



THE LIGHTNING FLASH

SOLDIER and CRAFTSMAN

August 2005

Issue 45

The RAEME Association (Victoria) Inc.

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SPIRITS IN THE WIND



They crouch in the gullies & ridges,
The ghosts of the soldiers who died.
Barbed wire foot entanglements,
Rusted and left where they lie.
The wind whistles over those ridges,
Sounds of bullets and shrapnel are heard
Carried by wind over trenches,
Where brave men were fated to die.
Those ghosts walked proudly among them
As the Anzacs marched in the parade
Even the viewing children could see them
As they waved their Australian Flags
Memories of fathers and uncles
All the soldiers who died for our land
We lay down our wreaths to their honour
Praising their deeds once again.

Written to the memory of Jack Hancher
who died at Belles May 8th 1915

Written by Beryl M Lorimer VX78329A (shortly before she passed away)

Contributed to "Lightning Flash" by her husband, Association Member Lindsay

THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Vic) Inc.

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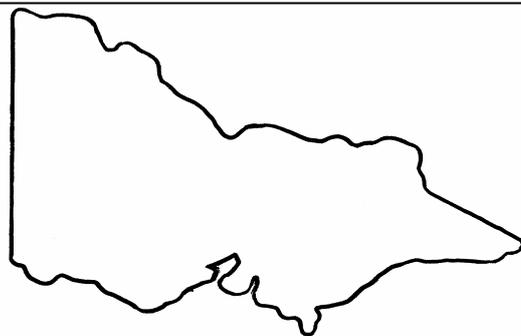
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LEOPOLD/ANGLESEA/PORTARLINGTON

As Lyall Butling has moved back to
 Melbourne

We are looking for a new Representative.

**BERWICK/PAKENHAM/WARRAGUL/
MORWELL/TRARALGON/SALE**

Bill Slegers
 25 Main Neerim Rd, DROUIN 3818
 ☎ 56 252 232 Mobile: 041 913 6149

**CRANBOURNE/KORUMBURRA/
WELSHPOOL**

Kevin Moon
 1 Hawkins St, KORUMBURRA 3950

ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION

This magazine is produced by the members, for the members, and is not to be solely one-way communication.

How do you find out what is happening in and around the RAEME ASSOCIATION, or in fact RAEME? through 'The LIGHTNING FLASH' of course.

DISCLAIMER The views and articles expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of this Association.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

COL. Terry Beaton (Corps Commandant Southern Region [and a member of ours!]) , Max Moore and myself were invited to attend a two day conference at Bandana together with representatives from all State Associations with the view to the setting up a "National Association"

This was a very fruitful meeting with the idea mooted to set up a national data base of past and present members of the Corps, a calendar of events of all the various Associations together with the bringing together of our memorabilia and Corps items that we have for sale.

There is a more comprehensive report elsewhere in this "Lightning Flash".

We may require to request some personal information from our members depending on what is required on that data base but please let me assure you there will only be A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THIS DATA BASE

While at this conference John Curtis from Western Australia noticed Max's Life Members badge and asked about it, as our old friend (who has been quite ill) Don Horsley had been made a life member of the WA branch (and a past President of our Association) and did not have anything like that badge. We had one made for him, and their President John Klein and myself presented the said badge to Don on a our recent visit to WA by Leonie and me to see our new Grandson.

Our new and improved website will be "on the air" very soon and will be linked to the National Association website on www.RAEME.org.au and click on the State you require!

Our AGM will be held on Sunday 28th August 2005 at 1100hrs in the Model room Oakleigh Barracks (official notice elsewhere in this 'Flash). We would like you all to attend and to take part in YOUR AGM and to think very hard as to what YOU are able to do to help YOUR Association. A good start would be to nominate for the committee!!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my outgoing hard working committee members for their untiring help during the past year.

See YOU ALL at the AGM!

Peter Cartledge
President

SECRETARY'S REPORT

There is little to report from the Secretary's desk. It is a matter of business as usual.

The Association correspondence, maintenance of records and the preparation of the annual accounts for the payment of dues are all a part of normal duties.

However, I do have the pleasure of welcoming to our Association two new members.

Our new members are **George Russell** from Heatherton and **Gary Treeve** from West Wodonga. On behalf of all our RAEME Association members I welcome George and Gary to our ranks.

As I mentioned in my last report, let me know if you have any likely candidates for membership and I will make sure they receive a membership form.

Gus Allen
Secretary

New Members

The President and Members would like to welcome our newest Members to the Association and look forward to seeing them at our AGM and other Social Functions.

George Russell
Gary Treeve

WELFARE REPORT

21 June – A call to Judy Langford who is now home after being in the Victoria Clinic, and is progressing well.

3 July – A call to Norman Curtis who has been in the Werribee Hospital, having lots of blood tests and medication for pain management. Norma Curtis is also back home and is battling her way. We wish them both better health in the future.

A call to Vincent McMahon who has cancer in the kidneys 6 months back. He has had ultra-sound and urology at Austin Hospital and CAT-scan, but his kidneys are not working too well. So back to Heidelberg Hospital. I had a long talk to Vincent, who greatly appreciated the call

Reg Cox
Welfare Officer

SOCIAL REPORT

It is with much disappointment that I report on our annual reunion last Anzac Eve with only 26 members and friends attending. I am sure those who did attend enjoyed themselves but what happened to the rest of our members?

If there is some reason why you think our attendances are down please let me know as I have said before there is a lot of work that goes into these functions and for only a few to attend it becomes very disheartening.

The work is just the same for a few as for a larger number but without the attendees then our merry band of loyal helpers wonder if it is all worthwhile!

Our next function is of course our AGM on Sunday 28th August 2005 (official notice elsewhere in this "Lightning Flash") at 1100hrs which will be immediately followed by a talk by COL. Terry Beaton on the "Death Railway" in Burma (Terry was curator of the Museum there for several years and has studied the building of the railway)

After Terry's talk we will serve a light luncheon and the Sergeants Mess will be open.

There are still a few places available for our trip to Victor Harbour Melbourne Cup Weekend. Please let me know if you are interested.

Peter Cartledge

Convener

THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Vic) INC **14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** and **ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

SUNDAY 29th AUGUST 2004

Model Room, Oakleigh Barracks
1318 North Road, OAKLEIGH SOUTH
(Note: Please be seated by 11.00am.)

TO ALL MEMBERS

In accordance with Association Rule 8 (1), the above notice has been served to remind you of the 14th Annual General Meeting date.

You should be aware that at this Meeting Reports are given from all Sub-Committees and it is your opportunity to express your opinions as to our future direction and to pass on an assessment of the Year 2004/2005 past activities.

REMEMBER YOU MUST BE FINANCIAL AT THIS MEETING

or your vote on any Resolution may be deemed invalid.

All Membership Categories (except Life Membership) Subscriptions for the Year 2004 – 2005 are now due and can be paid at the conclusion of the AGM.

It should be pointed out that all Membership Categories (except those of Life Membership and Honorary Members of the Incorporated Association) are liable for the above dues.

Gus Allan
Secretary

WANTED

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR
AUGUST 2005 - AUGUST 2006

POTENTIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Serving RAEME, retired and recently Retired Corps members or approaching Retirement and planning to reside in Victoria. Nominations close on

MONDAY 15th AUGUST 2005

COMMITMENT

Highly motivated, dedicated, team spirit, interest and welfare of the Association and its members.

THE CHALLENGE

To join a dynamic and highly motivated team of ex- AEME/RAEME and serving Corps members who are meeting the demands of providing a variety of support to Association members.

BENEFITS

The satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to keep the Camaraderie of the Corps alive and surviving.

CONTACT:

Secretary

THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Vic) INC.

C/-Oakleigh Barracks 1318 North Road, OAKLEIGH SOUTH VIC 3170

**Message from
Representative Colonel Commandant
(COL Graham Smith)**

As RAEME's newly appointed Representative Colonel Commandant I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself and to outline some of the priorities that I hope to be addressing in the coming months. I proudly served the ARA for 31 years with career highlights being the CO of 3 Base Workshop 86-87 and Controller MEA from end 93 to early 97. I adopted civilian garb in the newly formed DTR-A in 2000. If you like you can blame me for the TRAMM! Of all the complaints that I hear around the country, the enduring one is that RAEME and the Army has lost a lot with the demise of DGEME. As the RAEME Representative Colonel Commandant I have a duty to try in conjunction with HOC and the Corps directorate to redress some of the deficiencies. The fact is that we cannot do the job without your help.

Firstly you would have heard about the proposal to reintroduce Corps subscriptions. I am fully behind this proposal and I hope you will also actively support it. I see it as absolutely essential to resource some of the initiatives that will re-establish our *Espirit de Corps*. Since I took up the role of Honorary Colonel Commandant VIC / Tas. I have been seeking ways of ensuring the future viability of the RAEME Associations. For those who haven't had any contact with these very dedicated organizations, they do a sterling job in supporting our veterans and widows/widowers from past conflicts. They are also active in supporting serving soldiers through the RAEME craftsmen awards and they try to maintain the links with today's RAEME and the history of the Corps. They cannot continue to do these things without continued support and active involvement of RAEME's youth; that is you!

The introduction of Corps subscriptions could help to bridge these gaps that will ever widen with time unless we act now.

Later this month there will be a meeting of all the regional RAEME associations, Honorary Colonel commandants and HOC in Bandiana to discuss the formation of a National RAEME Association.

Improved communications is the key contribution such an organisation can provide to the regional associations and you the serving RAEME soldiers.

Shared membership lists, shared calendars of planned events, shared RAEME memorability and product lists, and the wide distribution of latest news and discussions of issues will be some of the improvements.

You don't need me to tell you that RAEME faces some serious challenges in the years ahead. I think that regardless of how RAEME is organised, the most pressing problem will be recruiting and training the tradespersons needed to maintain the ever increasing numbers of complex equipment being brought into service. We cannot just rely on the recruiting system to do the job; for reasons that are too many and varied to discuss they will fail – particularly faced with the demographic changes in Australian society. As it was true in the past we can be the most effective recruiters. Those of you in units can sell the Corps to the other Corps of the Army and help swell the ranks. I heard that ALTC had to cancel two fitter's courses this year because we cannot get enough candidates. Last Friday I attended the Melbourne RAEME Mafia Dinner and we farewelled three senior Corps members two of which (one LTCOL and one WO2) had been laterally recruited to RAEME. I think that well illustrates the point. Over to you!

Arte et Marte
Colonel Graham Smith



Our Representative Colonel Commandant
Colonel Graham Smith

RAEME National Association Meeting 17 – 18 May 2005

A meeting was held at Bandiana over the period 17 – 18 May to discuss the establishment of a national RAEME Association. The HOC BRIG David McGahey and the Representative Colonel Commandant COL Graham Smith co-chaired the meeting. The meeting was attended by each of the Colonels Commandant, the HOC staff and representatives from each of the Regional RAEME Associations. For further detail on the discussions from the meeting a copy of the minutes has been forward to each of the association representatives. For serving members a copy of the minutes can be located on the intranet Corps website.

A meeting of the regional RAEME Associations has been long overdue. The forum provided an ideal opportunity to discuss and compare the range of organisational structures, services provided and activities conducted within each of the regions. It was revealed that the issues and challenges faced by the association were common across each of the regions. All associations agreed that there is a significant potential benefit in the sharing of information and the aligning of certain structures, services and activities. Over the two half day sessions the key areas of discussion included:

- 1 Establishment of a national database,
- 2 Consolidate the mainstream Corps merchandise items and promote nationally,
- 3 Corps input to the Corps historical collection on display at Bandiana Army Museum,
- 4 Establishment of a national Corps activities calendar,
- 5 Linking of regional websites and the establishment of a Corps website
- 6 Association representation on the Corps Committee

The outcomes from the meeting were very positive. A range of action items were identified which will require ongoing development. Action officers have been identified. At the closure of the meeting COL Smith confirmed the



(L-R) Grant Kachel – SA, MAJ Graham Anderson – SO2 Heritage, Peter Cartledge – Vic Rep, Lyall Wedd – ACT, Ray Norman – Qld Rep, John Curtis – WA Rep, COL Mark Mackenzie – COL Comdt WA, COL Graham Smith – Rep Col Comdt, LT COL Terry Beaton – Col Comdt Vic, BRIGG David McGahey – HOC, Michael O'Donohue – NSW Rep, MAJ John Haley – SO2 Corps, Max Moore – Merch Rep, LT COL Andrew Adams – DHOC

Corps committee is very firmly committed to a National Association.

From this first meeting there is fair amount of housekeeping required.

It was proposed that an association representative attends the Corps committee meeting. John Curtis (WA Association) volunteered to attend the Oct 05 committee meeting. Subject to availability of resources it is proposed to hold a national association meeting over the period 16 – 17 May 2006.



The Boys in deep thought, after a hardy Breakfast, COL Graham Smith, Peter Cartledge & Lyell Webb

Reflections from the Past**by****Jack Westernhagen & Max Moore**

How many times at various Get-Togethers, such as our Annual Widows & Life member's Luncheons, ANZAC Eve Re-Unions, A.G.M.s, or whatever, have you heard that unforgettable tale being spoken between members or an enquiry asked "What ever happened to.....?"

To help you recall some of these events, our Historian Jack Westernhagen has recalled the foundation of AEME/RAEME in the CMF/ARES.

Hoping this may jog some old members memories , if it does put them to paper and we will print them in the "Lightning Flash", for your stories may prompt others to do the same.

If feel that you have trouble putting pen to paper give Jack or Max a ring and they can transcribe them for you.

From time to time, a series of articles, and where possible, supported by photographs will be appearing in our Newsletter 'The Lightning Flash'. Commencing from the very beginning of AEME in WW11 plus the beginning ACMF in Victoria in 1948, up to and including the present.

Hopefully, these 'Reflections of the Past' will stir the memories of some of our members into seeking out old photographs of those days gone by and perhaps since long forgotten, into providing further stories and provision of photographs for future Series.

Part-time soldering in Australia goes back almost to the beginning of European Settlement. Prior to the 1850s, Local Forces were established, or their formation was discussed, primarily to deal with specific incidents involving security.

The increasing demand for self-government within the Colonies, and the financial problems of the United Kingdom, resulted in pressure on the Colonies to assume greater responsibility for their own Defence. With the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, and the withdrawal of part of the Imperial Garrison, very real, if not wholly rational Australian fears led to the establishment of Volunteer Forces in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Despite fluctuations of public interest, and the effect of domestic or Imperial financial restraints, Part-Time Forces have been continuously in existence since that time.

'Volunteers' and Militia, as well as enthusiastic, untrained men fired by patriotism or adventure, formed the bulk of the Contingent sent by New South Wales to the Sudan in 1885 and the more substantial Forces committed by all Colonies to the Boer War at the end of the 19th century.

When the six Colonies Federated into a single

Commonwealth in 1901, their regular (mainly Garrison Artillery) and Citizen Forces were bought into a single defence system under the sole control of the central Government. Voluntary Citizen Forces, became know as the Citizen's Military Forces, were re-established in 1948 on the traditional Part-Time basis of Evening Parades, Week-End 'Bivouacs' and a Fortnight's Annual Camp of Continuous Training.

The roles of the Citizen Military Forces as seen by various Governments were similar, despite variations in the Conditions of Service. These were still considered essentially for Home Defence. The main difference in the existence since 1945 was of a Full-Time Combat Force, which could be deployed to trouble spots abroad, or if necessary; at home.

The Citizen's Military Forces since 1948 (now re-designated as The General Army Reserve) have become not the first, but the second, or even the third (after National Servicemen) source of Military strength.

In July 1948, the Federal Government approved the raising of a Voluntary Citizen's Military Force known as The Army Reserve as part of the Australian Military Forces. Recruiting notices began appearing in the Melbourne Herald on 11th June 1948 for volunteers and General Enlistment commenced on 1st July 1948 with advanced applications being accepted prior to this date.

The first AEME Training depot 'A' was located at the corners of Victoria Parade and Powlett Street, East Melbourne in May 1948.

Recruitment in the Citizen's Military Forces came not only from the community of untrained recruits, but from many ex-World War II veterans upon their demobilization and their return to civilian life; who wished to retain some of the Army life they had experienced in the service for their country.

As the ranks soon swelled with recruits, the following AEME ACMF Training Depots were established:

- 3rd MD AEME Trg Depot 'A'
Cnr Victoria Parade & Powlett Street, East Melbourne
- 1st Apr 1948.
- 3rd MD AEME Trg Depot 'B'
Somerville Road, Yarraville 1st Apr 1948.
- 3rd MD AEME Trg Depot 'C'
Artillery Trg Depot Myers Street, Geelong
1st Apr 1948.

Some of the characters of those times.

DECEASED WO 1 Terry Croft (ARA)
RSM HQ CRAEME 3rd Div,
WO 1 Allan Regan 1st (CMF)
RSM HQ CRAEME 3rd Div.
WO 1 Harry 'DAD' Switzer.
WO 1 Ken 'Lumpy' Miles.
WO 1 Bob Mc Guire.
WO 2 Eric Gell

WO 2 Pat Cooney (ARA).
 WO 1 Don Hodgart (ARA)
 WO 2 John Emond (ARA)
 S/Sgt Ken 'TOSS' Virgo
 (ex REME Arty & ACMF).

NOW RESIDING INTERSTATE:

Capt Norm Gow.
 S/Sgt Fred Woodward & S/Sgt Jimmy Duquemin
 both in S.A.).

“This is the type of story we are looking for”.

Recently when speaking to a Medical Orderly who survived Changi told me that if it had not been for the skills of the Wksp.& AEME prison personnel there, hundreds more prisoners would have died,, as they repaired and manufactured instruments for all the equipment needed for the Hospital.

Those who have visited Burma and Changi may have seen the graves of AEME and Ordnance Wksp Tradesmen who gave their lives doing their jobs.

The HONOUR Roll below is a copy of a drawing by one of the surviving prisoners of Changi.



Look for a follow up story on
 Craftsmen who Died in Changi

This article should be in the
 next “Lightning Flash”

Note: Any old photographs you send to us will be scanned & returned to the sender.

Max & Jack

VP Day Salute to Veterans Received from the Victorian Branch of the R.S.L.

I would be grateful if you would pass along the following information to your members via your Newsletters and notice boards.

(It was received from our National Headquarters last week and was too late to include in the forthcoming issue of Mufti)

Between the 13th - 15th August there will be a Salute to Veterans taking place in Canberra to commemorate the victory in the Pacific.

At this stage the Victorian Branch is in the process of planning various activities in Melbourne and regional areas. Further details will be advised in due course.

National Headquarters has inquired as to how many World War II veterans might be attending from Victoria.

Where possible, would you please ascertain from your members if they intend to go to Canberra or attend planned commemorations in Melbourne. Would you then please ring ANZAC House on (03) 9655-5555 and pass on the numbers. We don't need names, just numbers.

With thanks.

John Deighton
 Chief Executive Officer

27th May 2005

Activities 13-14-15 August 2005

Church Parade 1300 hrs 14 Aug 05
 St. Patrick's Cathedral

Concert 1000 hrs and 1400 hrs 14 Aug 05
 Melbourne Town Hall (Tickets via **Ticketek**)

Government House Reception
 (Invited Guests) 1350 hrs 14 Aug 05

Football Hawthorn/Essendon, 14 Aug 05
 MCG

Shrine Service 1230 hrs 15 Aug 05
 Display of all Banners

RAEME Vietnam Veterans Bluebell

(extracted from "RAEME Craftsman" Winter 2005)

As members of this association were Australia wide it became harder to meet & elect members of the committee. As you are aware Geoff Trevor-Hunt as Secretary Editor, compiled the Bluebell Newsletter, and then it had to be published and mailed out to some 750 addresses. This became nearly impossible to co-ordinate with Geoff in Western Australia and myself in Victoria, so Bluebell went into recession.

However all is not lost, the Corps publishes the *Craftsman* twice a year and is mailed out to all known addressees. Maj Graham Anderson is the editor and has been given the Bluebell mailing list in case you have not been receiving the *Craftsman*. YOU can help by contributing articles, HATCHES, MATCHES, DESPATCHES, PHOTOS you may have, even a "Warrie" or two. Just because you have left the service, you should not be lost to RAEME.

RAEME was the second largest corps in SVN so there must be some tales to pass on. The Corps has a fine exhibition at the Army Museum, South Bandiana, and unless you have visited in the past 3 months it is now a MUST see if passing through Albury/Wodonga. It really is magnificent and credit to all those who have and are still contributing their skills to this display. You may have some memorabilia from VN that you may like to contribute, and recognition will be acknowledged.

Which brings me to my final point:

THE FUNDS - DONATIONS

- \$5000 to the SVN MUSEUM PHILLIP ISLAND VICTORIA, and the members of the association will have their names on a plaque, acknowledging same
- \$3000 to Army Museum Bandiana, to the RAEME Exhibition to assist in the purchase of a mannequin
- \$2500 to assist the organisation of "The Gathering of RAEME", held in Brisbane April 2004

I trust all of the above meets with member's approval, in keeping members informed of Corps matters and personnel, and a practical solution to the dispersal of funds,

ARTE ET MARTE

Brian Kelly
Ex President

Bluebell Association

The following was circulated to
Ex-Service Associations by the R.S.L.

BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA COMMEMORATION SERVICE

**A commemoration, which honours the
courage, sacrifices and service of the
Australians and their Allies who repulsed the
Japanese attack on Australia in 1942 - 1943**

**The Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne
Wednesday, 7th September, 2005
at 10.45 am for 11.00 am**

Each year on the first Wednesday in September, *The Battle for Australia* is commemorated nationally. As the 60th Anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific approaches, it is timely to remember the sacrifices made by Australia's defence forces to achieve victory.

This year, a Tri-Service ceremony will be held at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance at 11 o'clock on Wednesday, 7 September. Veterans, the general public and school children will be joined by the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria Lady Southey, Members of Parliament, Service Chiefs and dignitaries. Following the laying of wreaths, the school children will place floral tributes beside the Eternal Flame.

The main purpose of the ceremony is to make our children aware of the threat to Australia in the years 1942 to 1945 and the way in which our servicemen and women defended our nation against the threat.

Your Association is encouraged to have members at the ceremony, wearing their medals, as an example to the children. Seating is available for veterans.

We would also hope that you would identify your Unit or Service by parading your Association Banner.

70 wonderful years and still so in love



Their romance began more than 70 years ago. "I met Hazel at her brother's party in Richmond, when I was 23 and she was 18, Les Bailey recalled. "She was alright looking, but I was half-whacked at the time." The joke typifies them, the Bon Beach couple who have battled through life together and can still laugh about it all.

They married soon after in 1935. "Things were tough then. It was the Depression and I had just finished my apprenticeship as a clicker in the boot trade, but I couldn't get any work. I was taking the food from my parents' mouths, so I became a swaggie," Les said. He travelled around NSW, Victoria and South Australia, "jumping the rattlers." Hazel was one of seven kids, who had lost her mother early at 13. "We're both battlers," Mr Bailey said. By 1934, Les returned home and found a job. All went well for the couple for a few years, when war broke out. Off Les went, leaving Hazel to look after two girls and a son. Les and Hazel moved to Bon Beach 25 years ago. "The move did us both a lot of good. We became involved in local issues." Nowadays, life is good. "We've got 10 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren," Les said, "And Hazel's been a wonderful wife. She's a great knitter and a pretty good cook."

Asked the secret to their relationship, he said, "Well, we get on pretty good. And I'm a fast runner!"
(by Deb Morris – "Chelsea Independent" 25 May 2005)

In Remembrance

Why are they selling poppies Mummy?
Selling poppies in town today?
The poppies, child, are flowers of love
For the men who marched away.
But why have they chosen a poppy Mummy?
Why not a beautiful rose?
Because, my child, men fought and died
In the fields where the poppies grow.
But why are the poppies so red Mummy?
Why are the poppies so red?
Red is the colour of blood, my child,
The blood our soldiers shed.
The heart of the poppy is black Mummy,
Why does it have to be black?
Black, my child, is the colour of grief
For the men who never came back.
But why, Mummy, are you crying so?
Your tears are giving you pain.
My tears are the fears for you, my child.
For the world is forgetting again.

**Former Army Apprentices:**

Jim McCormack 10th Intake Veh Mech (WA)

Norm Rooke 12th Intake Veh Mech (WA)

Bill Jones 13th Intake Veh Mech (NSW)

The Bridge on the River Kwai

Recently Bruce & Sandra Williams had the experience of visiting "Hell fire pass" and travelling by train on the old Burma railway track through "Death Valley".

To have spoken to many 2nd world war veterans who served in these areas and listen to their stories one would never understand how difficult it really was for them until you have experienced being their and even then it is hard to comprehend what happen on the Thai Burma Railway.

Bruce & Sandra left Bangkok at 6.00am on the 28th February to travel to the River Kwai area. On arriving at the River it was an exciting adventure for them as we have all seen the movie Bridge the River Kwai but until you have actually arrived, see the river and walk the Bridge you have no idea what feelings you have especially when you have read or spoken to veterans about the area.

On walking the Bridge and visiting the Museum you will note that there was not just one Bridge spanning the River but in fact there were two, the original wooden bridge being completed in February 1943. The 11 span Steel & Concrete Bridge as seen today was completed in the following June, the first train also travelled over it in that same month. How ever both these Bridges were first temporarily disabled in February 1945.

They were then repaired by Allied Prisoners with the wooden bridge being hit again in April 1945 and the Steel bridge in June. The Service Bridge was finally destroyed on 2nd April 1945.

However when you are there the feeling of knowing the tortures that our Troops suffered at the hands of the Japanese was incredible and although you may be a tourist when you are on that Bridge the occasion becomes very solemn and you can't help feeling the anguish that hovers over the area.

From there we travelled to the War Graves Cemetery in Kanchanaburi and what an occasion that was it was unbelievable to be able to contemplate the misery, sorrow and gloom surrounding the needless deaths of those resting in peace there, and to see all those head stones not just of Australian diggers but Brits, Canadians, Indians and many other countries all represented there.

As we stood amongst the graves in the Australian section and walked through the aisles it brought a lump to our throat and tears to our eyes just to see the ages of the majority of these Soldiers laying in rest. We observed how many RAE, ASC, AEME troops were there. I always thought that the troops that were lying in the cemetery would mostly be Infantry or artillery soldiers, but it is not the case to my surprise.

After leaving there we visited the Museum dedicated to all those troops, this museum was built by an Australian who now lives there and we had the pleasure of running into him as we were crossing the bridge so we do know this man is real and alive.

After leaving the Museum we walked down to "hell Fire pass". the railway and original sleepers are still there today. On walking along the line and proceeding into the pass it was an incredible feeling once again. Just to quote a figure in excess of 16000 troops died building this "Thai to Burma Railway". Not all of these of course died at Hell Pass.

As we walked through the pass and read the various plaques around location, the one that was of most interest was the plaque to "Weary Dunlop". Just as we passed his plaque I was taken back to see that a drill bit was still embedded in the rock, but at some stage during the building had broken off. I stood there with mixed feelings thinking; what had happened when that poor man broke the drill, I am told that the drills used at that time were hand drills and not pneumatic.

The torture that was evident here and on the rest of the railway, Museum & Cemetery was to say the least unbelievable however history proves different.

Just a little of history before finishing my notes and worth remembering: the allies had 61000+ Prisoners of War there and of that total 16000 troops lost their lives on the Thai - Burma railway, but in addition to this there were 100000+ slave Asians (Labourers) who also died and this is not mentioned often. Total Deaths were in excess of 116000 people; what a terrible waste of life.

WE SHOULD NEVER, NEVER FORGET WHAT WARS DO TO US.

"LEST WE FORGET"

Our travels through Asia were certainly an experience which we would not have missed. During the time we were away we covered Hong Kong. China(Canton) Singapore & Bangkok.

In Singapore we also went to the bunker where the surrender of Singapore was signed on the 15 February 1942. Here there were 138000 troops from Allied nations of whom more that 130000 became prisoners of war: As a matter of interest there were 9824 Japanese Casualties as well. but this is another story.

Arte et Marte

Bruce & Sandra Williams

105 FD WKSP, 4 CSSB

Hello again from 105 FD WKSP Coy! We're past the point of no return with half the year over already! The following 6 months will see the tempo stepped up to the next level as we begin to see the fruits of our labour materialise with implementation of the second half of the training program.

This year has seen the introduction of some new and exciting concepts to the training program, firstly with an increase to production weekends, but more importantly, an implementation of Brigaded RAEME production weekends. The Brigaded RAEME production weekend involves all RAEME personnel within 4 Brigade parading at Maygar Barracks and conducting a large scale production workshop to firstly reduce the backlog of tasks, but secondly to bring RAEME together and build inter-unit relationships. Thirdly, it's also an excellent opportunity to share a quiet ale with some long lost mates and catch up on all the other units rumours and hearsay!

This concept has caught the eye of some influential people, which have decided to make these types of exercises a standard for all critical trades and occupations across many hat badges. Who would have guessed that all it took was the initiative of a couple of humble EME WOs to get this off the ground!

The Training WO Gavin Richards-Bell has been detached to HQ 4 Bde for the next 6 months, filling the vacant EME WO position. All ARA personnel are now taking on extra tasks to fill the void left by the Training WO.

On the social side, the Workshop had a gathering at 'Witches and Britches' theatre restaurant in May which was a most enjoyable evening, and there are more planned.

Next year will see the changing of the guard with myself, SGT Langdon and CPL Boserio posted.

I'll bet that Alf is still dreaming of camels, Macca is still driving the MRV to recruiting displays, Tom is still having in depth arguments about politics and it's business as usual at 105 FD WKSP

B.H. SWEENEY LT

Dat Do Minefield SBS Program

The following email has been distributed around the RAEME serving and past members' network:

Hi Everyone,

I received the following email from one of our members John Power (MAJ RTD) which may be of interest from a historical perspective.

Best Wishes,

John

Good Morning Everyone,

I have just been advised that a documentary relating to the history of the Dat Do minefield will go to air on SBS at 8.30 pm on Thursday 18 August 05. As RAEME was heavily involved in designing, constructing, modifying and maintaining the mechanical means developed to achieve a clearance of the 22,000 M16 mines that were originally laid in the field the story of the whole history of the minefield may be of interest.

Additionally, a Dr Greg Lockhart who is based in Sydney is finalising the draft of a book titled "The Minefield - and Australia's Fateful Vietnam Strategy" the narrative of which is now with the publishers for editing. The finished product will probably be available early in the New Year. It deals with the history of the minefield in much more detail than can be included in the documentary.

Hoping this will be of interest,

Best wishes,

John Power

Again, the program details:

<p>8.30 pm Thursday 18 August 05 SBS</p>



THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Victoria) INCORPORATED
Incorporation Reg No. A0022655Z

NOMINATION FOR COMMITTEE MEMBER

SOLDIER AND CRAFTSMAN

I..... **(Proposer)** Membership No.....
(Given Name) (Surname)

Street & Address:

..... Post Code:

Signature:.....Date:/...../..... Phone No. (...).....

Hereby nominate: (Nominee)
(Given Name) (Surname)

Date of Birth:/...../..... Membership No:

Street & Address:

..... Post Code:

for Election as a Committee Member of the RAEME Association (Vic) Inc.

I, **(Secunder)** Membership No.....
(Given Name) (Surname)

Street & Address:

..... Post Code:

Signature:.....Date:/...../..... Phone No. (...).....

Second the above nomination.

Support reason for consideration: *(Please be brief)*

.....

I, **(Nominee)** Membership No.....
(Given Name) (Surname) accept the above nomination.

Signature:..... Date:/...../..... Phone No. (...).....

*Please note: Each member being Nominated or Proposing this nomination, **MUST BE** financial at the time of submitting this form.*

Received for inclusion in AGM Ballot:

Signature of the Secretary:..... Date:/...../.....

THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Victoria) INCORPORATION
Incorporation Reg No. A 0022655Z

NOTICE OF 15th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
and ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS 1100hrs Sunday 28th August 2005
Oakleigh Barracks, 1318 North Road, Oakleigh South

A G E N D A

1. ATTENDANCE
2. APOLOGIES
3. SILENT TRIBUTE – THE ODE
4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 14th AGM 29th August 2004
5. BUSINESS ARISING
6. PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
7. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT
(In accordance with Association Rule 8. (4.B.))
8. SUB-COMMITTEES REPORTS
(In accordance with Association Rule 8. (4.B.))
9. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR
10. GENERAL BUSINESS:
 - a. RAEME CORPS SHOP ITEMS
 - b. POSSIBILITY OF STARTING A SUB BRANCH OF THE ASSOCIATION IN WODONGA & SEYMOUR AREA
 - c. LIFE MEMBER AWARD
 - d. CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
 - e. ANY OTHER GENERAL BUSINESS AS RECEIVED BY THE SECRETARY
11. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR YEAR 2005 – 2006
12. DATE OF 16TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
13. CLOSURE OF MEETING

Note: A meeting of the 'INCOMING' Committee of Management for the purpose of Election of Office Bearers for Year August 2005 – August 2006 will be held Immediately after the conclusion of the A.G.M.

Immediately following the AGM there will be a talk by LT COL Terry Beaton on the "Death Railway" in Burma.

After Terry's talk a light luncheon will be served in the Sergeants Mess with drinks at bar prices.

Please ensure you have signed the Attendance Book prior to leaving the meeting

THE LIGHTNING FLASH

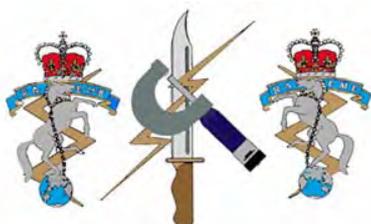
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