



# THE LIGHTNING FLASH

SOLDIER and CRAFTSMAN

November 2006

Issue 49

The RAEME Association (Victoria) Inc.

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## RAEME DAY of REMEMBRANCE - Sunday, 4 Feb 07

Everybody is reminded that the 2007 RAEME Day of Remembrance will be held on

**Sunday, 4 February 2007**, at the Shrine of Remembrance, commencing 1100 hrs.

This year there will be no cycle races to hinder access to the Shrine. As such, the ColComdt (RAEME) V&T has also arranged for a conducted tour of the Shrine prior to the service for those interested. The tour will commence **at 1000 hrs sharp**, as it takes about one hour. Those wishing to do the tour are to advise COL Terry Beaton on 03-9431 3961 by no later than **Wednesday, 31 Jan 2007**. It is a Remembrance Day so there is no need to advise you of dress to be worn.

The service will comprise a pilgrimage march from the forecourt to the inner sanctum, followed by a "Laying of Crosses" service at the RAEME Tree of Remembrance. Participants will then be invited to adjourn to the Emerald Hotel at 415 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne for lunch and a good old "RAEME bash". All Chapters of the RAEME Association and other sub-unit groups are welcome to march behind their own unit or Association banners - as they did this year.

Participation by all serving and former RAEME personnel and their families is strongly encouraged. It is a family day and children are welcome! To ensure adequate tables are provided for our group, (as the Dining Room at the Emerald has a limited capacity), those wishing to have lunch are asked to contact COL Beaton by

**Wednesday, 31 January 2007**

Don't forget to bring a hat as it may be hot again, which makes the reunion in the Emerald all the more pleasant! See you there!

*Arte et Marte*

# **THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Vic) Inc.**

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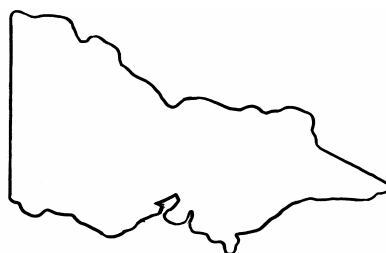
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## **ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION**

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 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Items to Pat Marley,  
Peter Cartledge or Gus Allen Sec.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Peter Cartledge)**

It is with much sadness I report the passing of our esteemed Vice President and Life Member William Maxwell (Max) Moore at Cabrini Hospital Malvern on 7<sup>th</sup> September after a brief illness.

Max has been and will continue to be very sadly missed by all his friends and associates and particularly by our Association.

Max and I go back well over 40 years and I am sure there are many people who have known Max for much longer.

Max was a "doer" and very little if any thing at all was a trouble to him. His old saying "it is not a problem if it can be fixed" will always be in the back of my mind!

Max did so much behind the scenes for our Association apart from the merchandise he ordered, handled and delivered. His input to our newsletter, the sourcing of material, address labels, the printing and the posting. Who printed the flyers, menus and much much more? - MAX!

Max's funeral was attended by several hundred as would have been expected.

During our recent weekend away I presented a framed Charter to Andrew Turner, President of our new Chapter at Bandiana, at a barbeque arranged by them at South Bandiana in the presence of MAJ Anderson representing HOC.

There are two more presentations still to take place for our other two Chapters.

The Seymour Chapter presentation will take place at The Seymour Club on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November and for the RAEME Vietnam Southern in the new year.

Congratulations to the steering Committees of these Chapters for the work they have done to get them up and running.

**Peter Cartledge**  
*President*  
*Arte et Marte*

**SECRETARY'S REPORT (Gus Allen)**

I will miss Max's assistance. Over the years Max was a great help to all of the Committee. His expertise in computers and their many facets was sort after in preparing all manner of documents from business cards, membership lists to menus.

A past member of the Association died since the last Lightning Flash.

Leslie Whitford passed away recently. COL John Lee recalls Les bringing his son along to join the CMF and indeed finished up joining himself.

We have new members and I wish them a hearty welcome to the Association.

They are:

**Alan Rogers**  
**Geoff Trezise**  
**Barry Mills**  
**Shane Clayton**

I ask all Chapter secretaries to keep me informed of any new Chapter members to enable our records to be maintained accurately.

**WELFARE REPORT (Reg Cox)**

Reg Cox in his capacity as Welfare Officer has contacted Don Brown, Phil Cook, Ron Lorimer, Barry Ridgway, Ken Kermonde & Alice Kermonde. Doug Brazier has also been on the sick list.

Additionally, Peter Cartledge our President spent some time in hospital with a suspected spider bite.

Doug Brazier has suffered a haematoma, and is in the Olympia Private Rehab Hospital

We wish them all the best



**Max Moore**  
*(Vice President and Life Member)*  
**Donald Walker**  
**Leslie Whitford**

**William Maxwell Moore****"Max"**

10/7/1936-7/9/2006

Aged 70 Years



Words are few, but thoughts are deep,  
 Memories of you are ours to keep.  
 A life made beautiful by kindly deeds,  
 A helping hand for others needs.

Big was your heart, your friendship true,  
 Loved and respected by all you knew.  
 We speak of you with love and pride,  
 We smile through tears we cannot hide.

Thank you for the happy memories shared,  
 The love you gave, the way you cared.  
 You've left a space no one can fill,  
 We miss you now, and always will.

*(from Max's Funeral Memorial Card)*

**SOCIAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2006**

We had a most successful weekend away over Melbourne Cup weekend although more attendees would have been much better! There were only 20 people who left from Oakleigh Barracks on Saturday morning, picking up Rouna & Neil Charter at Seymour stopping at Benalla to view "Weary" Dunlop's Memorial and joined at Myrtleford by the Tingwells with their grand-daughter Jessica. With Margaret Oakley and Bruce and Sandra Williams joining us on Sunday, we travelled to South Bandiana for a barbeque where I was honoured to present a framed copy of their Charter in the presence of a number of their Members from the Chapter.

We had a visit to the Mt Beauty information centre where we learned of the Kiewa Hydro Electric scheme and the proposed extensions to it. Monday evening we held a semi-formal dinner at our Motel, again joined by Margaret, Sandra, Bruce, Bev and Alby Cunningham. This was followed by a sing-song of older tunes led by Bob Easton (Motel owner's father-in-law) on the harmonica.

If you are ever looking for a place to stay while at Myrtleford you could not do better than The Golden Leaf Motor Inn!!

Tuesday on our way home we stopped to view the animated display of the Kelly Siege at Glenrowan, then on to Euroa to watch the result of our Coach Sweep, arriving back at Oakleigh about 1730 tired but by all comments very happy and satisfied with the trip.

You will have seen from this it was a rather full package that all seemed to enjoy, however we could have taken another 20 people and they would have had as much enjoyment as we had! I have said many times before it takes as much effort to organize a function for 10 as it does for 100 the only difference being you need 90 more chairs! Please think about it!!

For our future functions please think very hard before you say NO!!

- **December 1<sup>st</sup>** is our Annual Corps Birthday Dinner (on the actual birthday!) @ 1900hrs East Malvern RSL first in first served!!  
**See flyer elsewhere in this 'Flash'.**
- **February 4<sup>th</sup> 2007** Remembrance Service at the Shrine 1100 hrs.
- **March 18<sup>th</sup> 2007** Widows and Life Members luncheon at Oakleigh Barracks 1130hrs April 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion barbeque lunch Oakleigh Barracks 1130hrs
- **April 25<sup>th</sup> 2007** Dawn service 0545hrs Oakleigh Barracks
- **August 26<sup>th</sup> 2007** AGM followed by barbeque luncheon

**Peter Cartledge**

*Social Co-ordinator*

**Obituary**  
**DONALD WALKER**  
**19/7/1921 – 19/4/2006**



**VX138863 Craftsman Donald Walker**  
**104 Aust Brigade Workshops**

Served with:

Citizen Military Forces

1 October 1941 to 25 April 1943

Australian Imperial Force

April 26 1943 to 17 January 1946

During this period he served with:

4th Light Horse Regt Hamilton and Colac

4th Motor Regt West Australia and Melbourne  
served for 978 days

Served 104 Aust Brigade Workshops

Outside Australia - Solomon Islands, Bougainville

Served for 397 days

Don became the family breadwinner at 15, after his father was killed in a farming accident. When aged 19 he became a member of the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, which was stationed at Hamilton. He served in the Australian Army for four years, including Bougainville and Solomon Islands, during World War 2.

After returning to civilian life in Colac, Victoria, Don continued to lead and support his love of "Scouting for Boys". He gave 29 years of support and leadership to the 1<sup>st</sup> Colac Boy Scout Group. He was also a staunch supporter of St. John's Anglican Church, and St. Cuthberts Home for Boys, Colac. He helped others, being a blood donor, and delivered Meals on Wheels. He was Secretary of Colac Masonic Lodge for 9 years. His great joy was the time he was Drum Major of the Colac City Band.

He enjoyed lawn bowls very much, both in Colac and later in Anglesea. Don was a member for several years of the Anglesea RSL Bowls Team when they competed in the Edinburgh Shield Competition.

In 1978 Don and May retired to their holiday home in Anglesea. Don was a Member of the Anglesea RSL for many years. During this period he was President for 2 years and Secretary for 2 years. He was a Foundation Member of the Daylight Lodge of the Great Ocean Road. He was also a Foundation Member of the Anglesea Probus Club, also serving a term as President. He was a strong supporter of the Church of Transfiguration, Anglesea where he was Secretary for some time. Don supported the (then) Anglesea Auxiliary for the RVI Blind, and he helped the "Red Cross Calling" campaign for several years.

A "special occasion" during his lifetime was, in 1988, when Don and his wife, May, traveled with a group, headed by the late Alan Woods of Swan Hill, to visit the World War 1 Battlefields of the Somme Valley, France. Their host was the Mayor Villers Bretonneaux, Dr Hubert Leiller and Mdme Christine Leiller. During this visit they attended the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anzac Day at the beautiful War Cemetery near Villers Bretonneaux. Next day, in Vignacourt, two streets were officially named after Australian WW1 officers. "Rue des Australiens". They also visited the Villers Bretonneaux School, which was rebuilt after WW1. The cost of the rebuilding was raised by the collection of pennies by Australian school children. The group also visited Compeigne "Ville de Armistice" where the signing of the WW1 Armistice took place in 1918. Alan Wood presented an Australian Flag to the officials there, and this Flag was amongst the flags of the other Allies of the 1914 – 1918 War. A special and emotional journey was to visit his wife's Uncle's Grave near Ieper (Ypres), Belgium. – Private W E Lambell, 23rd Battalion (1<sup>st</sup> AIF), Killed in Action, September 16, 1915, at Ypres. Private Lambell was born in Birregurra, Victoria.

Another special occasion for Don was in 2005. He was selected as a finalist in the Herald – Sun "True Blue Lifetime Award". His Certificate reads: "For an Australian who had dedicated their life to inspiring and giving hope to others by embracing diversity and demonstrating Australian values of equality, fair play, and tolerance".

## 2006 Corps Committee Meeting & Seminar Report

by Col Terry Beaton

The RCC meeting was held on 18 Oct 05, chaired by COL Graham Smith.

### Appointments

**Head Of Corps** – BRIG David Welch replacing BRIG David McGahey wef 21 Oct 06

**DHOC** – LTCOL N Stanton replacing LTCOL Andy Adams. (LTCOL Adams is posted as Comd Joint Logistics Unit –Victoria (JLU(V)) and promoted Colonel in Dec 06.

**Corps WO** - TBA replacing WO1 Dave Clarke who is leaving the Army

**New National Award** – Since 1992 John Phoenix as a past President of the demised 3MD WOs/SNCOs Association has been searching for the award that was presented to the winner of *3MD ARA Craftsman of the Year*. According to the inscriptions, it was last presented in 1995, with the demise of RTC and regional awards. It was found in a damaged state in the custody of the HOC Cell in early 2006. It was handed to John who has done a magnificent job, not only restoring the figurine, but also having it surrounded by a thick protective glass case with a reverse image of the Corps Badge etched on the rear plate. John Phoenix presented the re-vamped trophy to BRIG Welch, as the new HOC. The trophy is to be used as the new perpetual National Award of “ARA Craftsman of The Year”. It became very obvious that this had been a very personal project for John, made more significance after he visited the grounds of North Bandiana for the first time in over tens years. The trophy was presented the next day to CFN A.K. Ireson of 16 AD Regt. Well done JP!

**Corps Subscriptions** – SO2 Corps Heritage advised that due to the St Eligius Medallions the number of subscribers had increased from only 64 in 2005 (Corps manning - 3200) to 294 in 2006. A significant number of the increased subscribers were former members of the Corps. Only 206 medallions are left.

**National and Regional COY Awards – CFN Roy Disher of 2 FSB** (Hobart) is awarded the National

Award for **ARES Craftsman of Year for 2006**. He attended the Seminar at HOC expense. Both recipients became the first national winners to be presented with a gold framed and engraved Prince Philip Banner Miniature in lieu of the monetary awards and certificates presented previously.

Regional winners for the Craftsman of the Year for the Victoria & Tasmanian Region

Award	Recipient	Unit
ARA	CFN A.M. Jung	26 Tpt Sqn Wksp
ARES	CFN C.S. Daley	26 Tpt Sqn Wksp

Congratulations to the winners and their unit. The Regional ARA and ARES award will be presented at the ColComdt's Mixed All Ranks Corps Birthday Dinner at East Malvern RSL on Friday 1 Dec 06. BRIG McGahey will be attending to present the awards.

**Banner Miniatures** – The SO2 Corps Heritage advised that 200 Banner Miniatures had been ordered and to date 150 had been delivered and that 105 had already been sold.

**Corps Instructions** – It was agreed that all Corps Instruction would be updated, but that a lack of staff was delaying the work.

**National Association Meeting 2006** – DHOC (LTCOL Andy Adams) advised that due to lack of funding, it was not possible to hold a National Association Meeting in 2006.

**Corps Historian** – The RCC was briefed on the work carried out (to date) on the EME Display at the Army Museum. MAJ Anderson advised that Daimler Chrysler have agreed to provide some sponsorship for the display. It was agreed that these funds would be used to make better cabinets to display the uniforms recovered from the Bellfield Museum by Max Moore and Jack Westernhagan, which are currently being treated for infestations

**Pictorial Corps History**. It was reported that the suggested compiler/author, has withdrawn his availability to carry out the task. The project has been put on hold.

**Corps Port** This year's port is being produced by 10 Force Support Battalion (FSB).



**DHOC Report** LTCOL Adams reported that most units are doing it hard at the moment due to tempo of overseas deployments, lack of manning and excess of unit equipment without assigned operators. New kit is still being introduced without due prior consideration of its maintenance liability. He reported that most basic tradesmen are leaving at 6 year mark. Unlike their Arms counterparts, they don't get a great ride, as they are committed almost full time to maintenance, without the luxury of doing sport and adventure training. The Chief of Army has sought an increase of 2500 positions for logistic Corps from the Government, but low recruiting and retention figures will not help manning. Currently some 200 REME are being processed for employment in RAEME

**Corps Wreath** COL Beaton reported that wreaths on behalf of the Corps had been laid in Thailand and Burma in remembrance of the 84 members of the *Corps of Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (AEME)* who died as POWs either during or after construction of the Burma Railway. He also raised that he had recently paid respect to 4 AEME POWS buried in the Yokohama War Cemetery, but reported that 3 of 4 were incorrectly buried under AAOC Corps identification. COL Beaton is to attempt to locate the families with the aim of having these plaques amended at Corps expense through the Office of Australian War Graves, DVA.

### Corps Seminar

The Corps Seminar was held 19-20 Oct 06. Over 200 attended. The National Craftsman of the Year Awards for both ARA and ARES were presented to the recipients at the opening.

**Land Materiel Maintenance Support Review** – BRIG Barnett gave an update into the LMMSR. Last week he reported the following findings to the APMC,

Requirement to centralize servicing tasks to take this burden from first line support units. To reduce workload by 40 % (7 Bde have recently used spare facilities to form a Service Station)

Due to lack of manning in units, a requirement to remove all equipment that cannot be assigned to an individual operator and centralize it into a pool remote from the unit.

Requirement to introduce Bde EME's to have more responsibility to manage Bde asset  
Greater Fleet Management

**Corps Officer Dinner.** The recipient of the Peter Jennings Award as Top Student on a Logistic Officer Basic Course (LOBC) in 2006 gave a presentation of the Leopard tank in recognition of its service since introduction in mid 70s. The Corps historian gave a presentation on the "Royal Corps". In short:

BRIG Fields as our first DME ensured that the official designation for AEME is "**The Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers**". Brig Geyton as DME in 1948, despite AHQ insistence all logistic bodies have Corps in their title, successfully created RAEME with the official designation as "*The Royal Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers*". A title held until 2 Dec 1971 when the Hassett Review of the Army forced onto us our current title "**Royal Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers**", meaning we have not only lost the prestige of being the only *Royal Corps* in the Army, but we have even lost the term *Corps of*. However the Corps toast was given to MAJ Andy Turner (Retd) who had served in 101 Fd Wksp, SVN and he proposed the first toast to the 'Royal Corps' in 34 years - a title that nobody can remove from our proud Corps History.

As we are updating our  
Membership list, PLEASE let us  
know of any alterations we  
should know about, and send us  
an email with your email address  
to:

[raeme.sec@nex.net.au](mailto:raeme.sec@nex.net.au)

or Secretary Gus Allen on:  
(03) 9802-5460

## Seymour-Puckapunyal Chapter Charter Presentation

Arrangements have been made with the Seymour R&SL Club to have a get together at the Seymour Club, 1 Elizabeth St, Seymour, on **29 Nov 06** for the purpose of the **Presentation of our Charter** by the President of The RAEME Association of Victoria Inc. Mr Peter Cartledge. It is also anticipated that a number of the Melbourne people and Committee will be accompanying the President. Invitations have been sent to our Patron, Brig. Conrad Ermer and Brig Ross Grant. Both are former Directors (HOC) of our Corps.

Also on the night, the newly formed Seymour / Puckapunyal Chapter will be presenting to the Seymour R&SL Club a **Prince Philip Banner Miniature**. This Banner was to have been presented to the Seymour R&SL Club by RAEME members of the Seymour R&SL Club to the Seymour R&SL Club, but as a number of our Chapter members, who are not yet members of the Seymour R&SL Club, have made donations towards the purchase of this Banner, it has been decided to **make the presentation on behalf of the Seymour / Puckapunyal Chapter**.

I would expect the presentations to be made at around about 1900 hrs.

As usual the Seymour R&SL Club gets together from about 1730 hr with the reciting of the Ode at 1800 hr followed by a finger food supper. Arrangements have been made with the Seymour Club to have additional snacks for this evening, and I request that all those persons wishing to attend, **please notify me of your intentions** so as I can confirm numbers with the Club before 22 Nov 06.

If I have left any one off the email mailing list could you please forward this email on to them and for those who do not have access to emails could you please pass this information on?

Arte et Marte

**David Maddick**  
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## Bandiana Chapter Receives Charter

President Peter Cartledge presented Bandiana Chapter President, Andy Turner, with a framed copy of their Charter at Bandiana on Sunday 5 November 2006.

Charter had been formally granted on 8 May 2006 but a social occasion was appropriate for the presentation.



A bus load of RAEME Association Victoria members who were on their annual bus tour visited Bandiana for the occasion giving the president an opportunity to make the presentation. A BBQ was held in the Memorial Park near the RAEME Craftsman Memorial opposite the Army Museum Bandiana and the two groups got to know each other a little more.

State President, Peter Cartledge said it was an example of the Association serving more widely into country Victoria. Chapter President, Andy Turner, said it was the start of a new, inclusive era where the camaraderie of RAEME is available to all who ever wore the badge whether in war or peace; serving or retired; regular or reserve.

Maj Graham Anderson, RAEME SO2 Heritage spoke and congratulated the two presidents on their achievement and passed on the regards of the DHOC LTCOL Andy Adams. Congratulations were also received and read out from our Colonel Commandant COL Terry Beaton.

**Andrew Turner**  
President  
Bandiana Chapter,



## **105 Workshop Company: The year in focus.**

2006 has been a year of much change and activity for the workshop. With commitments to OP ACOLYTE, EX HAMEL and other unit activities all members have been quite busy.

The unit came under the command of Major Peter Cave who himself received two new Platoon Commanders, 2LT Chris Northover and 2LT Jarred Thomson. The shiny new Lieutenants found workshop life a welcome change from the unique environment of RMC.

Captain Guy Langford was posted in briefly, and has now left the workshop. Captain Bob Stearn has assumed the position of company 2IC - members are finding his red beret a source of some concern. The offending head dress has yet to be upgraded to a less provocative hue.

WO2 Tony Danger was posted in as Training WO, and then out to East Timor as a WO ART ARM. Also posted out to Timor was CPL Toby Bailey, who has now returned to the Oakleigh workshop. SGT Paul Glendenning was posted in as the new Oakleigh Wksp Spvr, but ended up spending most of his days at Broadmeadows as the Acting Training WO and daytime ASM.

OP ACOLYTE was supported by SGT Eddie Hatzakortzian and CPL John Guerra who utilized their driving skills to good effect. The workshop facilities were used as the mechanical maintenance base for the operation.

ANZAC day was enthusiastically welcomed by the workshop. The RAEME banner took pride of place in the centre of the formation for the march down Swanston Street. A contingent from the workshop adjourned to the Young & Jackson hotel in the city to share a few cleansing ales with members past and present.

The 4CSSB unit birthday was well attended by workshop members. CPL Cassar gave a fine presentation to 4CSSB members on the history of the Workshop Company, Arte et Marte was defined for the uninitiated. The gruelling 'Kokoda Challenge', a foot race up the thousand

steps commemorative trail, was undertaken early on the Sunday morning. 2LT Northover achieved a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish for RAEME, narrowly pipped for second by the ADJT.

RAEME showed a good turnout for the unit live fire exercise, EX CANNONBALL. We achieved the greatest number of vehicles per capita and hence enjoyed first class sleeping facilities in the cold Puckapunyal winter. The new Lieutenants enjoyed their first experience as OIC ranges outside of the training environment. The Sunday saw the conclusion to a safe and enjoyable shoot with members participating in a section defence range, a new experience for some of the newer personnel.

Workshop Company deployed over a dozen personnel and vehicles on the Brigade exercise, EX HAMEL. The workshop ran two FRT's and also sent members forward with 4/19 Prince Of Wales Light Horse Regiment. (The ASM, Allan Hawkins was not allowed to relive his glorious past with the Regiment). Those involved reported a positive experience in Cultana, with a steep and rewarding learning curve encountered by those who had not attended an AFX in the past.

With Driver's courses and a Brigaded RAEME weekend to finish the year off, we are looking forward to the Christmas break, with the Corps birthday providing a great lead in to the end of year celebrations.

**2LT Chris Northover**  
*Platoon Commander*  
*105 WKSP COY*



## **F Force Cutting Found**

by Col Terry Beaton

Thirty intrepid travellers ventured on this year's ANZAC pilgrimage to the Burma Railway, including three daughters, one son, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren. It enabled a son and a daughter to pay their respects to Fathers, whose graves were in Thailand and Burma respectively. All three daughters were born to F Force men, whilst Barney McKinnon's father died at the Malay Hamlet with H Force. The Derhams were a family related to John Lonsdale (2/29 Bn), a survivor from SAF Pond's Party. Joy's uncle, Ivan Lonsdale (2/29 Bn) is buried in Kanchanaburi. Hence it was crucial to visit the abandoned railway embankment at Takanoon, which their father, uncle and others had slaved to build. Pieces of ballast were gathered for remembrance.

Sadly attendance was down on previous years with only 250-300 at the Dawn Service, despite a large group of 80 from WA, including five ex-POWs. Although our group had no ex-POWs, we did have an 84 year old WW2 Veteran who had served in "the Islands" with 113<sup>th</sup> Brigade Workshops and gave us an insight into his war. We also had the courageous Margaret Gibson who was travelling at the age of 83. After walking the group along the Memorial Track from Hintok Station to Hellfire Pass, it was gratifying to see that the "Memorial Rails" had finally been relaid after the dispute with DVA following their removal by OAWG prior to ANZAC Day 2005. It was also good to see the acknowledgement to ex-POW Tommy Morris had been returned to the inside of the Museum.

The group's main highlights in Thailand were the memorable service held beside the open grave at Cholera Hill Cemetery (Shimo Sonkurai) and the discovery of a cutting at Kami Sonkurai. At the service two daughters gave short addresses after they had laid a wreath made from gum leaves and RSL poppies brought from Melbourne. Many a tear was shed as the presence of the men was felt.

After a short trip we reached Kami Sonkurai to explore the railway on this now Government Farm.

Discovery of ballast confirmed that the feature was not an embankment, but a cutting, which had not been cleared of undergrowth since the line was lifted in 1948. Several members discovered the notorious nature of Thai vines as they were viciously scratched, bleeding profusely from numerous lacerations. Unlike the POWs, their wounds were treated immediately upon return to the coach.

Fifteen then ventured into Burma for an awesome trip, including all three F Force daughters and our WW2 veteran. The trip south by coach enabled us to travel beside the colonial built railway from Yangon (Rangoon) and to cross the incredible 2.5 km long road/rail bridge that spans the enormous river delta at Moulmein. On 1 May 06 a violent thunderstorm struck Thanbyuzayat upon our arrival at the Cemetery, which cleared the air and made the headstones sparkle in the sunlight prior to the Service. After the laying of wreaths, garlands of flowers were laid on the Cross of Sacrifice as a personal tribute. A trip to the joining point had many taking photos of the moss covered Memorial Wall commemorating the start of the Burma Railway from that end. Following a wonderful picnic at Sesete Beach, the group returned to Thanbyuzayat Station and discovered a manual turntable made over 100 years ago. Whilst there, we actually saw the Burmese use it to turn around a diesel engine for the return trip back up the line to Moulmein.

Our Burma group is indebted to Ambassador Bob Davis and the staff from the Australian Embassy for their wonderful hospitality and support throughout this incredible Burmese adventure. Anybody who would also like to experience such a memorable ANZAC pilgrimage to the Burma Railway should contact Jason Brownley on (03) 98574555 or email :- [jason@belmoretravel.com.au](mailto:jason@belmoretravel.com.au) for details.

## “Sadly Forgotten”

by COL Terry Beaton

On ANZAC Day 2006 at the War Graves Cemetery at Kanchanaburi, Thailand – the dreadful loss of eighty four (84) AEME POWs who had died from disease, starvation and brutality either during or after construction of the infamous Burma Railway, was finally remembered for the first time in 61 years with the laying of a wreath on behalf of the Corps. The most poignant line of the “*Ode of Remembrance*”, which too many take for granted, unless you yourself have lost mates following warlike combat, is “*Lest We Forget*”. Unfortunately the inhumane destruction of these 84 men’s lives, had been forgotten by the Corps, until now, and does not even rate a mention in our comprehensive Corps History written by Theo Barker.

When I graduated into the Corps in 1974, the focus of training was still directed to Counter Revolutionary Warfare (CRW) following our involvement in Vietnam. Though at Corps Training Wing at RTC during my YO’s (Young Officers) Course, we still learnt from Army pamphlets written after WW2 preaching Continental Defence and the doctrine of RAEME in the “Paddock”, with clear and distinct lines of repair and recovery stretching back from the FEBA. Yet at no time did we ever deal with our own Corps History beyond the superficial look at how the Corps evolved from the sands of the Middle East. It was not until 1992 with the publication of our first official Corps History that I finally learnt about the decimation of the Corps between WW2 and Korean Wars. I certainly did not appreciate that casualty numbers actually represented individual lives until my involvement with the Burma Railway. Moreover, it helped me to realise that the “true” victims of war are not actually the dead, as they have walked to the white light and have no more worries, but instead it is the survivors and their families who have to live with the effects of war for the rest of their lives. This was brought home by the wife of an ex-POW who said “Terry, have you ever heard a man scream in his sleep and wake in a sweat soaked bed”. A story that I have heard repeatedly from wives of Vietnam Vets and peacekeepers.

In hindsight, I now realise that our Corps is like a Victorian policeman – essential, yet nobody really wants them until their house is robbed or their life is threatened! Likewise operational planners in Canberra rarely think about maintaining the essential equipment required to conduct operations. If they did, RAEME numbers in contingents would be more realistic to support the equipment deployed. Similarly when the accolades are being handed out at the end of a warlike activity, it is always the Arms Corps that get the public recognition with little acknowledgement going to the Logistic Forces which support their sustained operations. Similarly the same applies to recognition of the dead. For years I have watched Battalion Association after Battalion Association march on ANZAC Day and numerous Battalion Associations lay wreaths at Kanchanaburi, but until the Inaugural “RAEME Day of Remembrance” this year,

I had never seen a wreath laid or small memorial crosses erected by a Logistic Corps to specifically remember those members who had lost their lives.

To put things into perspective, according to Theo’s History only six (6) RAEME personnel died during our entire nine year involvement in Vietnam following LT K.J. Beatty visit (9-17 Aug 63) from AAF (FARELF) in Malaysia. Yet in only a three year period spanning 15 Feb 42- 16 Aug 45, eighty four (84) AEME POWs died either in Thailand, Burma or Japan slaving for the enemy. This figure does not take into account those that died as POWs under the Japanese in Borneo and Ambon with the capture of 75, 88 and 104 LADs attached to “Sparrow Force”. Sadly, few if any POWs on “the line” even knew that they were members of the new Australian Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (AEME) as they were captured with the “Fall of Singapore” on 15 Feb 42, before any official Corps re-badging had taken place. As such, only AEME personnel posted to Ordnance Wksps and LADs have been subsequently re-buried in War Grave Cemeteries under our Corps’ identification. Armament and specialist tradesman on Battalion and Artillery Regiment establishments may still have been re-buried under their parent unit’s Corps identification, thereby reducing the actual number of our Corps who died as POWs. When comparing the total number of Corps deaths with the ratio of AEME personnel in Ordnance Wksps and LADs to the WW2 establishment of 1200 for an Infantry Battalion, it doesn’t take a genius to realise that our Corps’s prorata death rate of POWs was equivalent if not higher than that for the Infantry. Yet until this year, sadly these men had been forgotten by their own Corps.

Appropriately another member of our ANZAC pilgrimage group this year was a 84 year old WW2 AEME Veteran, named Doug Brazier. CFN later Acting SGT (Instructor) Brazier had served in the Islands with 113<sup>th</sup> Aust Bde Wksp, which was a Victorian raised unit with the majority coming from the Geelong area. During an informal service beside an original open grave in the “Cholera Hill” Cemetery at Shimo Sonkurai, where 152 Aussie had died during a cholera epidemic in Jul 43, Doug broke down as he realised only three of the 120 from his own WW2 unit were still alive. Although very honoured to have laid the first wreath on behalf of the Corps in Kanchanaburi and subsequently at the Thanbyuzayat War Graves Cemetery in Burma on 1 May 06 - where the majority of AEME POWs are buried - my greatest memory however, is having Doug stand alongside me as we jointly laid poppies on some of the numerous AEME graves in both cemeteries. Sadly however, for 14 of our dead there is no known grave as the single greatest known cause of death was “**drowning at sea**” when the *Rakuyo Maru* was sunk by US submarine *Sealion* on 12 Sep 44 in the South China Sea on it’s way to the coal mines of Japan. Having just survived the rigors of the Burma railway these men lost their lives from so-called “*Friendly fire*”.

“*Lest We Forget*”

## “The Royal Corps”

Col Terry Beaton

The last “*Crafty Moments*” touched on the changes to our distinguished Corps Emblem and hat badge. Although surmounting of the “*horse forcene*” with the **Queen’s Crown** occurred in 1955 – (over three years after her coronation in Feb 52) – there has been one further significant and sad change. Few serving today will know that our current hat badge was introduced in **1972**, when the former 1955 format was altered to display a much large Queen’s Crown in compensation for the loss of our “*prestigious*” title as “***The Royal Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers***”. From 1948 until 1971, our Corps was the only one in the Australian Army with this elite title, granted by King George VI on 10 Nov 48 for our dedicated services during WW2.

Sadly, the loss of our “unique” title resulted directly from the Hassett Committee Report <sup>(1)</sup> released in 1971, which recommended a complete restructuring of the Army, due to the changing face of warfare learnt on the battlefields of South Vietnam. Our new title as the ‘***Royal Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers***’ was granted by Queen Elizabeth II and gazetted in 1971. The Hassett Report instilled the new Corps of RAEME with the responsibility for the repair and maintenance of all of the Army’s equipment. It also saw the formation of the Royal Australian Corps of Transport (RACT), but at the demise of the *Royal Australian Army Service Corps* (RAASC) and the movement of “Watercraft Transport” from RAE to the newly formed RACT. The cover of Issue No 51 of “*The Craftman*” (Summer 2003/4) showed that the Corps was 55 years old with the granting of “Royal” in 1948. But this was slightly inaccurate! In Dec 03 “the Corps” as formed on 1 Dec 42 was 61 years old. It’s title as “***AEME***” lasted less than 6 years (1 Dec 42 to 10 Nov 48). It’s title then as “***The Royal Corps***” lasted 23 years until 1971. Whereas its current title as “***RAEME***” has now been in existence for 32 years. As such, RAEME will celebrate its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 1 Dec 06, but “The Corps” will celebrate its 64<sup>th</sup> year since its formation.

The Corps, and in fact the whole ADF, faces one further major change to all emblems which incorporate a Queens Crown. Some time in the future a “**King**” will sit on the throne. It took over three years for Australia to change all emblems from a King’s Crown to a Queen’s Crown with the death of King George VI. How long will it now take with clothing contracted out and the whole of the Australian Government faced with the same problem. Will this be an opportunity for the republicans to argue that it is time to cease our observance to heritage and the Monarchy. Regardless of the argument, it is still going to cost the ADF a large sum to change all insignia, from a Queen’s Crown to either a King’s Crown or a new image.

Many readers will not be aware that the Corps has a “*Memorial Tree of Remembrance*”, which is growing on the St Kilda Rd side of the serene gardens of the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.

It is a Spruce Tree and was planted during a dedication service in Dec 1964, when the Directorate of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering (DEME) was located with AHQ Melbourne at Albert Park Barracks, before the advent of Russell Offices in Canberra. The *Memorial Tree* is marked by a dedication plaque acknowledging our prestigious title as “*The Royal Corps*”. Next year as part of the RAEME Day of Remembrance Service on 4 Feb 07, the Corps Memorial Tree will be re-dedicated and hopefully a new plaque, identifying the Corps with our current title as RAEME, will be placed next to the older historical plaque – which will now commemorate the loss of our prestigious title as “*The Royal Corps*”.

In Issue No 55 of “*The Craftsman*” under “**RAEME Matters**” readers were briefed on one of our premier Corps artworks titled “*AFV Repair in the Light Green – Vietnam November 1969*”. At the time the painting was released in 1972, it was controversial and created argument over a number of issues. One such issue was its reference to the “*Light Green*”. At this point, it is important to realise that the painting has always been solely an “***artistic interpretation***” by Mr K.C McFadyen of an FRT activity that may have occurred in SVN. It was BRIG Bendall who had suggested that a painting “*depicting repairs to a tank by a FRT and with a helicopter delivering a spare engine might be suitable*”. (As quoted in the article on page 21).

Speaking to several “blackhats” who served in SVN from 1967-69, it seems that the topographical maps of the Phouc Tuy Province were marked with two shaded areas in green near the Long Hai Hills. One was a smaller shaded area of “*light green*” representing light bamboo jungle with few trees to the east of the hills. The other was a “*long*” elongated area of “*dark green*” representing thicker and more heavily wooded vegetation to the southeast. Somehow in 1968, it became more common practice to refer to these two areas on the map as the “Light Green” and the “Long Green”, though these terms were never officially adopted as operational zones. Yet none of these veterans saw the scene in the painting depicting the “Light Green”, let alone the “Long Green”; especially as it shows a completely open paddy field, instead of the forests of bamboo that they had driven armoured vehicles through in the real “*Light Green*” mapped vegetation area.

Moreover, the description states “*the final drive assembly was lifted in by CH47*”. The painting’s description needs amendment, as it can be easily seen that the assembly under the CH47 is a “Merritt Brown Epicyclic Gearbox”, which is the same assembly seen at the rear of the disabled tank, **not** a final drive. None of the veterans could recount a Centurion MUA being flown in by CH47 for a disabled gun tank. However, all veterans could readily remember it happening for M113 power packs and MUAs, but then recalled that the power packs had come in their shipping containers for protection during flight, not as an exposed assembly, as depicted in the painting.



It is therefore safe to say, that Mr McFadyen has done a wonderful job to “*artistically represent*” an Armoured FRT activity anywhere in the Phouc Tuy Province at any time in SVN. Not necessary the “proposed” incident in 1969, as detailed in the supporting description.

Lastly, the Corps lost one of its true “identities” with the sad passing of Major Bruce Thomas Leonard last year. Born in 1923, he had joined the Militia in 1939 at the age of 15, due to a doctored Birth Certificate. He earned the nickname “Mick” after the American Boxer Mick Leonard, due to his own boxing prowess. He transferred from the Infantry to the Armoured Corp when he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF in 1941. After three years with the Armoured Corps in Australia, Mick joined 13 Small Ship Company in an attempt to see active service. He was now a member of RAE and saw operational service in Bougainville and New Guinea. With the amalgamation of technical trades into one Corps, Mick joined his fourth Corps “RAEME” on 10 Dec 50. He attended the first “18 month long” Vehicle Artificer’s Course at Ingleburn. He then served in the BCOF No 2 Base Workshop at Hiro, Japan during the Korean War where as a WO1 he had to supervise “Japanese tradesmen” and was later elevated to fill a Captain’s position.

Upon his return he served in Bandiana, Brisbane and Townsville, where he accepted a commission and was posted to the Trials and Proving Wing at Monageeta in 1963. Two year’s later he was OC 1 Armd Regt LAD, but did not see active service in SVN. Instead he was later sent to AHQ Melbourne at Albert Parks Barracks, until given the unique opportunity as a Major to supervise the construction of the Vehicle Rebuild Workshop near Bangkok for the Royal Thai Armed Forces under a SEATO Cooperation Project <sup>(2)</sup>. Returning to AHQ Melbourne, Mick retired on 13 Dec 74 after 36 years of service, in four different Corps - 24 years in “RAEME”. I am told that any former RAEME members who knew Mick, will still be warmly welcomed by Fay at any time at their home in Taree. Farewell to a great character who saw so many changes to the Corps, including the planting of our Memorial Tree in 1964.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. General Hassett was the Chief of General Staff (CGS) at the time.
2. In 1988, when I went under the DCP Project to upgrade facilities at VRW, senior Thai Officers still fondly remembered Mick and his contribution to the workshop.

There are TWO kinds of RAEME bods:

**Ex-Army Apprentices**

**And those who WISH they were!**

## **Australian Defence Medal**

For those who have not yet seen it ....

**Ribbon:** *Maroon with black border; white stripes*



**The Australian Defence Medal**

## **Army Apprentices Association of Australia**

A web-site for the newly formed Army Apprentices Association of Australia is at:

**[www.austarmyapprentice.org](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org)**

A Membership Application Form can be downloaded.





**COLONEL COMMANDANT (Victoria & Tasmanian Region)**  
**RAEME MIXED ALL RANKS CORPS BIRTHDAY DINNER-**  
PLUS  
**THE CRAFTSMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

Will be presented by BRIG David McGahey

**TO BE HELD AT THE EAST MALVERN RSL**  
**STANLEY GROSE DRIVE, EAST MALVERN (MEL 60, A12)**  
**On Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006**

WHO IS INVITED?

**All serving & retired members of the Corps and their Companion/Guest**

TIMING

1900 hrs for 1930 hrs

DRESS

**Ladies: After Five Wear**

**Gentlemen: White Mess Kit (6B) or Coat and Tie**  
**Miniatures are to be worn.**

COST

**\$45.00 per head (inc. GST)**

Payable to **"2006 Victorian RAEME Corps Dinner"**  
**c/o 8 NEERA Crt. GLEN WAVERLEY 3150**

**RSVP : No later than Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

SEATING CAPACITY

**As the maximum seating for this venue is only 84 seats**  
**Get your returns & cheques in early, as "first-in best-dressed"**

CONTACTS

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**COME and SUPPORT your CORPS and your CRAFTSMEN**

Arte et Marte

✂------(Cut off here)-----

Name: I .....and my Companion/ Guest.....  
will be attending the 2006 RAEME Corps 64<sup>th</sup> Birthday Mixed All Ranks Dinner at East Malvern RSL on  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

Signed.....

Please find enclosed my Cheque / Money order (*made payable to 2006 Victorian RAEME Dinner*) for \$.....

Please forward this return to "2006 Victorian RAEME Corps Dinner", Address as above.