Airlift of plant equipment from Atata Island, Tonga by Chinook helicopter

Despite TU Brahman having a short time to prepare the aircraft, stores and tooling, the unit successfully self-deployed from Townsville to the Port of Brisbane for embarkation on HMAS Adelaide. This quick response

time was achieved and due in part to significant effort from 5 AVN's maintenance and logistics personnel. C SQN's broad tasking remit requires task-organised equipment. Achieving readiness for a deployment at short notice combined with the requirement to simultaneously maintain flying operations at 5 AVN, has been a significant challenge for C SQN. Recent events have underscored how innovation is key to successful aviation maintenance deployments and demonstrates how the C SQN team is working hard to be "Future Ready" while staying "Ready Now".

Operation Tonga Assist was enacted because of the eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano, located approximately 65km North of Tonga's mainland (Tongatapu). This posed the question of what effect will volcanic ash have on the CH-47F, and what additional maintenance requirements may be required to mitigate any negative consequences. As there were no known ADF operations within a volcanic ash environment, the ADF reached out to other nations operating a CH-47, such as personnel in the US, and the UK, as well as learning from the Royal New Zealand Air Force's experience after White Island. The technical measures resulting from this correspondence included in-flight monitoring by aircrew, post-mission reporting for ash exposure, trend analysis on power checks, compressor and turbine borescope inspections, and bespoke cleaning procedures. Rapid technical assessment and coordination of effects from the Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisation and Cargo Helicopter Management Unit saw the TST depart Australia with a workable plan to reduce the likelihood and mitigate the consequences of volcano ash damage.



RAN aviation support sailors prepare plant equipment on HMAS Adelaide's flight deck.

As this article is written, operations are ongoing and the TST are working hard to enable TU Brahma to deliver supplies and equipment in support of the recovery effort in Tonga.

S McGee
LT
C SQN LEO
Spanner News



MTT Vanuatu – Vehicle Maintenance Course.

Supported by the Vanuatu-Australia Defence Cooperation Program, a 22-member Mobile Training Team from the Australian Army's 7th Combat Brigade partnered with the Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) to deliver specialist training throughout November 2021.

As part of a three-week training package Vehicle Mechanics SGT Dale Daff and CPL Brendan Harris from the 106th Field Workshop conducted a Vehicle Maintainers Course aimed at enhancing vehicle repair and maintenance planning skills of the VPF.



CPL Brendan Harris explains maintenance procedures for a generator during the Vehicle Maintainers Course

The Vehicle Maintainers Course, delivered at Cook Barracks in Port Vila, was primarily focused on further developing the current skills of VPF mechanics and helping to implement a robust preventative maintenance program. This was primarily achieved through delivery of theory and practical lessons followed by on-the-job training including live maintenance tasks on the current in-service VPF fleet.



SGT Dale Daff and VPF Soldier PTE Amos Tomaki

Sergeant Dale Daff from 7 CSSB outlined how important delivering scheduled servicing training was and how it will enable the VPF to continue their work throughout Vanuatu.

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“Repair parts are not always readily available in Vanuatu, especially in the more remote islands. COVID-19 has also presented unique shipping challenges, so ensuring the fleet remains serviceable for as long as possible through regular scheduled servicing and inspections is vital to allow the VPF to carry out their duties across all provinces”.

VPF Soldier PTE Titonga explained that the unique environmental conditions in Vanuatu make regular vehicle maintenance even more important for the VPF. “In order to keep the vehicle running we have to maintain it every day, every week, every month otherwise our vehicles break down”.



PTE John Pierre

PTE Titonga went on to say “My colleagues and I have learned plenty and I believe we’ve improved. After the course we’re looking forward to training some of the younger members”.



PTE Peta Shem Titonga

The training provided will enable the VPF to continue their work throughout all parts of Vanuatu and will help

ensure the current vehicle fleet is serviceable and available for tasking whenever it is required.

The MTT was delivered under the auspices of Vanuatu-Australia Defence Cooperation Program (DCP), which supports the VPF’s organisational and capability growth.

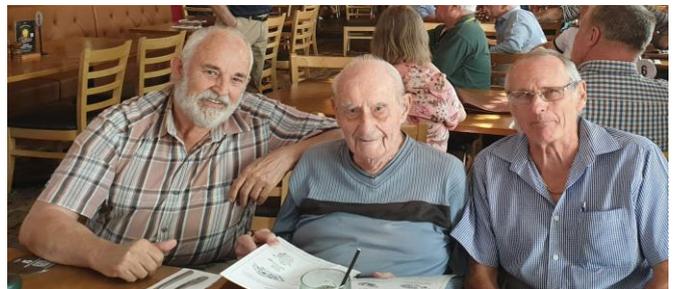
Arte et Marte

Dale Daff
SGT
106 Fd Wksp Coy



REPORTS ON LOCAL EVENTS

Lunch in Toowoomba. Around 30 people attended the second Darling Downs gathering on 19 Mar 22 at the Spotted Cow Hotel in Toowoomba, with attendees travelling from as far afield as Brisbane and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts.



We were honoured to acknowledge the attendance of BRIG (Retd) Bert Barker, above, one of the founding members of the Corps. sitting with Alf Vanderhorst and Barry Skinner.



Above - Peter Wooley (12th intake VM) gave a very interesting presentation on his 29-year RAEME career, including his long time at 5 Base Wksp Bn, Oakey.



Lynn Sanders, Wendy Dowling, John Ellison, Stan Curin (standing), Dennis Dowling, Clarrie Sanders, Terry Johnson, Lesley Ellison and Charmaine Johnson
RAEME Association Queensland Inc

We intend to hold these functions approximately every three months, with a tentative date for the next function being Sunday 12th June 2022. If you need to know about the happenings of the Darling Downs Chapter, or would like to assist organise future events, please contact me at: southwest@qld.raeme.org.au

Pete Pile
MAJ (Retd)
RAQ-DD Convenor



RAQ COMING EVENTS

The following social events will happen in and around Queensland in 2022. For further details on any events, please contact the RAQ Functions Officer at: functions@qld.raeme.org.au or Friday Files each week.

EVENT	DATE
RAQ ANZAC Day Function - Brisbane	25 Apr 22
SE QLD Apprentice Reunion - Bulimba	4 Jun 22
RAEME Reserve/CMF Reunion - Brisbane	21 Aug 22
RAQ Gold Coast Lunch - Mermaid Beach AEME SLSC	27 Aug 22
RAQ Sunshine Coast Lunch - Maroochydore	1 Oct 22
RAQ All Ranks Luncheon - Brisbane	TBA
RAEME 80th Birthday	1 Dec 22
RAEME Birthday – Brisbane	TBA
RAEME Birthday NQ - Townsville	TBA

ANZAC DAY 2022 - TOWNSVILLE



ANZAC day in Townsville will follow the same format as last year with a Dawn Service followed by drinks at Flynn’s hotel from 0600 before participating in the

Townsville ANZAC Day March and then back to Flynn’s Hotel for the Function.

Keep a lookout for the specific details in Friday Files and on the Events page of the Website.

Robert “Tank” Pontifex
RAQ NQ
north@qld.raeme.org.au



2022 ANZAC DAY MARCH - BRISBANE



The Event. 2022 ANZAC Day March and Post-March event in Brisbane is back to normal and is just around the corner with only three weeks to go.

March Start Location. George Street – towards Stephens Lane alongside Casino. Please note we are back to the original FUP, which is different from last year.

Time: RAQ need to be formed up and ready to step off at 1050 hrs.

Order of March: Group 5, Section C, Contingent No 68 – directly behind the City of Brisbane Pipe Band). Look out for the large tear drop flags at the head of each group and the proudly displayed RAQ banner.

Assistance: Folks requiring a wheelchair or a seat in a Golf Cart for the march can request assistance by contacting **Max Walker** by phone or email as shown below:

- Mobile: 0411 102 242
- email: anzac@qld.raeme.org.au
- email: james.walker3@ventia.com

Keep a lookout for the specific details on ANZAC Day Brisbane in Friday Files closer to the event and on the Events page of the RAQ Website. This includes the Post March Function.

Arte et Marte

James Walker “Max”
Mobile: 0411 102 242
anzac@qld.raeme.org.au



RAQ WARNING ORDER GOLD COAST LUNCH 27 AUG 22.

Situation. The RAQ as part of its annual social events program is organising its annual lunch on the Gold Coast at the Mermaid Beach AEME Surf Life Saving Club on the afternoon of 27 Aug 22.

Mission. You are asked to put the date in your calendar now and plan your life around this important event – please note wives, husbands, partners, girlfriends, boyfriends or mates are always part of this event.

Execution. The lunch will see a direct assault on the Surf Club conducted in several phases. Note the following key phases:

- arrive at the venue and head upstairs – some parking is available in the car park opposite;
- go to the FUP via the bar to grab a beer,
- join the other troops and commence gasbagging,
- take a deep breath and read the menu, draw rations at the ration order point using your own ration card,
- sit comfortably in the FUP, and
- enjoy your rations and carry-on gasbagging.

Admin and Log. Generally between 60 and 70 folks attend the lunch, but space is limited, so get in early. By August all the Covid restrictions should be relaxed. Surf Club management allocates an area to the RAQ members on the front veranda overlooking the sparkling ocean and provides tables / chairs. For all attendees. Please purchase your own drinks over the bar and purchase rations from the menu at the meal order point. Meals will be brought to your table.

Command and Signals. Further reminders will be forthcoming, as well as requests for attendance, in early June, July and August. Critically, at this stage, put the date on your calendar. The lunch is scheduled for Saturday the 27 Aug 22, commencing 1200, and generally winds up about 1630-1700.

Regards,

**Eddie 'Beans' Bevans & Barry Skinner
Co-Convenors**



RAQ SUNSHINE COAST ANNUAL LUNCHEON - SAT 1 OCT 22.

Readers are advised that this year's RAQ Sunshine Coast Annual Luncheon is to be held at the Maroochy RSL on Saturday 1 Oct 22. This year's lunch is of significance given it is the Corps' 80th Birthday.

It is early days of planning; however, we have already secured the Executive Chairman of Canberra based Aspen Medical, retired RAEME Major Glenn Keys AO, as our guest speaker. Aspen Medical provides support across the full spectrum of healthcare in Australia and abroad and has had Government contracts in Australia, the UK and US. Glenn has a wealth of experience on
Spanner News

delivering medical services but will concentrate on Aspen's support to State and Federal Government responses to the COVID pandemic in Australia.

The RSL has waived the cost of room and projector/screen hire and again will offset the cost of the lunch to the sum of \$10.00 per head for the first 100 attendees. The RAQ is matching the RSL and will subsidize the lunch a further \$10.00 per member and one guest, again for the first 100 attendees. This will reduce the cost per head for members and one guest to \$38.00.

Details confirming the menu, format and timings will be promulgated later in the year via Friday Files and letters.

Note the date, Saturday 1 Oct 22, in your diary on the Sunny Coast to celebrate this year, RAEME's 80th birthday.

**Ross Grant & Mike Prain
Lunch Convenors
RAQ Sunshine Coast Chap**



RAEME HISTORY SEGMENT

Bird Dogs, Bunny II and Possum – RAEME Support to 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight, SVN.

Introduction. Although the duties of RAEME tradesmen supporting Army Aviation clearly separate them from their ground RAEME peers, they share the same technical skills, creativity and innovation. Those values were evident throughout the unit's tour of duty in Vietnam from September 1965, when 161 Recce Flt deployed to Bien Hoa in Vietnam as part of the 1 RAR Group, up to 1972, to when the unit returned to Australia in 1972. During that period, the unit's fixed and rotary winged aircraft flew more than 72,000 hours completing more than 88,000 sorties in a diverse range of aircraft, maintained and serviced by integral RAEME & RAAF tradesmen. Because 161 pilots used the radio call sign "Possum" the unit was also known as the "Possums of Vietnam". High quality RAEME support for Army Aviation assets was a major feature of 161 Recce Flt's service throughout the Vietnam War, but in 1970, RAEME soldiers attached to 161 Recce Flt were given a unique challenge – this is their story.

The Challenge. The challenge offered to and accepted by the RAEME soldiers of then 161 (Indep) Recce Flt was to create a Cessna O-1 Bird Dog from the wreckage of battle-damaged US Army aircraft. The finished product, initially a flying, fully functional Bird Dog, nick-named Bunny II, is now displayed in the Museum of Australian Army Flying at Oakey in Queensland.¹

¹ From early during its service in the Vietnam War, 161 (Indep) Recce Flt operated two Bird Dog aircraft, on loan from the US Army. Tragically, on 23 May 1968, while flying top cover for a troop of Centurion tanks being moved to Fire Support Base Coral, one of these Bird Dogs was shot down and destroyed by fire. Major George Constable, RAA, the OC of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt, who was flying the aircraft, was killed in action as a consequence.

Origins of the Challenge. Major Charles “Charlie” Miller, AAAvn began his flying career as a SNCO pilot during the 1950’s. His love of aircraft and flying has been a lifelong affair. He invited the OC of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt, Maj Phil Calvert, AAAvn: “To rebuild the aircraft and bring it to Australia to be used as a towing aircraft at the Amberley gliding club.” In turn, Maj Calvert turned to

Captain Bob Millar, RAEME, 161 (Indep) Recce Flt’s Engineering Officer (EO) for assistance. The OC and EO decided that the challenge of creating a Bird Dog from wreckage was to be in accordance with the following criteria, rules/conditions:

- Challenge the technical expertise of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt RAEME soldiers.
- As the majority of operational aircraft maintenance was done at night, the challenge would keep RAEME members occupied during daylight hours.
- Generate intense interest and pride while enhancing morale not only among the RAEME members of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt, but among all members of the Unit.
- Preference be given to maintenance of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt aircraft at all times.
- All work was to be of the highest standard by reference to all relevant publications.
- As many RAEME personnel as possible were to be involved in the project.
- The project could be scrapped at a moment’s notice.
- While preferable, it wasn’t obligatory that the aircraft had to fly on completion of the challenge.

Work Begins. On 19 Aug 70, a truck carrying two distorted pieces of metal vaguely resembling sections of a Bird Dog fuselage and numerous spare parts rolled into the unit’s workshop area. Following the initial shock at the state of the truck’s cargo, an overall assessment of the damage was carried out. The damage assessment identified that the majority of the bulkheads, fuselage skins, undercarriage box sections, electrical, radio and instrument components, wiring looms and Perspex sections required repair, replacement or modification.



Cpl Russ 'Shifty' Gordon, RAEME and Cfn John Lamb contemplate the wreckage and ask: “What have we let ourselves in for?”

“Minor” components such as wings, flight control surfaces, engine and all its accessories, plus of course a propeller, were missing, requiring procurement. So it became necessary to test RAEME technical expertise, tact and diplomacy, relationships with allied forces, cheating and unabashed gall to see if it was up to the challenge. Sergeant Bob Zitzelsberger, RAEME, on his second tour of Vietnam, undertook to “mother” the project.



Sgt Zitzelsberger and L/Cpl Bower working on fuselage alignment. Note the creative rigging and alignment “tools” in use.

Sgt Zitzelsberger’s key assistants were Corporal Len Avery and Lance Corporal Fred Bower; both accomplished and experienced RAEME Airframe Fitters. They quickly produced a shopping list of necessary materials, large, varied and expensive enough to intimidate even the most innovative RAEME tradesmen. Necessarily, they adopted many of the scheming characteristics of a Sgt Bilko². That little bit of devil in most became a whole lot of devil in all involved.

Armed with Sgt Zitzelsberger’s extensive shopping list, members of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt spread out on a massive scavenger hunt using whatever methods necessary to beg, borrow, steal, barter and/or swap items needed to create the aircraft. There were many deals made, some of which indicated a naivety on the part of some Americans to fall prey to the cunning Australian RAEME Digger.

Ultimately, completion of the challenge was dependent upon the acquisition of a Continental 0-470-11B flat six piston aircraft engine of the type fitted to US Bird Dogs, none of which existed in the Australian Army inventory and neither were any to be found falling off the backs of US Army trucks. However, the ever-alert Maj Miller, while visiting a United States Navy Unit hangar saw a factory-new Continental 0-470-11B in the corner. Despite generous offers of VB beer, GP boots, slouch hats and poncho liners, the USN Officer refused to trade.

² The fictitious Master Sergeant Ernie Bilko, from the TV series of the same name, was in charge of a US Army motor pool at Fort Baxter. He abused his position by directing a continuous system of money making scams, ranging from gambling to renting out military vehicles.

He said he wanted a set of wheels, a sedan car and that was the only trade he would consider. Back to Maj Miller, who knew that RAAF Vung Tau had by Board of Survey condemned a Holden staff car. He seized the opportunity to trade this "set of wheels" for the Continental engine and achieve mutual satisfaction.

Work Finishes. Following some beer-fuelled brainstorming by Cpls Laurie Wood and Frank Benfield whilst diligently studying a technical article about Hugh Hefner's DC9 aircraft called Bunny I in the Playboy magazine, the Bird Dog was christened "Bunny II". Bunny II was now ready for initial ground running, requisite functional checks and necessary rectifications.



The first ground run: Cfn Rod Petty, Cfn Bob "Jumbo" Carroll, Cpl Wally "WJ" Nelson (in the 'hot seat'), Cfn Ron "Woodstock" Hodges and Lt Ian "Nino" Sinnott, AAAn.

Test Flight. On 9 May 71, as dawn developed over Vietnam, there was an air of nervous excitement and anticipation for all members of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt at Nui Dat. This was the day when Bunny II was to be test-flown following fastidious pre-flight inspections by the RAEME duty crew. CWOI Charlie Brewster, a loyal friend of 161 and a US Army senior Bird Dog test pilot, agreed to conduct the test flight. After signing for the aircraft and completing his own demanding pre-flight inspection, CWOI Brewster climbed into the cockpit, cranked up the Continental engine, obtained taxi and take-off clearances from the "flower in the tower", Air Traffic Controller, Sgt Bill Hudnott AAAn, opened the throttle and roared away down Luscombe Airfield before gently easing back on the control stick and launching Bunny II on its maiden flight.

The aircraft disappeared, into Brewster's test-flight schedule, ensuring some anxious nail-biting, when suddenly, at a height of only 30 feet above Luscombe Field, Bunny II re-appeared on a celebratory flypast.



CWOI Brewster pulled the Bird Dog into a wingover above Luscombe (dust) Bowl before making a more sedate and routine landing circuit eventually rolling to a stop at the Luscombe Field refuelling point to the cheers and contented satisfaction of all present. CWOI Brewster reported only one small defect and declared the aircraft unserviceable for 'Insufficient back travel on elevator'. Careful inspection of the elevator rigging by Cpls Avery and Wood confirmed the accuracy of the rigging and Bunny II was signed off as serviceable in a specially adapted EE500 Aircraft Maintenance Logbook.

Return to Australia (RTA). Bunny II was dismantled and loaded onto HMAS Jeparit disguised as "Cessna Parts" for shipping to 5 Base Workshop Battalion, Oakey. During 1976, Bunny II was re-assembled and became the property of 1st Aviation Regiment in the care of 173 General Support Squadron Workshop at Oakey. The task was completed under the guidance of now Sergeant Frank Benfield. On 14 February 1977, Australian and Army Aviation history was created when a now olive-green Bunny II, the first "Bird Dog" to be flown in Australia, was test flown at Oakey by Major Steven Tizzard and Lieutenant Colonel Hill-Smith, both former Possums of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt in Vietnam.



On 29 Sep 89, Bunny II was reduced to a static display at the Museum of Australian Army Flying (MAAF), Oakey. During 1991, Bunny II was restored to its 1970-71 Vietnam blue and white colour scheme by Sgt Wayne "Tubes" Gerhardt, RAEME, of the Paint Shop at 5 Base Workshop Battalion under the supervision of now ASM, WO1 Len "Big Bird" Avery, who as a Cpl Airframe Fitter had been a key RAEME soldier in the creation of Bunny II at 161 (Indep) Recce Flt in Vietnam.

Short Excerpt from "Bird Dogs, Bunny II and Possums - RAEME attached to 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight by Roderick Stewart 2020.

[Click here](#) to read the full 11-page article

RAEME NATIONAL NETWORK UPDATE

Message from the National Chair/Coordinator. The year has started quietly for me as the Coordinator of the RNN, but I note many of the associations around Australia are already busy and gearing up for a variety of activities, but most importantly, for local ANZAC Day commemorations. I have been receiving a few enquiries from folks around Australia interested in joining local

RAEME events – I have directed these enquires to the relevant associations and I am very pleased we can reconnect individuals associated with our RAEME family, and desirous of participating in our many parades and after parade activities, with the right associations.

I have continued to concentrate on supporting the various associations executives around Australia by maintaining the flow of communications to and from them. If the RNN can do nothing else, it can maintain the links with each other, with our broadly based Corps around Australia– current serving members and retired members.

Other tasks making progress, which we will steadily address in the coming months, include the following:

- **Spanner Packs.** It has been decided that delivering Spanner Packs to our brethren and sisters overseas will continue but at a much-reduced rate. Ray Norman is maintaining the momentum and has indicated that *“while there is even only one person overseas, I will continue to delivery our much-prized care packs to those folks.”* Generally, packs will continue to flow to personnel in operational areas, but we will consider personnel serving elsewhere. See two letters opposite from grateful recipients of the latest despatch.
- **Heritage Initiatives.** You may have seen the coverage on-line discussing the success of the first print run of the RAEME book of humour, “Straight from the Horse’s Mouth” and indicating a limited second print run is underway. The compilers, Ian Cook and Peter Shefford, have done a great job and the RNN is the main beneficiary of the most recent sales with the profits going in the RNN Accounts for future development of our websites around Australia.
- **RAEME Craftsman Magazine.** The next edition of the Craftsman magazine will be available online around April and in hard copy soon after.
- **Funding Support.** Some ongoing work from the December Corps Committee meeting is underway. I refer to the RAEME Bluebell Trust, which has had its “statement of purpose” rewritten and passed to the HOC Cell for agreement by the Corps Committee. In addition, work on the proposed new Corps painting is still underway with a business proposal being prepared for the consideration of the Corps Committee.
- **Appointment of a new COL in CHIEF Chief** – there have been many more enquiries about the appointment of a new COL in CHIEF. As previously advised RAEME will remain “in step” with REME and we will be advised in time of the new appointee.

My main goal for 2022 as advised is to get on with work to improve the websites for all associations in the RNN – if you have ideas for improving our websites or our IT services, or functionality, please let me know.

Spanner News

Arte et Marte

Ross L G Grant AM
CHAIR RNN

rnn.chair@raeme.org.au



SPANNER PACK – MORE HISTORY AND A RESPONSE FROM THE AREA OF OPERATIONS

A further three Spanner Packs were dispatched in late February 2022 – two to South Sudan and one to Fiji. This now brings the total number of packs despatched, since Op Spanner Pack was formed in 2008, to 4785 packs.

It has been agreed the program will continue while there are RAEME personnel serving overseas, generally in operational areas, but as mentioned previously, we will consider personnel serving elsewhere. I am aware of the potential for RAEME personnel to be deployed elsewhere in the coming years, so rather than wind up Spanner Pack, we will continue at a reduced rate.

As a result of the October despatch, I have received the following responses from WO1 Mark Warde, HQ JTF 633 J4 EME WO, who at the time may have been the last serving RAEME WO1 in the Middle East; and MAJ GEN Andrew Freeman, AM, currently serving in Washington:

Dear Raymond,

First and foremost, a personal thanks to you, and all members of our wonderful Association, for my assorted treats as a pick-me-up, when needed; and course it is always good to have more Corps paraphernalia to display. The stubby coolers in particular make it easy to identify a fellow Bluebell on bar night.

As perhaps the last EME WO in the Middle East Region (who knows what the future holds in that regard) I would also like to say thank you on behalf of all the RAEME members that have received a Spanner Pack over the years. To every member (past and present) of our fine Corps who has contributed to Spanner Packs via the RAEME National Network, state and Territory RAEME Associations and the RAEME Corps Committee, thank you. Your efforts have been greatly appreciated by a generation of RAEME members while they have served in the Middle East Region on various Operations.

Secondly, to you, Raymond, on behalf of our current generation of tradies, thank you for your efforts over many years in providing Spanner Packs and your efforts in support of our Corps in general.

Arte et Marte and Kind Regards,

Mark Warde

Hello Raymond,

I hope you and the family are well and are ready for Christmas.

RAEME Association Queensland Inc

I am still here in Washington (I have another year to go as the Australia's Defence Attaché) and it was a great surprise as we approach Christmas to receive a Spanner Pack. I don't think it matters what rank or age you are it is always special when someone receives one – it reminds us that we belong to a very thoughtful family/community that values friendship and we are not forgotten – thank you!!! I have attached a photo of me standing in front of the RAEME Flag that I was presented when I was Head of Corps. I proudly fly this flag each year on the Corps Birthday and for the past 2 years I have flown it outside the Residence of the Defence Attaché in Washington.



Again, thank you so much for the very thoughtful Spanner Pack!!

Kindest regards

Andrew

For readers, who may wish to assist, please note we do need your help, so if you can donate items, or money, please visit the shop on the RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) Website at www.qld.raeme.org.au where you will find a “make a donation” tag.

Arte et Marte

Major R.G. Norman OAM (Retd)
RNN Spanner Pack Coordinator
RNN@qld.raeme.org.au



VALE

It is with deep regret that we advise of the following:

- **Wylie**, COL (Retd) Donald, passed away peacefully on 6 Nov 21 aged 86, in Melbourne, VIC.
- **Bland**, MAJ (Retd) Ross (5th F&T) passed away in Oct 21 in hospital from bleeding on the brain. Ross served in 106 Fd Wksp SVN 1967-68.
- **Armstrong**, Graeme (17th VM) passed away on 10 Nov 21 in the Cabrini Clinic, Melbourne. Graeme served with 3 Cav Sqn in SVN 1967-1968.
- **Nolan**, LTCOL (Retd) Alan Arthur passed away 22 Dec 21 aged 86. Alan served in SVN with 106 Fd Wksp 14 Jan 70 to 17 Dec 1970. He also served as CO RTC.
- **Fairleigh**, Garry Errol (26th VM) passed away on 26 Dec 21. His life was celebrated on 5 Jan 22 at a service conducted at TS Burstow Chapel Toowoomba QLD 4350.
- **Ward**, Denis Harold Victor passed away on 29 Dec 21 aged 86. He completed two tours of Vietnam

with 161 (Indep) Recce Flt, firstly, from 4 Aug 67 until 6 Aug 68, and later from 13 May 70 until 12 May 71. A funeral service was held for Denis on 7 Jan 22 in West Ipswich.

- **Wikman**, WO1 (Retd) (25th VM) passed away on 6 Jan 22. Brian was a well-known and highly respected member of the Corps He spent many years in Corps Training Wing RTC.
- **Golder**, Warren John (25th Blacksmith) passed away 14 Jan 22 after a long battle with prostate cancer. He served at 2 Base Wksp Bn, 1 FER, Hobart Wksp Coy and at Wallangarra. He was known for his sincerity, humour and genuinely great character who touched all when they met him.
- **Shirley**, WO1 (Retd) Kevin (9th VM) passed away 5 Feb 22 after a long battle with pancreatic cancer.
- **Heesom**, Lt Col (Retd) Tom (8th VM & OCS Class Dec 57) passed away on 5 Feb 22. He entered OCS in January 1957 Intake and was awarded the Governor General's Medal for graduating first in his class. Tom served his country in South Vietnam during 1965/66 in the Australian Logistics Support Company.
- **Kent**, WO1 (Retd) Barry (27th F&T) passed away following a heart attack after a long illness on 3 Mar 22. Barry served with 1 Fd Regt, 1 Base Wksp Bn, C Sqn 1st Armd Regt, 107 Fd Wksp and SCMA. He had a private funeral followed by a commemorative Memorial (Poppy) Service at Oakey RSL QLD.
- **Fraser**, WO2 (Retd) Mark Rodney (17th Elec Fit) passed away on 14 Mar 22 following a battle with an inoperable brain tumour. Mark served at 5 Base Wksp Bn and several aviation workshops.
- **Maloney**, MAJ (Retd) Frank, “Speed” (13th VM) and OCS Jun 65, passed away on 19 Mar 22 following a long period of ill health. He served in 106 Fd Wksp SVN from 6 Apr 1969 to 16 Apr 1970.

WELFARE

- **Roche**, Brian, advised the RAQ he has been told by his haematologist that he has a very serious medical condition which is yet to be fully diagnosed. He is having more tests to assess the cause but is suffering from a lack of energy.
- **Neilson**, Fred, John Parfitt spoke with Fred on 24 Mar 22. He had an operation to remove one of his kidneys but is taking things carefully at this time.

As a reminder, please advise me of any brethren and sisters in distress, or who have passed, with **pertinent and accurate detail in a timely way**. Email me at the address below with details of welfare matters in Queensland.

Barry Shipway
Welfare Officer
welfare@qld.raeme.org.au



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Our association is gearing up to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the formation of RAEME, but in a modest way, ensuring everyone in our various regions can participate as much as possible. See the Table of RAQ Events on page 14 for information and watch for more detail in Friday Files. Already RAQ NQ and the Darling Downs team are leading the charge and have held several events to date.

ANZAC Day will also be a big commemoration in Brisbane and Townsville. Again, Friday Files will keep you informed of event details and administration. In regard to Covid, most restrictions have been lifted, so we can celebrate in a traditional ANZAC Day fashion with our many friends.

You will notice the summary of membership statistics on pages 5 – in general they show healthy growth in the RAQ and that is to be applauded. But don't forget you can do your bit to and encourage your mates and friends to join. We are looking for more serving soldiers to join and participate, in the life of RAQ, so take every opportunity to encourage membership when you attend local unit Spanner Clubs and other celebrations over 2022.

Serving members are our lifeblood when it comes to sales of memorabilia, and they have contributed significantly to the RAQ's improved financial situation – remember the RAQ can provide some assistance for celebratory events.

I have to offer a comment on our Queensland weather. Some of our members unfortunately have had first-hand experienced of flooding and associated damage in many communities – if you know of someone who wants assistance, let us know. It has been a dismal start to the year for many and some could do with a helping hand.

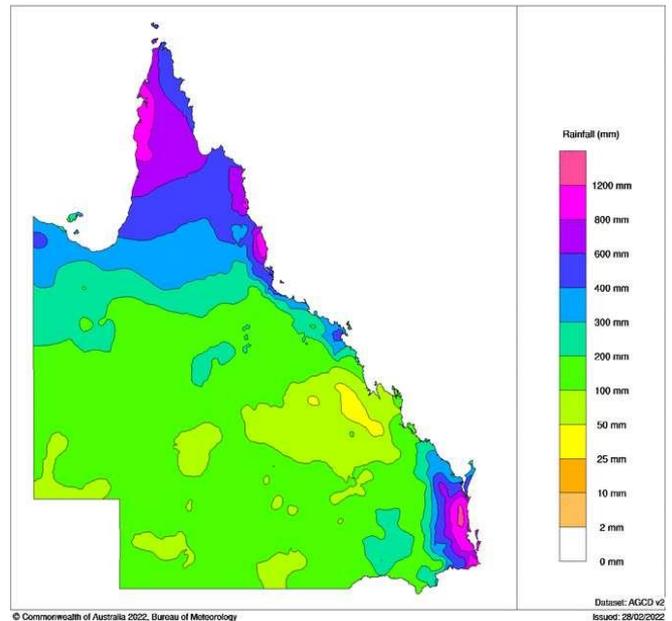
2022 is a watershed year for Australian military and Corps history - 80 years since the fall of Singapore, the bombing of Darwin; the massacre of Australian nurses at Banka Island; the Kokoda Track battles; the battle of the Coral Sea; the battle of the Beachheads – Gona, Buna and Sanananda; the battle of Milne Bay; to name a few; but importantly, the 80th Anniversary of the formation of the AEME later in 1942, from AAOC and several other Corps. My plan is to find some stories to represent this important year. If you, or your friends, have any particular 80th anniversary stories you'd like me to include in our next editions of SN in 2022, please forward them to me. I am also including stories that had to be culled from the Corps Memoir published in 2014 - there are many stories that remain untold!

Arte et Marte

Ross Grant
Chairman Comms Committee
commschair@qld.raeme.org.au
Spanner News



Queensland total rainfall (mm) 1 January to 28 February 2022
Australian Gridded Climate Data



RAQ Online Shop – NEW ITEMS

The RACQ has introduced a huge new range of mechanise, including, Stickers, Mouse mats. Workshop Flags, Tricolour badge pennants, Mugs and more!



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13 1905 > racq.com

RACQ

Army Apprentices Annual Reunion – Southeast Queensland 2022

Celebrating 74 Years of the Army Apprentice – 1948 to 2022 and the 23rd year of SE QLD Reunions



- **DATE:** Saturday 4th June 2022
- **VENUE.** Bulimba Bowls Club, Thynne Road (Access off Quinn St.) Balmoral Brisbane QLD
- **TIMINGS:** 1100 – 1600
- **DRESS:** Casual
- **CATERING:** “Sausage Sizzle” provided at lunch, but feel free to bring your own food. There is a large outdoor barbecue available for use. Drinks will be available at the bar.
- **ATTENDANCE:** This year we have invited members of the 50th Intake of the Army Apprentices School, to attend. They have not been involved before, so we will them make very welcome and hear their stories.
- **ELIGIBILITY.** The reunion is open to Ex-Apprentices, their families, ex-members of staff and any other personnel who were associated with Apprentices and wish to renew old friendships. If you know of any Ex-Apprentices who may not be aware of the reunion taking place, please pass this information on to them. Also, if you have access to any means of advertising the reunion, please feel free to do just that.
- **RSVP.** To the address below:

Brian Daley - 14th VM, 1 Michael Street Bulimba QLD 4171. Tel: (07) 3399 1300. MOBILE 0412 721 761. bjdaley14@gmail.com

“WITH SKILL AND FIGHTING: CRAFTSMEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY 1942-2014”.

For those yet to buy the Corps memoir, there are still copies available, detailed below is how to obtain a copy. It may be a great gift for someone who has served in the Corps.

Books are only \$40.00 plus postage. To order a copy send an email to RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au with the subject RAEME Corps History Book, include how many copies and your postal address details (so postage costs can be determined). The Head of Corps Cell will get back to you with full costs and payment details (preferred option is EFT) as soon as possible. Please be patient, there are only a couple of Defence Members in the HOC Cell and they have other tasks.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to drop us a line at RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au.