



# THE LIGHTNING FLASH

**SOLDIER and CRAFTSMAN**

**November 2005**

**Issue 46**

**The RAEME Association (Victoria) Inc.**

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**Print Post Approved: PP 339540061**

**Price: \$1.10 (Financial Members Free)**

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## **Colonel Commandant – Victoria & Tasmania**

### **RAEME Remembrance Day - Victoria and Tasmania Region**

This is an early warning order that it is proposed to hold a RAEME Day of Remembrance For Victoria and Tasmania in 2006, which subject to support is likely to become an annual event. The date chosen is the nearest Sunday to 1 February 2006. It was decided that it would be appropriate to use the demise of the RAEME Training Centre as a suitable occasion to use for a Day of Remembrance to also commemorate those RAEME personnel we have lost over the years. Regrettably, I was informed last Friday (21 Oct 05) by Ann Martin that our own Corps Birthday of 1 Dec (1995) was sadly used as the date for the official unveiling of the Army Logistic Training Centre. I have therefore gone back into history to find an appropriate date to use for the beginning of RTC. As it took 18 months to move from Ingleburn to Bandiana with numerous milestone dates, I have chosen the date when the order was struck to raise the unit, by the appointment of the first Commanding Officer/Chief Instructor. The official date of raising was therefore 1 Feb 1951, when LTCOL H.L.C. Martins was appointed as CO to raise the unit. It is also fitting to use this date as this renowned officer later, as a Brigadier, became our first DEME when the title was changed from Head of Corps. He served as DEME from 8 Jan 67 - 29 Dec 69, during the turbulent years of the Vietnam War. Further more, the "Brigadier H.L.C. Martins OBE, Memorial Encouragement Award" is still competed for today and awarded to the top junior NCO attending the RAEME Subject 4 (Sergeant) courses at ALTC and the Aircraft Maintenance School in any given year. Sadly Brigadier Martins passed away on 17 Jul 84 and the service will commemorate 21 years since his passing.

For 2006, the nearest Sunday to "1 Feb" will be 29 Jan 06. A booking has already been made at the Shrine of Remembrance for the laying of a Wreath and Last Post ceremony in the inner sanctum to be held at 1100 hrs. It is hoped that those working to form the new Bandiana Sub-Branch will hold a simultaneous Commemorative Service at the RAEME Memorial at the Memorial Park, South Bandiana. It is anticipated that the RAEME Association will hold a further Commemorative Service in Hobart at an appropriate venue. I would therefore ask for all RAEME to mark this timing and date in their 2006 diary. Further details will be supplied ASAP.

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(Vic) Inc.**

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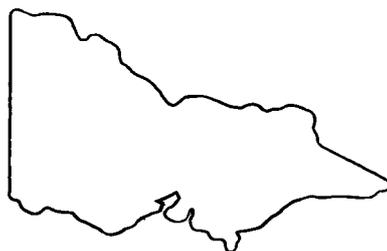
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We are looking for a new  
Representative. (Help Please)

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**CRANBOURNE/KORUMBURRA  
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**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.

**Let's hear from you!**

Deadline for February Flash  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2006

Items to Pat Marley, Max Moore  
Peter Cartledge or  
Gus Allen Secretary.

## **President's Report November 2005**

We had a most successful AGM on Sunday August 28<sup>th</sup> last.

Among things tabled at that meeting was the making of George (Tiny) Hepburn a Life Member of our Association and I was honoured to present Tiny with his certificate and medallion.

Following the AGM COL Terry Beaton (Colonel Commandant Victoria and Tasmania) gave us a very informative talk on The Burma Railway and then our barbeque followed.

The Corps Conference was held late in October and COL Terry Beaton called an informal meeting on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> at "The Black Stump" (an old RAEME watering hole) where 60 plus past and present members of the Corps showed great interest in starting a "Chapter" of our Association in the Albury/Wodonga Area. We will get this up and running as soon as possible. There will need to be a change to our rules to accommodate this "Chapter" and that is being considered as this report is being read.

There is an AGM to be held at ANZAC House 4 Collins St MELBOURNE on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 1030hrs, of RAEME Vietnam Veterans with a view to getting their organisation viable again along the same lines as the Albury/Wodonga Chapter.

This is a great step forward to getting all the past and present members of the Corps who wear our badge to come together for our common cause. Please inform any other past and present Corps members that you know of, of these movements. Would you please respond to the question in the Social report re the date of the Luncheon to Honour our Widows and Life Members as our "normal" date falls in the middle of the Commonwealth Games. Do you think it will matter to us, if so an alternative Sunday date please! We need to let the Caterers know ASAP. Either by letter to c/o RAEME Association Oakleigh Barracks 1318 North Road OAKLEIGH SOUTH 3167 or 8 Neera Crt GLEN WAVERLEY 3150 or (03) 9802 6406

Thankyou  
Peter Cartledge  
President.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Business as usual is the report from my desk.

I do have the pleasure of welcoming to our ranks a new member in the name of Pat Nevill, welcome Pat.

Whilst in the area of membership I would like to bring to the attention of our readers the wonderful efforts of our COLCOMDT-- RAEME for Victoria & Tasmania Region. I refer to COL Terry Beaton.

Terry has the knack of finding prospective members from all over the state and provides me many names and addresses to seek out as potential new members.

Sadly, I have to report on the passing of our member Welton Smith in June of this year and one of our Life Members Norm Curtis in August. Personally I remember Norm as a good soldier and a good man. He will be missed by his family and by the association.

**Gus Allen**  
*Secretary*

## **WELFARE REPORT**

A call to Tiny Hepburn, who is having some skin cancer removed. Tiny is in good spirits and mentioned to me Bob Valentine, (who is a REME member), so while at the S.A. meeting I'll mention his name.

Barry Ridgway is having more ongoing chemo and medical checks. His daughter had just arrived at his house to take Barry in for treatment.

In early October Pat Marley had to have an angioplasty and a stent fitted to his left main coronary artery. Pat is doing well, and is back teaching Electrical / Electronics after 3 weeks convalescence. No sooner was Pat back on his feet than his wife Terri had to have a hydrodilation procedure to her left shoulder. She is on the mend, and is thankful that it was not her Lawn Bowls shoulder that was affected!

A call to Vincent McNamara he has had the cancerous kidney removed at Austin Hospital, he is home and all seems to be working ok. So back to Heidelberg Hospital. for a check up in the next few months.

**Reg Cox**

*Welfare Officer*

## Social Report November 2005

34 of us have just returned from a great weekend away at Victor Harbour with our friends from REME South Australia Branch.

We toured the Fleurieu Peninsula with Brian Liddy our guide a total of 65 people between us. Most enjoyable smorgasbord lunch at "The Old Mill" at Hahndorf with a group of children entertaining us with Austrian dancing, playing "cow" bells and singers all accompanied by Austrian Music from the "squeeze box" etc) which we were loath to leave.

We had the pleasure of the company of the President of AEME/RAEME Grant Kuckel and his Wife Christine, and Howard a Committee member of the SA Association, for lunch on Sunday at Hahndorf. This was Grant's old home town, his ancestors being some of the founders of Hahndorf.

The chocolate factory was enjoyed by all with many of us buying jams, chocolate and decorations (guess who left their chocolate in the Hotel fridge upon leaving on Tuesday morning!!)

We would have liked to have spent more time at the "Wild Rose Garden" and Miniature Village of Historical Landmarks. There were also two Cockatiels that kept visitors busy with their antics.

Our weekend was completed with a scrumptious dinner, speeches, skits, jokes, a huge raffle and our Melbourne Cup horses which we have great fun with each year.

These cup weekends with REME (SA) are bi annual and on the alternate year we go our own way. If you have not joined us on one of these please look out for next years as we have 45 seats on our coach to fill!

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November we will host the Corps birthday dinner at East Malvern RSL on behalf of COL Terry Beaton (Colonel Commandant Victoria and Tasmania)

Our AGM was held on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August last, followed by a most informative talk on The Burma Railway by Terry and I have booked him to continue his talk next AGM (August 27<sup>th</sup> 2006)

As you may have heard on "the grapevine" or at the AGM our ANZAC eve reunion was quite poorly attended, prompting us to review this function and it has been decided to try a Bar-B-Que lunch on the Sunday after ANZAC Day (Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006) please MAKE A NOTE OF THIS DATE NOW !

This change of date may also enable you to attend your own units reunion as well as our Associations. Whilst changing dates when do YOU think we should hold our Luncheon to Honour our Widows and Life

Members as our "normal" date is in the middle of the Commonwealth Games. Do you think it will make any difference to us?

Please let me know your thoughts either by mail to c/o RAEME Association Oakleigh Barracks 1318 North Road OAKLEIGH SOUTH 3167 or 8 Neera Crt GLEN WAVERLEY 3150 or (03) 9802 6406

### RAEME Remembrance Day

A booking has been made at the Shrine of Remembrance for the laying of a Wreath and Last Post ceremony in the inner sanctum to be held at 1030hrs for 1100 hrs on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2006

It is hoped that those working to form the new Bandiana Sub-Branch will hold a simultaneous Commemorative Service at the RAEME Memorial at the Memorial Park, South Bandiana.

Peter Cartledge  
Social Coordinator.

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## Colonel Commandant's Report (Vic & Tas) by Colonel Terry Beaton

Since receiving the formal appointment by Chief of Army in Jul 05, the emphasis has been to disseminate to all RAEME personnel in both Victoria and Tasmania - my willingness to attend any organised functions and to visit any units still in the region. Extensive work is helping to break down the inaccurate perception that the RAEME Association of Victoria (RAV) is orientated around the "Old Boys" of the ARES. Many current members are serving or ex-ARA, with many more in the process of joining. At the end of Oct 05, Sheila and I will accompany a RAV group on a 4 day outing to Victor Harbour - as guests of the REME Association of SA.

A Colonel Commandant's All Ranks (Mixed) Corps Dinner will be held on Friday 25 Nov 05 to celebrate the Corps Birthday and to present the "The Craftsman of The Year Award (GRES)" for the region, which encompasses both Victoria and Tasmania.

I am very happy to report that the RAEME Association of Tasmania (RAT) has risen like the phoenix from the ashes, due to the hard work of the Committee headed by Russell Clark. It has a reported membership of 65. The RAT's Corps Birthday Celebrations will be held at Derwent Barracks on 11 Dec 05. The Committee have asked for a good attendance, as the Colonel Commandant will be in attendance for the first time in a number of years.

To coincide with the Corps' Seminar 2005, there was a "RAEME Gathering" at **The Stump** on Friday, 21 Oct 05 to gauge the interest and feasibility of forming a Bandiana Sub-Branch of the RAV.

(continued on page 5)

### Colonel Commandant's Report (continued)

Incredibly, about 60 attended this impromptu reunion which lasted over three hours. During which time, 21 signed RAV membership forms and 8 volunteered to help raise the new sub-branch. More remarkably, we had a member of the Queensland Branch, Steve Vincent, fly down to attend.

The foundation stone has now been laid upon which, to re-invigorate ethos and build the future of RAEME activities in Northern Victoria.

My grateful appreciation to Andy Turner, Gary Treeve, Dave Martin and many others for their hard work to organise the venue and spread the word.

A project, which started as an attempt to update the sadly outdated Retired Officers List (Vic), has expanded to capture the names and contact details for all RAEME members currently living in Victoria and Tasmania.

Following a "mail out" to the old Officers' List - after only one week, the list had expanded from 127 to 175 names to be contacted. A personal data sheet disseminated through the RAEME Mafia network and the RAT has also started to capture the WOs/SNOs who reside in Victoria and Tasmania, to offset the loss of the WOs/SNCOs Association (Vic). The gathering at "The Stump" has captured another 45 names - all ranks. Those who have already received a letter and form from me are reminded to send it back - now - please!. Those who haven't are asked to complete the form in this newsletter and send it to me ASAP to ensure you are on the Colonel Commandant's All ranks RAEME lists for 2006.

Dennis Clarke and Murray Lewis are attempting to reform the old RAEME Vietnam Veterans Association (RVVA) with one significant difference - it will be the RVAA of Victoria and not a National Association this time. A reunion and AGM is to be held at ANZAC House in Melbourne on 2 Dec 05. I wish them all the best for this venture. As Colonel Commandant it is my intention to raise Corps ethos by supporting any RAEME group in the two states, by overseeing their activities to ensure they are open to any RAEME member, as well as promoting the greatest dissemination of notice for all group functions - so that everybody will be kept informed. My policy is that regardless of entry type, rank or service background, we are all members of one Corps - RAEME.

Arte et Marte

**COL Terry Beaton**  
**COLONEL COMMANDANT Victoria/Tasmania**

### FAMOUS MILITARY SAYINGS

"Sometimes I think war is God's way of teaching us geography."

*Paul Rodriguez*

"A slipping gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least

expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what's left of your unit"

*US Army's magazine of preventive maintenance.*

"Aim towards the Enemy"

*Instruction printed on US Rocket Launcher*



**LTCOL Lawrence Raymond Sargeant (RL) E.D.**  
*(see tribute page 6)*

**LTCOL Bob McNaught.** Regrettably Bob passed away in April this year after a long illness involving his heart.

**SGT Colin Ellis (VM)** has passed away aged 77 years. Colin was born in 1928 and passed away on Sunday evening (18 Sep 2005) at 1900 hours. Colin served at 5BOD Nungarin, BCOF Japan at the Commonwealth Workshop, Darwin, Tasmania, Broadmeadows and Perth Wksp Coy, retiring with the rank of SGT. After he retired from PWC, he built up a business, at Midland, doing Defence contracts for trade repair from the Workshop.

**Welton Smith** in June 2005

**Norm Curtis** (Life Member) in August 2005

### Vale

#### Lt. Col. Lawrence Raymond Sargeant (RL) E.D.



Lt. Colonel Lawrence Sargeant who passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004, had a long and distinguished military career, well respected within the Corps of RAEME and well remembered by the 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Intakes of Balcombe Army Apprentices.

Born on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1916 at Prahran, Victoria. He commenced his military career in the Militia on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1939 with 3<sup>rd</sup> Division AASC.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1939, he was promoted Cpl. on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1939, was promoted Sgt, Discharged 12<sup>th</sup> May 1940. He enlisted in the Permanent Military Forces on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1940.

3<sup>rd</sup> February 1940, saw him promoted T/Warrant Officer Class II and transferred to the Australian Instructional Corps.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1942, he was transferred to 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion (The Brighton Rifles) and appointed Regimental Quarter-Master Sergeant. He transferred to the Australian Imperial Forces on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1943.

30<sup>th</sup> January 1943, he was promoted Acting Warrant Officer Class I and saw service in Papua New Guinea from 25 Aug - 12 Nov 1943.

On 12<sup>th</sup> November 1943, he was posted to 114<sup>th</sup> Lt. AA Regt RAA.

On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1945 he was posted to Land Head Quarters, School of Infantry.

On 19<sup>th</sup> November 1945, he was transferred to 3<sup>rd</sup> Military District Recruiting Staff.

On 24<sup>th</sup> September 1947, he was posted to 3<sup>rd</sup> Military District Detention Barracks.

His next posting was to the newly formed Army Apprentices School at Balcombe, Victoria as the School's first Regimental Sergeant-Major from 19<sup>th</sup> April 1948 until 8<sup>th</sup> January 1953.

Here was this rather tall impressive military bearing figure greeting apprentices to their first taste of military life.

Whilst at the Army Apprentices School, in an abandoned hut (left over from the days when it had been previously occupied by members of the United States 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division recuperating after fighting the Japanese Forces on Guadalcanal Island in the Pacific) he set up a miniature Rifle Range and taught early Intakes of Apprentices how to fire a .22 rifle (you had to pay for your own bullets).

On 28<sup>th</sup> June 1948, he enlisted in the Australian Regular Army Special Reserve. was discharged on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1950, and enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1950. On 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 1953, Lawrence Sargeant was posted to Northern Comd. Wksp in Qld. 3<sup>rd</sup>

August 1961 he was appointed Regimental-Sergeant Major of 2<sup>nd</sup> Base Wksp Moorebank N.S.W. On 5<sup>th</sup> July 1963, was Commissioned as Lieutenant (Q.M.) His next posting was 105 Infantry Wksp (CMF) (later redesignated as 105 Fd Wksp Type 'A')

RAEME ACMF Trg Depot at Chapel Street, East St. Kilda from 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1965 - 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1965 when he was appointed Staff Capt HQ CRAEME 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Chapel Street, East St. Kilda.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August 1966, he was posted to AHQ (Melb) DEME Albert Park Barracks serving under Brig. J. Dean OBE. On September 1968, he was promoted T/Capt. and whilst serving at Albert Park Barracks he had the pleasure of being the Escort Officer to a visiting REME DEME at that time and escorted him around Australia whilst he visited several RAEME units.

Lawrence's postings were as follows:-

12<sup>th</sup> June 1968, he was posted to PNG Wksp. On 4<sup>th</sup> September 1968, was promoted Capt. On 17<sup>th</sup> August 1970 was posted to 1<sup>st</sup> Avn Regt Wksp at Oakley QLD. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1971, was posted to 3 Base Wksp (ARA) Camp Road, Broadmeadows (formerly 3<sup>rd</sup> MD Wksp, later as S Comd Wksp. Later redesignated as 3 Base Wksp (ARA) until 17<sup>th</sup> June 1973. On 24<sup>th</sup> April 1972 he had been promoted Maj. On 17<sup>th</sup> June 1973, was placed on the Retired List and on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1973, was granted permission to wear the uniform of Lt. Colonel.

In later years, Lawrence Sargeant joined the RAEME Association (Vic) Branch at Oakleigh Barracks Oakleigh South and attended many ANZAC Eve Re-Unions and the Annual Widows and Life Member's Luncheons where he renewed many of his old RAEME acquaintances both from the ARA and the Army Apprentices School, Balcombe days.

Arte et Marte

**Lt. J.L. Westernhagen (Retd.) E.D.**  
*ex 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake Veh Mech Balcombe Apprentice.*

## The RAEME Association Dux of Subject 2 CPL RAEME Victorian Regional Trophy



### The History of the Trophy

In 1985 Mr. Geoffrey Maggs (then President of Vic. RAEME Association) and the Association Rep on the Victorian Corps Committee, was requested to produce a trophy for the Dux Subject 2 Cpl RAEME.

Mr. Maggs commissioned Max Moore to produce the Trophy.

The Trophy consisted of a large RAEME Bronze Badge, that was a copy of the Badge on the front gates of Bandiana Officers Mess, The lower base was from an Engineering Trophy presented in 1938 to the top Student of the 1938 Engineering Skills course, the upper base was turned from a CES Jack base.

In 1986 it was presented to the Corps Committee as the Victorian Regional Trophy and was awarded to the Dux of Subject 2 Cpl RAEME that year and every year, until in the 1990's when the Corps Committee withdrew all Regional awards from their Register and only National Awards were retained.

At a RAEME Association (Vic) Committee meeting it was proposed and approved that the Trophy be offered to the Corps Committee as a National Association Award.



*The Trophy being presented to COL Terry Beaton COL Commandant Victoria & Tasmania Regions, by Mr. Peter Cartledge President RAEME Association (Vic) Inc and Mr. Max Moore, Vice President, being the person that had the Trophy manufactured for the Association in 1985.*

The Association Trophy will be awarded to the Dux of Subject 2 CPL RAEME and to be presented to the Winning Student by the Regional COL Commandant and a member of the regional Association.



*BRIG. McGahey HOC receiving the Trophy from Col Beaton at the October Corps Committee Meeting Bandiana 2005*

## 2005 Corps Committee Meeting & Seminar Report – by COL Terry Beaton

### RAEME Corps Committee (RCC) Meeting

The RCC meeting was held on 19 Oct 05. BRIG David McGahey (HOC) officially congratulated COL Graham Smith (Rep ColComdt and ColComdt SA & NT), BRIG George Jacoub (ColComdt-NSW) and COL Terry Beaton (ColComdt – Vic & Tas) on their new appointments and welcomed them to the Committee, before handing over to COL Smith to chair the meeting.

**New National Award** – At the committee meeting on 13 Oct 05, The RAEME Association of Victoria (RAV) generously presented their magnificent trophy - previously used for the Victorian Regional Award for Subject 2 Corporal - for passing onto the Corps Committee. With due ceremony it was presented to BRIG McGahey. The RCC gratefully accepted the generous gesture and agreed that it would be used for a new National Award of “Craftsman Regimental” acknowledging the top Crafty of the 6-10 Subject 2 for CPL Courses conducted at ALTC in any given year. Like the Brig Marten’s Encourage Award for Subj 4 for SGT, it was agreed that the final name to be used will recognise the generous donation by the RAV.

**Corps Subscriptions** – SO2 Corps briefed the meeting on the initiative to encourage subscriptions from serving members to the Corps Fund by subscribers receiving a numbered medallion, which will feature our patron saint ST Eligius – Patron Saint of Artificers. To date only 64 serving members have subscribed out of a total Corps manning of 3200. It is hoped that this initiative will prompt more to contribute.

*CCEME Note: Although initially targeted at serving members, after debate RCC agreed that any former Corps member could receive this token upon receipt of his contribution to the Corps Fund. Contributions are: ORs - \$26, SNCO/WO - \$39, Officers - \$54. Subscriptions can be made direct to SO2 Corps, HOC Cell*

It was also decided that a system would be introduced to indicate year of subscription to encourage subs each year. SO2 Corps also suggested a Dutch Raffle for subscribers seeking specifically numbered medallions. The medallions will come with a hole to enable them to be used as a key ring. When the initiative was presented to the Seminar delegates, its use “to obtain free drinks” in the same vane as the “Old Bastards Card” was floated. This was very well received by the Seminar attendees.

**National Awards** – The RSM presented the list of winners for the National Awards. These are to be published in the next issue of “The Craftsman”.

At this moment, the Craftsman of Year (GRES) for the Victoria and Tasmanian Region is still undecided.

**Banner Miniatures** – The RCC agreed to produce another 200 Banner Miniatures. Expressions of Interest can be sent now to the SO2 Corps. A payment in advance will secure purchase and prevent missing out on this next production run before it is sold out. Expression of interest in specific numbers from 200-400 can also be passed to SO2 Corps at time of ordering.

**Corps Instructions** – It was agreed that all Corps Instructions would be updated next year. Having raised the requirement, COL Beaton volunteered to assist HOC Cell in this task.

**Craftsman of Year** – It was agreed that Corps Inst No 17 would be the first re-written due to the ambiguous nature of its content that creates several interpretations of the outcomes. The RCC agreed that wef 2006 the recipient of the National Award is automatically eliminated from being also awarded the Regional Award, which will then be awarded to the second named candidate for that region, unless there are no other nominations. It was also agreed that for 2006-07 the National and Regional Awards would not be a monetary prize. Instead the recipients will be presented with a suitably engraved Banner Miniature and the National Award recipients for both ARA and GRES will be flown to Bandiana to have their awards presented at the Corps Seminar.

**National Association Meeting 2006** – DHOC (LTCOL Andy Adams) advised that the ability to hold the 2006 National Association Meeting was dependent on funding availability. More advice next year.

**Corps Historian** – The RCC was briefed on the work carried out (to date) on the EME Display at the Army Museum. Seven of the 12 cabinets allocated to RAEME have been significantly improved, resulting in 178 items being catalogued under the new EME Historical Collection. An appeal was made to the Seminar for contributions of small historical items to be placed in the five remaining cabinets, which currently hold other Corps items. HOC asked for the minutes to reflect a vote of appreciation to COL Beaton for his efforts and to acknowledge the significant improvement in the display.

*CCEME Note: Prior to departure from Bandiana, a number of new historical items, including a Bottle of RAEME “Rapier” Port 2005, engraved Wine Glass 2005, place mats from Corps Dinner and a trophy presented in 1953 were placed on display in Cabinet 5.*

**C-In-C’s Annual Report.** COL Beaton raised the issue that in the past the Rep ColComdt and HOC would send an annual report to the Colonel In Chief on his birthday to pass on best wishes from the Corps and to update him on Corps activities. It was agreed to resume this tradition

in light of the BRIG McGahey's attendance at the C-in-C Dinner late last year. HOC reported that Prince Philip stated that this had been his first dinner in about 50 years and to make the most of it, as it will probably be his last. Following discussion, it was agreed that the HOC/RepColComdt would approach Prince Philip to ascertain his availability and willingness to attend a Drumhead Ceremony to re-dedicate his banner during his Commonwealth Games' visit. It will also serve to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of his presentation of the Banner on 20 May 1986.

*CCEME Note: At this very late stage, the chance of this activity happening rests with Prince Philip, followed by support from Chief of the Defence Force.*

**HOC Cell Capability** – BRIG McGahey highlighted the difficulty facing the HOC Cell when both he and the DHOC have full time service commitments and that their Corps positions are Extra Regimental Appointments. However HOC reported that at the Seminar, BRIG Barnett (RAAC) will present his findings into the Corps Capability Review initiated by BRIG Ross Grant's farewell letter to Chief of Army. Without doubt the greatest problem facing RAEME at the moment is the significant imbalance in the Equipment Liability to Manpower Asset ratio. BRIG McGahey welcomed the results of the study and their presentation to the Army Capability Management Committee (ACMC) meeting on 28 Oct 05.

**Regional RAEME Representatives.** The RCC agreed that Corps Inst No 32 should be re-written following the apparent lack of commitment to Esprit de Corps and doctrinal matters by a number of RRRs fulfilling positions appointed by Corps Instructions. It was agreed that from 2006, selected RRR will receive an official letter of appointment from HOC, which will also highlight their responsibility to promote Esprit de Corps in their region in support of the Colonel Commandant.

**Pictorial Corps History.** Last year it was proposed by BRIG Ross Grant that a Coffee Table style pictorial Corps History be published to follow on from the excellent work done by Theo Barker in his book "Craftsmen of The Army". The RCC was briefed on the inability of the assigned project officer to continue with this task due to personal difficulties. Moreover the suggested compiler/author, James Mason, would not be available until mid 2006. It was agreed to put this project on hold until personnel are available.

### Corps Seminar

The Corps Seminar was held 20-21 Oct 05. Over 200 attended. It was opened by LTGEN David Hurley (Chief of Capability Development Group) who has responsibility to achieve the requirements from the Defence Capability Plan. He briefed the Seminar on the processes required to complete the current 29 equipment acquisition projects worth \$2.1 Billion, as well as

presenting the CDF's two primary objectives for the ADF. These were both directed at looking after the ADF's greatest asset – its people; especially as the CDF firmly believes that paramount ADF capability is dictated by its people. Equipment is useless if you don't have people to operate and maintain it. He addressed the current problems on recruiting and retention.

### Seminar Highlights:

**HNA** – LTCOL Jeremy Hansen gave a presentation on CA's concept of a "Hardened and Networked Army (HNA). HNA is a conservative development plan, which in simplicity is based on an Army of "twos" rather than "three", to remove the hollowness (previously called void or deficiencies) from affecting operational planning, ie make two strong from three weak. It is hoped that by 2009 under HNA, the future manning level will rise to 26,442 with few manpower deficiencies and provide an increased response to Governmental directions. Under HNA there is proposed to be a redeployment of units from Sydney and Darwin to form a second Mechanised Battalion, using 3 RAR, around Adelaide. SME is to be re-located to Puckapunyal.

**Land Material Maintenance Support Review** – BRIG Barnett presented the results of his study, which has identified the need for seven further studies as follows:

- Study One – Training of Tradesmen
- Study Two – Recruiting and Retention (Both operators and maintainers)
- Study Three – RAEME Officer Training – too much logistics and not enough Corps specific.
- Study Four – Operator Training
- Study Five – Use of Data info systems (SDSS/MMM)
- Study Six - Maintenance Mgmt, Procedures and Processes
- Study Seven - Philosophy, Policy and Doctrine ( or the lack of new developments)

**REME Brief** – LTCOL Larry Ratchell (from DEME) presented a brief on the current situation facing REME. Currently 1,741 "All Ranks" are deployed overseas, which represents 18 percent of REME's manpower asset. DEME is staffed by about 60, with DEME(A) under the ACGS with executive, management and professional head of Corps roles. DEME has started its own recruiting drive using two brightly coloured vans travelling to schools and recruiting direct to REME. A great initiative to overcome the drawback of the global outlook taken by Army Recruiting. As such they are meeting 94% of their intake requirements. Sadly the Apprentice School is closed and trade training has been moved to Harrowgate. There is also a possibility that Arborfield may be lost, which means that the beautiful old West Court Officers Mess will be lost and the REME Museum and other REME Schools will have to relocate. The British Army is undergoing restructuring and downsizing. It appears to be undergoing an equivalent process to our DCP project.

This has thrown up many REME personnel who are seeking to continue their Army career in RAEME; especially in light of the unofficial policy of 22 years service and you're out. LTCOL Ratchell highlighted the REME initiative of TSF. However, after groans from the audience had subsided, he said that it stood for Tactical Services Flash and he demonstrated his tri-colour strip flash worn on his DPCU to identify his Corps whilst wearing such a uniform. He also stipulated that in REME, competency has become a very important issue.

**TenixToll Brief** – Former RAEME Officer Bernie Launger gave a brief on DIDS (Defence Integrated Distribution Systems), which incorporates the commercial responsibilities to warehouse, distribute and maintain ADF equipment currently contracted to a combined venture by Tenix and Toll Logistic Systems, which defeated the bid by the combination of ADI and Fox Logistic Systems. DERs not being met - still seems to be one of the main issues.

**RAEME Trade Management** – MAJ Mike Opie, (SO2 Trades and Training) gave a presentation on the work being carried out with trade management and trade pay. With the loss of DEME it appears that a trade pay submission has not been presented to the Defence Force Renumeration Tribunal (DFRT) since 1994, ie nobody available to do the work. The establishment of a Trade Cell at the Army Logistic Training Centre (ALTC) some time after 2000 is finally addressing this important issue. The first trade to be reviewed was ECN 226 – Recovery Mechanic. MAJ Opie confirmed that the previous “One Army Policy” was dead and now the emphasis is on providing the “gap” training to enable the Reserve to provide an effective capability. It is hoped that in future all trades will be reviewed on a 3 year cyclic programme starting with ECN 146. It was good to hear that the RAAOC Operator Supply Courses from Jul 05 are teaching Prod Clerk competencies to students. Let's hope they will be posted to RAEME units on completion of training.

**New National Award.** The Corps RSM, WO1 Tobor Fekete, at the School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (SEME) at ALTC - presented to the Seminar the generous Award donated by the RAEME Association of Victoria (RAV). A rousing applause resulted from his announcement that it would be used from 2006 as the new National Award for Subject Two (CPL) – The Craftsman Regimental Award. Everybody was very impressed with the quality of the trophy donated by RAV.

**HOC Cell Tasks** – On the afternoon of Day Two a forum of all attendees agreed to a number of tasks significant issues being reviewed by HOC Cell over the next 12 months and for presentation at next year's seminar.

These involved such issues as:-

Recruiting (VM courses cancelled due to the lack of interest by Army recruits. As with civil industry nobody these days wants to get their hands dirty). Need to re-think target audience eg 15-16 years olds having signed the UN Agreement preventing recruitment of boy soldiers under 17 years and 8 months of age – this would require some form of pre-enlistment trade training before final qualification as an Army Tradesmen.

- Posting tradesmen to contract repair to improve trade skills and “respite” from operational activities,
- professional development of engineers under the programme (PDP) and whether it should become compulsory,
- the formation of quarantine pools to ensure better fleet availability and management,
- technical satisfaction and competence at all of repair, now called light, medium and heavy and not first to fourth lines.
- Provision of contractor support in ADF units in barracks to offset deployed tradesmen.

**Summary** – In summary, it was fascinating to hear that the Army is continuing to ignore history and reinventing itself, repeating the issues faced 20-30 years ago and that decisions made in the last 15 years are causing the majority of significant issues currently facing the Corps: - like loss of a Directorate responsible for Corps Management, the loss of Clerk (Prod), failure to train to required competency levels by streamlining course content; thereby creating issues where unqualified tradesmen are unable to repair specialist pieces of equipment, like unit repairs to hydraulic hoses due to need for certification. Without doubt it was a far more productive and professionally conducted seminar than the one attended last year. The Corps Dinners were well attended and very enjoyable. The seminar organisers should take a well-earned pat on the back.

### **RAEME Association of Tasmania**

**The RAEME Association of Tasmania has been re-formed. Its first Newsletter (Issue 1) was issued in September 2005**

**COL Terry Beaton, COL.COMDT Vic/Tas has welcomed the re-formed Association in an article in that Newsletter.**

**If you would like a copy of the Newsletter, contact Pat Marley on (03) 9802 0636 or email: patmar@melbpc.org.au**

**Colonel Terry Beaton**  
**Colonel Commandant (Vic & Tas)**

*Biographical Notes*

Born in Alexander Barracks Hospital, Singapore in 1952 and raised for 7 years in England and Malaya. Son of a British Army Warrant Officer who left the Army in 1962 and emigrated to Australia with his family as 10 Pound tourists, settling in South Australia.

Entered Duntroon in 1971 graduating into the Corps of RAEME with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering in Dec 1974.

Represented Australia at the 1974 Commonwealth Games as a Decathlete.

Apart from appointments in TSU, Pucka Wksps, MEA, Mat Div, HQ 3MD, and DGEME also commanded 21 Const Sqn Wksps as a CAPT and 102 Fd Wksp (Lt) as a MAJ.

Sent to Royal Military College of Science in UK in 1981 and completed a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

Promoted to LTCOL in 1988 and later posted to Thailand for 3 years as the Military Mechanical Engineering Advisor. During this time became actively involved with the Burma Railway and have subsequently had several articles published.

Returned from Thailand to become SO1 Corps in 1992 and became the last SO1 Corps under a DGEME (Kingo) and when the position was disestablished in 1994 as part of the ramping down of the Army.

Posted as SO1 Gen Stores at HQ LogComd - being now suddenly multiskilled. Looked after Med & Pharm supplies Tri-service, as well as those sent to support Rwanda. Transferred to the Inactive Reserve in early 1996 when position civilianised, but continued to work for Defence for another 4 years as a Coordinator for study visits by Very Senior Thai Officers.

In Dec 1999 I became the first Australian Curator of the Australian Government's Memorial Museum at Hellfire Pass in Thailand, a position held for two years.

In late 2001 I returned to Melbourne and now spend most of my time researching, writing or speaking about the railway, whilst also undertaking the responsibilities of a voluntary RSL Pensions Advocate assisting Veterans from all wars to seek compensation for service-caused medical disabilities.

In Jun 05 appointed ColComdt (RAEME) for Vic and Tassie by the Chief of the Army. Any spare time is spent riding my VFR 800 with my wife, Sheila (she rides her own Honda Hornet 600) over the winding roads throughout Victoria.

Yours - "With Skill"

**Terry Beaton**

(T.R.BEATON)

Colonel

COLCOMDT-RAEME Victoria & Tasmanian Region  
 03-94313961

**RAEME VIETNAM VETERANS UPDATE**

A reminder to all RAEME Vietnam Veterans of the Annual General Meeting to be held at Anzac House 4 Collins St, Melbourne at 10.30 A.M. on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2005, in The President's Room, with Morning Tea provided.

For further information ring Dennis Clarke on 9848 6757 M. 0409 518 744 or Murray Lewis on 8361 0250 M. 0429.85000S.

We have a positive response to reforming the Association within each State. Colonel Commandant of Victoria-Tasmania Terry Beaton.MSc. BEng[Civil], has given his support to the Association. Special thanks also to the RAEME Association of Victoria for their support.

BRIG Conrad Ermert apologises but due to a previous engagement interstate he is unable to attend the meeting, but thoroughly endorses the concept.

**ReUnion Matters**

Phil (Buddah) Bond from Queensland ex 106 Fld. Wksp is organising another RAEME Reunion to be held at Albury-Wodonga Region over the Vietnam Veterans Day 2006 - Commemoration of the Battle of Long Tan starting on the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of August.

Eddie Ermanis (ex Lead Guitarist from the Forty Seventh Movement) in Victoria tells me that 17 Construction Squadron Wksp are holding a RAEME Reunion in Darwin June 2007,

John Power tells us that 161 Recce Flight had a most successful reunion on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, in Adelaide with approximately (two hundred veterans and wives in attendance.

Noel and Una Lake kindly hosted a reunion of 75 veterans from 102 Fld Wksp at "Avondale" their property located near Kerang. A big thank you from all who attended their now bi-yearly function on the 29<sup>th</sup> September through 1st and 2nd of October.

**To Locate and Record  
All RAEME in the Region  
By COL T.R.Beaton**

An initiative has been started to try and capture all RAEME (both serving and former members – ARA and GRES) in Victoria and Tasmania. The project had started in early Oct 05 with updating the Retired Officers List, which regrettably has not been updated since CAPT Vaughan was the Secretary of the Corps Committee (Southern Region) in 1999.

With advice that the WOs/SNCOs Association has sadly become defunct, the project was expanded to then also capture all WOs/SNCOs residing in Victoria and Tasmania. With the realisation that there was little scope for ORs to gain information about Corps activities, it was then decided to go “the whole hog” and capture all RAEME personnel serving and former members currently living in both States.

***For those who have not received the “RAEME “All Ranks” Personal Details Form” as supplied in this issue of Lightning Flash, please complete the form and return it ASAP to the address shown on the form.***

With the officers, I have at least an outdated list to start with for the collection of names and details. I have no such starting list for either WOs/SNCOs or the OR group. Your cooperation in completing the form will ensure your name is registered on the Colonel Commandant’s Listings; thereby ensuring that you will be able to be sent Corps news updates in the future.

If you have received the form already through either the “mail out” or by email via the Mafia network and have not yet found time to complete and return it, then please do so, as your name will be either eliminated or not added to the database, if I don’t receive your form - to indicate your willingness to be part of the “Force“ of the newly invigorated RAEME Corps in Vic & Tassie. Instead you can remain on the “Dark side” moping about what used to be in the past! It is time to get over it and come out of the dark days and join the rest of us trying to make a brighter future. The ball is in your court!!!

**Where are they now?**

About 129 letters were sent to addresses on the old Retired Officers’ list. Several have been “Returned to sender”. I am now seeking help to locate the following former RAEME members. Last known address:

Mr A. Perrot 8 Vincent Street	DEER PARK 3023
COL W.P. Delves 16 Faversham Road	CANTERBURY 3126
Mr R. Hunter 126 Alexander Road	UPWEY 3158
Mr R.D.Digance 425 High Street	KEW 3101
LTCOL G.J.Bryant 234 Bridport St	ALBERT PARK 3206
MAJ P. Pantic PO Box 583	KYNETON 3444
CAPT P. Flynn 41 Warralong Ave	GREENSBOROUGH 3088
Mr W. Whitehall 2 Heathermont Ave	BELGRAVE 3160
COL B. Amor	Found, is moving to South Australia

**FAMOUS MILITARY SAYINGS**

"When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend."

*U.S. Marine Corps*

"Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs always hit the ground."

*U.S. Air Force*

"Once the enemy is in range, so are you."

*US Infantry Manual*

### Australian Defence Medal

*(The following was forwarded by member  
Bruce Williams It is extracted from the RAASC  
Association newsletter)*

Service after 1946 can only be claimed for the issue of the medal.

1. Recipients will have been required to serve for at least 6 years in the regular or reserve forces.
2. Holders of the National Service Medal will have to have served an additional volunteer period of at least 6 years, after completion of their National Service.
3. The award of other long service medals or decorations will not preclude the award of the Australian Defence Medal for concurrent service.

The decision for the exact terms and conditions was to be made in Feb 05 and publication from the Minister for the Defence Office could be expected.

Negotiations are proceeding for around the 6 year requirement for those who have left the service with some other consideration for those who completed an agreed time of service??

Don't remember seeing any thing mentioned from the RAEME Association could you please let me know what this was about as I am sure there are many of us who would have a claim on such a Medal and I would prefer to have it claimed vis the RAEME Association.

*(Editor's Note: A major article on the Australian Defence Medal appeared in Issue 42 of "Lightning Flash" of August 2004)*

### SPIRIT OF OZ.

*"Horses Mouth" Editor's Note:*

*This poem comes straight from the walls  
of the Sari Club in Bali.  
It is exactly as it is penned by an Unknown  
(with no apologies for the vernacular language).  
I think it epitomises the Spirit of OZ.*

You hurt us bombing Bali, but we can take the pain,  
But if you think you will beat us you can think a-bloody-gain.  
We battled at Gallipoli and we fought the bloody Hun,  
Of all the arseholes we've had to face you're just another one.  
You won't get your hands dirty, you won't fire a gun  
Whenever danger threatens you, just pack your gear and run.  
You brainwash innocent children to do your evil deeds  
Careful not to let them know just where it really leads.  
You get them to believe all your bigotry and lying  
Until they cannot see there is no glory in their dying.  
Now we'd like to pose a question, answer if you can  
Where does your Holy Book tell you to kill your fellow man?  
Now listen hard and listen well, we're giving you the word,  
You're never going to beat us you spineless bloody turd.  
You'll never face us personally, you haven't got the guts  
You know that if you did we'd have your bloody nuts.  
Our spirit is unbroken, and our heads are still unbowed,  
We sure as hell aren't scared of you and your gutless crowd.  
So get your act together - you'll never win because  
What you are really up against is the spirit that is OZ

*Courtesy "The Horse's Mouth" Summer 2004-05*

### FAMOUS MILITARY SAYINGS

"It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed."

*U.S. Air Force Manual*

"Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons."

*US Gen. Mac Arthur*

"Try to look unimportant; they may be low on ammo."

*US Infantry Manual*



### 3 Recovery Coy Mid-Year Update

3 Recovery Company is the only RAEME recovery company in the Australian Army. As a part of LSF and 9FSB the unit's role is to provide Force level (third line) recovery support to deployed forces.

Since our last update the activity and challenges for the unit have continued.

In the first few months of 2005 three soldiers were engaged on Continuous Full Time Service to complete the ARA MRV and HRV recovery mechanic's course of five month's duration, at ALTC. We also supported the Recruiting Campaign at Avalon Air Show by providing an MRV, F1 Twin Boom Recovery Vehicle and support personnel. At short notice one of our recovery mechanics deployed to East Timor to fill the gap while a replacement ARA person became available. Over time the company has developed rapport with the School of Armour and continue to provide personnel support for the ARVM and MRV crews. Personnel while in training to commence the Recovery Mechanics course have provided driver support to Special Forces and 15 Transport Squadron. Recently our drivers helped 15 Transport Squadron (a GRES unit that is also part of 9FSB) transport M113 APCs from Sydney to Puckapunyal. The company broke new ground recently when our female GRES recovery mechanic served with 17 Engineer Regiment for the first phase of their AACAP task based at Fitzroy Crossing (WA). It is a mark in history, the only female GRES recovery mechanic in the Australian Army she thoroughly enjoyed the experience and is keen to repeat the experience.

Our largest and most recently completed support effort was Ex Talisman Sabre 05. The company provided direct supply of 12 personnel and 4 Wreckers with 20T trailers to the multinational exercise based at Shoalwater Bay training area (which according to their signage is the best training area in Australia). Personnel also backfilled positions at 9FSB home base to enable others to deploy to Ex-T-S.

For a company of some forty personnel, mostly Reservists, there have been and should continue to be many opportunities to serve the wider Army community both in Australia and overseas. Enquiries should be directed to either SGT Tony Clarke on (03) 8710 2408 or WO2 Sean Lee on (03) 8710 2416.

Arte et Marte

### 3 Recovery Coy October Update

The role of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Recovery Company (3 Recov Coy) is to provide force level (third line) recovery support to deployed forces. It is the only General Reserve Sub-Unit dedicated to recovery in the ADF. Subsidiary to its primary role, the company prepares General Reserve soldiers for courses that lead to the trade qualification of Recovery Mechanic. The company is located in the multi-user depot at Doveton, approximately 35 kms south east of the Melbourne CBD.

To become a Recovery Mechanic the General Reserve soldier must complete a series of courses. The first course qualifies the trainee as an ADF licensed driver for light (Landrover), medium (Unimog) and heavy (Mack) rigid vehicles. The first introduction to recovery techniques and equipment commences with detachment training. After detachment training the trainee completes an advanced theory and practice course at the Army Logistics Training Centre (ALTC) to become a qualified Recovery Mechanic. Under normal conditions of service as a General Reserve soldier this qualification would take three years to complete. In the first quarter of 2005 three soldiers from the company signed on for continuous full time service and completed the full-time Army Recovery Mechanics course at ALTC.

Prime candidates for deployment on Exercise Talisman Sabre, these trainee soldiers joined nine other company members to provide support to Australian and American forces in the Rockhampton and Shoalwater Bay Training Area in July and August. Unsure of what to expect besides fun in the sun, the heavens decided to open giving the Rockhampton camp a WW1 muddy working environment. These muddy conditions meant vehicles left overnight were bogged where they were parked, fortunately recovery support was only a short walk to the detachment from 3 Recov Coy. A full compound of vehicles, there was often no choice but to park in the same spot upon return from tasking, hoping it had dried up just that little bit to avoid the embarrassment of being bogged again. At times it did and at other times the Recovery Mechanics were rubbing their hands with glee that they had another job.

In addition to recovery tasks in the Rockhampton area, a Recovery Post was strategically located in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area to ensure prompt response should an emergency arise. Within days of the post being manned a land rover had rolled over, the driver and passenger fortunately walked away from the wreck. Recovery support from the recovery post was prompt and timely when compared to available support had it come from the force support maintenance area at Rockhampton.

In April 2005 a need arose in East Timor for a Recovery Mechanic at short notice. 3 Recov Coy's Corporal Tim Knowles was available and deployed to East Timor. He faced his first of many recovery tasks within hours of stepping off the plane. Of his brief time in East Timor Corporal Knowles enjoyed the experience saying, "it was a challenge doing a live recovery task and not many locals understanding me, but it eventually got done safely".

In May and June the ADF's and 3 Recov Coy's only female General Reserve Recovery Mechanic, Craftsman Kristy Dowel provided recovery support to 17<sup>th</sup> Construction Squadron (17 Const Sqn) when they deployed to Fitzroy Crossing on AACAP tasks. When not exercising her recovery skills Craftsman Dowel improved her general trade skills by working as a trades assistant for soldiers of 17 Const Sqn.

Later this year the company will welcome delivery of the new Heavy Recovery Vehicles (HRV). Based on the existing Mack Truck platform the new HRV with underlift replaces the existing HRV that has had constraints on lift, tow and salvage capability due to winch safety restrictions. The new HRV will give the unit a capability they have not had since 1995.



**Recovery Detachment from 3 Recov Coy retrieving a vehicle body in a State Park for collection by contractors for recycling.**

When not deployed or fine tuning their military skills, soldiers of the company practice recovery techniques by retrieving dumped vehicle bodies from difficult to reach locations in National Parks and State Forests. The vehicle bodies are relocated to an accessible area for collection by contractors and are recycled. These challenges add to the unusual art of recovery and provide soldiers with a sense of community spirit.

Morale in the company is high, recruit numbers are steadily increasing and the skill level of soldiers steadily improving. The Company is an integral sub-unit of 9 FSB and can offer the General Reserve soldier regular opportunities to engage in a diverse range of activities in support of deployed forces. Progressively there is a growing awareness of and demand for 3 Recov Coy to support ADF units and engage in beneficial community activities. This growing trend is set to continue and provide challenges for its General Reserve soldiers.

3 Recovery Company parades on Wednesday evening and usually one weekend per month. Opportunities frequently arise to deploy soldiers and equipment to support a diverse range of live tasks such as forces on exercise, training courses and to aid the community.

Typically these periods of deployment are 16 days duration but can be longer should the circumstances demand.

***Enquiries should be directed to Chief Clerk on (03) 8710 2408 or WO2 Sean Lee on (03) 8710 2416.***

Arte et Marte

#### FAMOUS MILITARY SAYINGS

"You, you, and you ... Panic. The rest of you, come with me."

*U.S. Marine Corp Gunnery Sgt*

"Tracers work both ways"

*U.S. Army Ordnance*

"Five second fuses only last three seconds."

*US Infantry Manual*

"Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last, and don't ever volunteer to do anything."

*U.S. Navy Swabbie*

## Craftsmen Also Died on The Burma Railway

By COL T.R. Beaton – Corps Historian

Sixty three years ago on 15 February 1942, Lieutenant General H. Percival surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army Commander in Malaya, General Tomoyuki Yamashita. In surrendering to the “Tiger of Malaya”, the British Malayan Command forced into captivity around 80,000 Commonwealth troops, including over 20,000 Australians. The Aussies came from the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Division, which had valiantly fought down the unfortified West Coast of Malaya, through Jahore Bahru and had then fiercely opposed Japanese landings on Singapore until the surrender.

Contrary to common knowledge, prisoners were not initially housed in the renowned Changi Gaol, but instead sent to more than fifteen makeshift POW camps spread throughout Singapore. The infamous Gaol was originally used by the Japanese to hold male and female ex-pat civilian internees and their children. This situation did not change until the Changi airport was built by POWs in May 1944. Then once all civilian internees had been relocated, all POWs were shifted from Selerang Barracks on the Changi Peninsula to the Gaol, so that Japanese aircrews could be billeted in the vacated Barracks.

Once all POWs were confined after the surrender, the Japanese began a programme to persuade native troops in the Indian, Malayan and Singaporean Armies to defect and fight for the Japanese cause. Under skillful propaganda the Japanese claimed that their just cause was to rid Asia of all Western Imperialism and to make “Asia for Asian”. Some 30,000 native troops defected to the Japanese cause, with the majority forming the basis of the Indian National Army, which fought alongside Japanese troops to force the British out of Burma and India. Of the 50,000 remaining Caucasian prisoners, by 1944 all but about 5,000, had been systematically sent on working parties throughout SE Asia and the Pacific as forced labourers to help the Japanese war machine.

One of the most notorious projects was the building of a 415 km light railway linking the existing British built state railways in Thailand and Burma. This infamous railway became known as the Burma railway or the “Death Railway”, due to the loss of over 110,000 lives during its construction as a result of starvation, deprivation and extreme brutality. General knowledge of the Burma railway is unfortunately limited to an academy award winning movie directed by David Lean called ‘The Bridge On The River Kwai’. Although a great movie with fine

acting and moving music, the movie was actually made from a fictitious story written by French author Pierre Buole in 1952, based on an actual event, but which has little factual content. Moreover, the movie was shot in Ceylon and the actors blew up a wooden bridge that did not look like any bridge ever built on the railway.

In reality the steel spans of the real bridge across the Mae Khlong River (now renamed the Kwai Yai River to conform with this popular movie), were stolen from the Batavia Railway in East Java and is one of only eight steel and concrete bridges out of the total of 688 bridges built by the Japanese railway engineers. The remainder were made from timber, which POWs had to fell, move to the site and haul into position.

As usual, most people when discussing the railway think only about the men from the fighting units, which would have been captured with the Fall of Singapore. Yet there were tradesmen repairing equipment throughout the Orbat for the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Division. Unit names included those possibly unknown to today’s young soldiers, such as LADs, Fd Wksp, Medium Wksp or Base Ordnance Wksp – there were no TSSUs in those days.

At the time of the Fall of Singapore, responsibility for the maintenance of Army equipment was primarily an Ordnance responsibility, which had a dual supply and repair role. Other Corps, like RAE, also had their own integral workshop support. The birth of AEME came from the sands of the desert, when it was decided to centralize all repair and maintenance functions into one technical organisation, thereby creating our Corps on 1 December 1942. However for most POWs, that was the last thing on their minds, as they were trying to survive the next three and a half years of captivity and starvation. In fact, most never even knew of the Corps formation until well after their liberation from POW camps throughout Asia and Japan following cessation of hostilities on 15 Aug 45.

On ANZAC Day 2005, the Commemoration Service held in the beautifully maintained War Graves Cemetery at Kanchanaburi, where 1,362 Australian servicemen are buried, presented a rare opportunity to search for the graves of the eight Australian EME tradesmen who have rested there for nearly 60 years. I managed to find three graves. Interestingly, the headstones of the two “Crafties” and one Corporal had all been marked as having belonged to the “**Corps of Elec. & Mech. Engineers**”. Knowing that the original graves in 1946 had been marked by a 1m high white wooden cross with just their number, name and initial, this Corps identification confirmed that the placement of the bronze plaque, to replace the cross, occurred before the end of 1948, as RAEME was granted its “Royal” title on 10 Nov 48.



The Cross of Sacrifice at Kanchunaburi War Cemetery after 42 Wreaths had been laid.

separate state. Brown was from VIC (VX40679), Peterson was from SA (SX11322) and Purcell was from NSW (NX36170). By comparison with the death of those from the Infantry Battalions, our AEME men were far older in age.

Also apart from the four who had died from 2/4 Fd Wksp, the percentage loss of life was much lower than the Infantry Battalions. Whether this was due to lower percentages of AEME on the railway or due to a better ability to survive, will never be known. In addition, as the Japanese used POWs to operate their railway workshops, sawmills and blacksmith shops, it is highly probable that these deaths resulted from Allied bombing raids on marshalling yards and workshop facilities, rather than through disease and malnutrition.

It is therefore sad to think that these eight men and their REME counterparts, shown in the photograph taken of the Memorial Wall, were probably killed by so-called 'friendly fire'.



Bronze plaques marking the resting places of three AEME servicemen whose remains were found after the war and identified

The various inscriptions at the bottom of each plaque were wording provided by their respective families, following official notification of their confirmed deaths.

According to the Cemetery Registers, the eight AEME personnel in this cemetery are listed as follows:

- Bradley Pte Benjamin Walter**  
- 84 LAD (AEME) died 23 Dec 43, age 33,
- Brown Cfn William John**  
- 2/4 Fd Wksp (AEME) died 24 Jul 43, age 42.
- Curtin Pte Norman William**  
- 2/4 Fd Wksp (AEME) died 11 Dec 43, age 27
- Hutchinson Pte Harry**  
- 2/10 Ord Fd Wksp (AAOC) died 6 Jan 44, age 30
- Neale Pte John Graham**  
- 87 LAD (AEME) died 13 Dec 43, age 27
- Peterson Cpl James, Horace**  
- 2/4 Fd Wksp (AEME) died 6 Aug 43, age 31
- Purcell Cfn Matthew**  
- 2/4 Fd Wksp (AEME) died 2 Jul 43, age 31
- Wharton S/Sgt Kenneth**  
- Base Ord Wksp (AAOC) died 9 Apr 44, age 29

Of the three graves photographed, each enlisted in a

The reason why the REME names appear engraved on a sandstone wall and not with individual bronze plaques is because their remains were never found or positively identified.

SCHOFIELD H.	TAKLE S.L.	WE
PRIVATE	TAYLOR A.	CC
W.T. ALLOTT E.	VOSS C.A.	HUD
	WATSON H.F.	SIP
	WHITBY B.E.	AUS
	ROYAL ELECTRICAL	
	AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS	
	WO.I (ARM SM)	
	LCE CORPORAL	
	CLARKE L.A.	
	CUBBERLEY C.J.	
	DUNN S.	
	SERJEANT	
	CRAFTSMAN	
	LONGWORTH R.	
	HAIGH R.	
	STARLING F.M.	
	MAXWELL H.E.	
	STEEL D.	
	MORRALL G.V.	
	SYLVESTER F.F.	
	SCOTT L.	
	TRIGGS F.	

The names of British REME personnel whose remains were never found or identified. There are 105 unidentified remains marked as "Known Unto God" graves in this cemetery

which therefore gives credence to the theory that they may have died due to Allied raids, because the American "carpet bombing" often resulted in large loss of life in the POW camps located near to targets.

In Nong Pladuk POW camp, adjacent to the marshalling yards, 79 Dutch POWs were killed in one raid by US B-24 Liberators flying from China. Fortunately the RAF, using mixed crews of British, Australian, NZ and Canadian airman flying Liberators from India, attacked targets from lower altitudes causing less POW casualties.

*(This article and photos appeared in Issue 54 of "RAEME Craftsman", Winter 2005)*

### RAEME Association Members in the Community Braeside Waterwatch

Member George Russell is a Braeside Park "Waterwatch" Volunteer.



George (shown in the above photo on the right, wielding a pole) and his fellow volunteers, armed with water testing kits, sample bottles and other equipment, test water quality indicators including pH, salinity, dissolved oxygen, phosphate, temperature and turbidity. They also survey macro-invertebrate numbers.

The volunteers also undertake general care and maintenance, including revegetation, weed removal and plant nursery and propagation.

**This letter appeared in  
"The Victorian Senior", October 2005.  
And the Herald-Sun**

**Were you at RAEME courses in 1973?**

I would like to contact any students or staff who may have attended or who may have been posted or detached to 106 Field Workshops, RAEME Training Centre, Bandiana/Bonegilla, Victoria on the 3/73 Craftsman training course held in February, March and April 1973.

Please write to 3 Vostok Crt, Whittington, Vic 3219.

Peter Cowell

*(From "The Victorian Senior" October 2005)*

### Emerald RSL

Member Bill Holmes is a member of Emerald RSL. Prior to last Anzac Day, Emerald RSL raised \$2287

Bill Holmes, as spokesman for Emerald RSL said "The people of Emerald are fantastic. Emerald Pharmacy takes the box and we set up a table at Ritchie's supermarket. We don't have to ask people, they just come to us".



In Remembrance: Emerald honours its war veterans.

*(From the "SignPost Community Magazine" May 2005)*

*We wish you all a  
Merry Christmas  
and a Bright and  
Prosperous New Year.*



*From the President  
and Committee  
of your  
Association.*



**COLCOMDT's RAEME SERVING/RETIRED "ALL RANKS" LIST  
RESIDING IN VICTORIA AND TASMANIA**

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Surname: ..... Rank .....(Oftrs)/(WOs/SNCOs)/(ORs)  
(Cross out not applicable)

Christian Names: ..... Service No.....

Preferred Name: ..... Spouse/Companion's Name: .....

Address: .....

.....Postcode .....

Postal Address: .....

.....Postcode .....

(If Same as residential address write "AS ABOVE")

Email: .....

(Please print neatly – due to increased accountability changes to the ADF, these days it is preferable to remain in contact with people using the email system rather than via normal posted mail. However, for those who do not have an email address, other provisions will be made whenever possible.)

Home Phone: .....

Business Phone: .....

Are you a member of "The RAEME Associations of Victoria or Tasmania:      Yes              No

If not, would you like a Membership Application form sent to you:      Yes              No

Are you happy for your contact details to be passed on to other RAEME person:      Yes              No

How are you currently informed: RAV, RVVA(Vic), RAEME Mafia, 106 FW Assoc, or COLCOMDT (V&T), By word of mouth. (Delete not applicable)

**Note:**

If you have mates who may not be on the Col Comdt's List – please onforward this email to them or photocopy this form and tell them to send it ASAP. To:

**COL T. R. Beaton, 4 Brownes Crescent, ELTHAM VIC 3095 - Tel: (03) 9431 3961**

ARTE ET MARTE



**THE LIGHTNING FLASH**

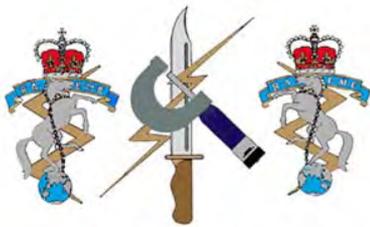
If undeliverable return to  
The RAEME Association (Vic.) Inc.  
C/- Oakleigh Barracks  
1318 North Rd  
OAKLEIGH SOUTH VIC 3167

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**SOLDIER and CRAFTSMAN**

**Change of Address**

Is your address shown above correct?  
If not please fill in the spaces below and return  
this whole sheet in an envelope to:

**The Editor , THE LIGHTNING FLASH  
C/- Oakleigh Barracks 1318 North Rd  
OAKLEIGH SOUTH VIC 3167.**

Name .....(Block Letters)

Address .....

.....Postcode: ..... Phone:.....