

THE LIGHTNING FLASH

SOLDIER and CRAFTSMAN

October 2015

Issue 81

The RAEME Association (Victoria) Inc.
Incorporation Reg No. A 0022655Z ABN: 96 873 522 994
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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

052018

Albert Ward (facing camera leaning back) - Great Uncle of Margaret Royle
See Story Page 10

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our AGM was held at Clayton RSL on Sunday 30 August 2015. The Office Bearers and Committee were returned to office, unopposed, for another year. LTCOL Brian Cahill (Retd.) was the returning officer and conducted his role in a very confident and professional manner.

Brian also announced the recipient for Life Member and the successful person was our Secretary, Mr Alan Rogers. Brian called upon COL John Lee (Retd.) and myself to present Alan with his Life Membership badge. It took some organising to keep this result a secret from our Secretary and the surprise was evident when the announcement was made. Congratulations, Alan! And thank you Brian for undertaking the task of Returning Officer.

On the 24th of Aug 15 some members attended Alkira Secondary College to help with their WW1 Descendants project. I thank the members who made themselves available to help the Year 9 students. It made WW1 history 'come alive' for them. Thank you to John Sloss; Ivan Royle; Margaret Royle (who stepped in at the last minute); Mark Ryan; Andrew Mclean; Don Kinsey; Peter Mogan and Neil Charter. A special thanks to Jemma and Maddy who greeted us on our arrival at Alkira and for escorting us within the School. On behalf of the members I thank Alkira and the students who hosted our lunch.

The 1st of September saw us visit the Shrine with the Alkira Year 9 students conducting the ceremony at the RAEME tree, for Remembrance Day. The poems and verses chosen for the ceremony were very meaningful and moving. Thank you to Mrs Nicole Scott for coordinating and escorting the students to and from the Shrine. I also thank the members from our Victoria Barracks Chapter who took some time away from their desks to support this activity.

Wednesday the 9th of September saw the committee have their meeting at Clayton where the new committee were welcomed and duties allotted to them. See our Secretary's report for allocated portfolios.

There are two functions that are to be held in November. The first function is our Bandiana Chapter Dinner, Saturday 14 November that is being held in Bandiana, and the second function is our RAEME Birthday Dinner that is being held at the Clayton RSL on Friday the 27th of November at 6.30pm

Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Mike Newbond
President



Graeme Benjamin John Leslie

13th Intake Army Apprentice Radio Mechanic
Commissioned via Portsea OCS
Passed away 30 July 2015

Dominic Pontelandolfo

105 WKSP, 7 TPT TSST & 3 EME SVCS
Passed way 17 July 2015

Ruth Durance-Sloss

Passed Away 12 August 2015

Noel (Blue) Rushby

Passed Away 29 September 2015



SECRETARY'S REPORT

A new year started at the 2015 AGM with 32 members attending. Lt Col Brian Cahill acted as the returning Officer with 2104-15 Committee standing down. The Committee nominations for the years 2015-2016 was announced & with the numbers nominated equalling the Committee Members required a ballot was not required. The Committee for 2015-2016 below:

2015-2016 Committee of Management

Executive

President	Mike Newbond
Vice President	Allan Hawkins
Secretary	Alan Rogers
Treasurer	Aranka Illia

Members

Gus Allen	Member
Pat Marley	Member
Danny Hayes	Member
Peter Zimmerman	Member

Chapter Representatives

Bandiana	Grant Connelly
Seymour/Puckapunyal	Dave Maddick
Victoria Barracks	Alex Birrell
Vietnam Veterans Southern	Dennis Clarke

Congratulations to new Committee members Danny Hayes and Peter Zimmerman at being nominated to the Committee of Management.

Our thanks to George Reid for his contribution to the Committee over the last 4-5 years

The next functions to be held are :

Bandiana Dinner; Sat 14th November 2015. Members wishing to attend this Dinner. This Dinner is a great venue to meet the Bandiana Chapter Members as well as being a great night. Members wishing to attend should contact the Association Secretary
 ☎ 03 9704 6700 email secretary@vic.raeme.org.au

RAEME Birthday Dinner; 27th November 2015 Clayton RSL. The Victorian Craftsman of the Year Perpetual Award will be presented at the Dinner. Notice attached. Information from the Association Secretary
 ☎ 03 9704 6700 email secretary@vic.raeme.org.au.

2016 Shrine Remembrance Ceremony; At the moment the usual Light Lunch is in doubt due to the current restriction of the use of the Shrine kitchen facilities. The President and myself will be discussing the lunch with the Shrine Management in the near future. It would be a great disappointment if we have to forego the Lunch. Since the lunch was instigated the number of Members attending this important day to remember our departed mates has more than tripled.

RNA Vice President; We have nominated Dennis Clarke to the RNA President and Committee for this position, however to date we have not received a reply from the RNA President as to the success or other wise of this nomination.

Alkira Secondary College; During the year WW1 descendants visited the College and discussed with the Students the memories and details of their relatives that had served in WW1. The students were then to research the relative and submit a paper as part of their VCAL Year.

With Skill and Fighting ; Craftsmen of the Australian Army 1942-2014 is now available. The Association will have a hard copy for Members who wish to sight the book at all of our functions in the next 12 months. Details on how to order are noted in the Flash.

This Book is an excellent and extremely well documented read with several of our members getting a mention, well worth \$80-00

VALE 2014-2015

Ray Cuddihy 7 September 2014	LM Ed Collins 9 October 2014
LM Ross Hope 9 May 2015	Dom Pontelandolfo 17 July 2015
Ruth Durance-Sloss 12 August 2015	

Arte et Marte

Alan Rogers
Association Secretary

**WITH SKILL AND FIGHTING
CRAFTSMEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY
1942-2014'**



To purchase a book you will need to make a deposit of \$80.00 by electronic transfer into the account below.

**RAEME Corps Fund
BSB: 803205
ACCT: 20509705**

Once payment is made, please send an email to RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au and add the CC address of william.myers@defence.gov.au, together with proof of payment (scanned receipt of deposit), point of contact details and an up-to-date delivery address. The Head of Corp Cell will then distribute the book upon confirmation of payment."

In the reference field of the electronic transfer and proof of payment, please include your surname and phone number. Retain a copy of the deposit transaction, or ask your bank for a receipt, and then send a scanned copy to: RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au.

In the email, please ensure you include your name, delivery address and contact phone number. Should you have any queries, please contact the HOC Cell directly, 02 6055 2193, prior to ordering. Books should be dispatched within 28 days of ordering and every effort will be made to inform you of despatch details.

**Members wishing to purchase a book by Cheque / Postal Note should contact the Secretary for a special order form ☎ 03 9704 6700 ;
email secretary@vic.raeme.org.au**

Once received HOC Cell will forward a copy/copies postage free .

RAEME Association (Vic) Inc Functions 2015-2016		
September 2015	October 2015	November 2015 14th COM Bandiana 14th Bandiana Dinner 27th Birthday Dinner
December 2015	January 2016	February 2016 Shrine Remembrance Day TBA
March 2016	April 2016 Anzac Day Reunion TBA 25 th ANZAC Day March	May 2016 22th President Lunch Clayton RSL
June 2016	July 2016	August 2016 27th AGM
September 2016	October 2016	November 2016 Bandiana Annual Dinner RAEME Birthday Dinner Clayton RSL

Note.

Venues and Timings will be issued under separate cover
Venues & Dates may be subject to change from time to time.

Committee Meetings will be in Camera unless otherwise noted

Note Months after August will be subject to the incumbent Committee of Management.

Contact the Association Secretary for further details if required

**The Victoria Barracks Chapter of the
RAEME Association Victoria Inc. is
holding its Annual General Meeting on
Friday 20 November 2015
commencing at 1600hrs**

Venue details

Mail Exchange Hotel
688 Bourke St Melbourne
(cnr Bourke and Spencer Sts)
Function room at the rear of the dining area
Off street parking available at Wilson Parking 542
Little Bourke St for an \$8 flat rate after 1600

Meeting Agenda is Attached (page 6)

Any items you wish to have added to the agenda are to be forwarded to me NLT 20 October 2015

Any nominations for committee positions of President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer are to be forwarded to me not later than 20 October 2015

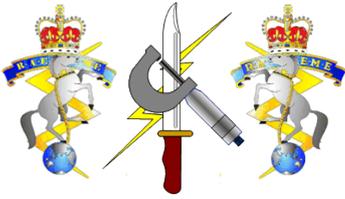
If elections are required, they will be carried out under supervision of the returning officer (Mr Noel Goltz)

Spanner Club commences approx 1630hrs

If anyone has any questions in relation to the AGM, please don't hesitate to contact me

Alex Birrell

Secretary
Victoria Barracks Chapter
RAEME Association (Victoria) Inc
Phone: (03) 9282 5852
Mobile: 0419 004 809
email: alex.birrell@defence.gov.au



SOLDIER and CRAFTSMAN

THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (Victoria) INCORPORATED
 Incorporation No.A0022655Z1 ABN; 96 873 522 994

Patron Brigadier C.Ermert ARMIT Msc FIE Aust CPEng (Rtd)
 Col/Cmdt BRIG David McGahey AM, CSC

Victoria Barracks Chapter

President: Capt Tony Minniti

Secretary: Alex Birrell

Phone No: 0419 004 809

email: alex.birrell@defence.gov.au

Annual General Meeting 20 November 2015

Agenda

- Item 1. President's Opening Address
- Item 2. Secretary/Treasurers Report
- Item 3. Election of Office Bearers (President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer)
- Item 4. Call for volunteers for the Social Committee
- General Business**
- Item 5. TBA
- Item 6. Meeting Closure

LIFE MEMBER AWARD

At the Annual General Meeting in August, RAEME Association (Victoria) Inc Secretary ALAN ROGERS was presented with his award of LIFE MEMBER, in recognition of his long and dedicated service to the Association as Secretary and Committee Member.



Alan Rogers (centre) being presented with his "Life Member" badge by Life Member and former President COL John Lee and current President Mike Newbond.



Life Member Alan Rogers (left) being congratulated by President MAJ Mike Newbond.



SEYMOUR-PUCKAPUNYAL CHAPTER

The list of current office-bearers is:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| President, | David Maddick, |
| Vice President, | John Phoenix, |
| Secretary, | Jack Bishop, |
| Treasurer, | Mick Quinlan, |
| Committee, | John Blackwell |
| | Geoff (Tex) McPherson |

Membership for the year 2014 – 2015 was 20 Financial Members.

Monthly Spanner Club meetings have again been regularly held at the RSL Hall, Crawford St. Seymour on the last Wednesday of the month, in conjunction with the Seymour RSL Social Club. The Ladies Auxiliary have done a magnificent job catering for the night, with a variety of dishes on offer. Spanner attendance varies from about four to ten RAEME members attending.

The President of the Seymour / Puckapunyal Chapter (David Maddick) and his Wife (Sonnyia Maddick) attended the 70th Anniversary of the enlistment in the Australian Defence Force of Maj. Jack Balsillie MBE (Ret) as one of the first 100 Army Apprentices, on Friday 10 July 2015, being the actual Anniversary of enlistment, at Bendigo District RSL. These Apprentices became known as Workshop Apprentices, and were prior to the formation of the Army Apprentices School Balcombe. Approx 60 friends and acquaintances were in attendance.

Thirteen of the 100 Apprentices were from Vic & Tas with only five remaining, four were in attendance, with one apology through sickness.

Attendees were;

- Jack Balsillie
- Sam Gibbs
- Bill Calder
- Ken Dyall
- Athol Tomkin (Apology)

Despite having had multiple minor strokes, Jack remains in reasonable health, with mobility being his major problem.

The Seymour Chapter again hosted the February Committee of Management meeting. The usual Country Style BBQ was presented.

Again many thanks to Kathy Quinlan, (wife of our Treasurer Mick Quinlan who is still employed overseas). Kathy was a tremendous help in the kitchen and other duties.

Our 2015 AGM is scheduled to be held in the Second week of October, actual date and location yet to be decided.

David Maddick

President

Seymour / Puckapunyal Chapter,
RAEME Assoc (Vic) Inc.

BANDIANA CHAPTER

In February we again held our Remembrance day Service which under the circumstances of increased security, it was well attended.

At our AGM in March saw several committee members resigning, namely our Treasurer Tony Heald and Jack Colville.

Grant Connolly was re elected as President and Hans Seivers as Treasurer, a new addition is Adrian Huggins.

All other members were elected unopposed.

Our dinner this year will be on Saturday 14th of November, at the Commercial Club, Albury.

Cost will be \$40.00 a head.

George Reid

Secretary

Bandiana Chapter,
RAEME Assoc (Vic) Inc.



BLUEBELL **Vietnam Veterans Southern**

RAEME VIETNAM VETERANS MEETINGS

Our last meeting was held at SEAFORD RSL
Next meeting WANGARATTA RSL

RAEME ACTIVITY IN VIET NAM

Continued from last Bluebell.....

This was dangerous work as the mines became more exposed, due to coupling the carriers to recovery vehicles enabling them to tow the disabled machine back to the N.D.P for repair. At times, if the damage was severe the Carrier mine-sweeper would be moved back to the 1 Field Sqdn Wkshp at Nui Dat on a low loader.

On October 28th the day Brigadier Weir visited the mine clearing teams to check on progress, two enemy groups fired on them from the north. On the 29th of October the dozer "Power" was shot at. This became a frequent occurrence, with mortar fire, also falling on the NDP on a number of occasions, without causing any casualties. The observation tower was regularly peppered with rifle rounds.

At 4:15 on the 7th November, Lieutenant Doug George, Craftsman John Walker and Lieutenant Rainer Frisch were in the process of the NDP to a new position. We were located about half a kilometer, on the eastern side of Dat Do, when George and Walker were wounded. George remembers it well: "We were sitting on the open rear hatch open moving north along the track on the western side of the minefield perimeter fence. I looked around to see a gaggle four old men talking and looking in our direction. I felt something was wrong. Ten seconds later the track triggered an M16 mine, which jumped about 25 feet but did not detonate. I stopped the track. I called the mine clearing APC forward. It ran up to the proposed NDP and back again to the old one without discharging any mines. It appeared clear. We moved on to the new NDP. Later, riding the track back to the old NDP, we had gone some distance when another M 16 jumped. This one detonated, blowing the three of us into the APC through the cargo hatch opening. I was stunned, but remember looking at Walker who had blood all over his face. I started about him, until I realised, that I had a number of holes in myself. I knew the family jewels were okay and I wasn't going to die.

Rainer Frisch, who was only dazed, got us back to the old NDP and there we organized a dustoff". Doug George had multiple shrapnel wounds in one leg,

buttocks, side and back spent two weeks in 1 Fld Hospital at Vung Tau, before returning to duty. John Walker spent three days at 1 Fld hospital with facial shrapnel wounds had, a short break and returned to duty.

On 9th November four members of a tank crew, associated with the NDP defence, were wounded when they detonated a booby trap.

Among numerous other incidents, 1 Fld Sqdn Wkshp's Corporal Danny Sullivan, was lightly wounded after a Land rover detonated an M16 mine which the VC had relocated.

On the morning of April 1970, Corporal Blue Baker had a serious brush with an anti-tank mine, which, had been specifically set up outside the minefield perimeter. Somewhat "over- confident" after six months of burying the field, and was looking for a place to enter the field from the southern section. He says, "I was standing on the hydraulic tank with my head up for a bit of air, and steering with my foot, when suddenly a massive explosion stunned me. Every-thing went black. Shrapnel had, wounded my legs and abdomen. Blue baker returned to road work after treatment and light duties. The D8 was a complete write-off with a crack the full length of the engine block. The track frame was cracked severely as well. This vehicle is located at the Casula [NSW] RAE Museum.

The recovery of plant with blown tracks and grouser was routine. Burnt out transmissions, clutches, and damaged tracks in the mine-clearing APCs. The excessive heat would also cause further problems. Mine damaged radiators, in the bulldozers continuously required repairs. Recovery mechanic Craftsman John Stanford said: "every day something needed to be done in the carriers. In the NDP we had portable welders, compressors and generators, which allowed us, to get a lot done in the field. With the fitters APC being fitted with a crane we could also fix most track problems and damaged idler wheels. Every three to four days we'd have to fix the boom, or change the tyres on it, due to shrapnel damage. If the damage was too severe we'd back load the vehicles and plant to the workshops.

At the Workshops, the effort never slackened. John Power said: "many times the equipment was loaded onto the transport or rolled out of the gate just in time to tag onto the end of a convoy as it headed to the work site. One time we had a tradesman lying on the bed of a low loader bolting on the belly plates as the vehicle trundled towards the front gate with a Land Rover following to collect him when he jumped off the trailer. This should be enough to show the indispensable contribution that the RAEME Fitters made to the destruction of the minefield.

Frangimus IV officially ended after Major Rowe completed his tour of duty in January 1970 and Major Ray Johnson took over as OC of 1 Field Squadron.

To Be Continued

RAEME VIETNAM VETERANS NEWS

3 CAVALRY ASSOCIATION

The "Black Hats" have requested financial support, for the purchase of an M113 armoured personal carrier, to mount at their Tongala Memorial. This also affects a large number of RAEME "Black Hats" who were an important part of the Cavalry. We have contacted the Association to let them know that we will be making a substantial contribution of support. The V V A Museum have just received a carrier from Defence and as the Cavalry were told their application was the sixth in line, that should make now fifth in line.....Maybe a Fitters Carrier?

There is a fortieth anniversary special tribute concert being held on the 31st October 7.00PM at Caroline Chisholm College 204 Churchill Avenue Braybrook. The Vietnamese Community featuring second generation entertainers along with I Was Only Nineteen "Red Gum". Entry: Adults \$40-00 Concession \$ 30-00

RAEME Viet Nam Unit Reunions

102 Field Workshop 2nd 3rd 4th October 2015
"Avondale" 601 Bray,s Road Gannawarra Victoria
Contact Noel Lake 03 5456 9246

1 Armoured Regiment LAD October 2015 16th 17th 18th
Halls Gap Victoria
Contact Russell Cunningham H 03 5766 2413 M 0437 834089
Bungie12@bigpond.net.au

17 Construction Workshop
October 19th 20th 21st 22nd 23rd Bendigo Victoria
Contact Garry Whykes
H 08 9726 1920 M 0411 810077
ghwhykes@gmail.com

1 Field Squadron Workshop
2016 Date TBA Adelaide South Australia
Contact Don Grieveson or Tony Hinton
H 08 8449 5945
grieveson@internode.on.net
arhinton@hotmail.com

106 Field Workshop
2016 November 18th 19th 20th
Venue: Frankston Football Club Victoria. – The Mighty Dolphins
Note: there is lift access & the function centre seats over 200.
Contact Milton Pearson Tel 03: 5976 8648
csm1066869@gmail.com

Albert Ward

Margaret Royle's Great Uncle

(see photo on front page)



Albert Ward was born at Neerim South in 1894. He was a 22-year-old unmarried farm hand (expecting life as a farmer) when he enlisted in the AIF on 3 October 1916. His brother Benjamin had already served at Gallipoli (15th Battalion) and had been wounded twice.

Albert was made a private in the 38th Battalion. He trained at Seymour and embarked on the *Medic* on 16 December 1916, disembarking at Plymouth, England, on 18 February 1917. It was a further six months before he was sent to France, on 25 August 1917. He served on the Western Front for almost a year before receiving a shell or gunshot wound to the back and thighs on **18 July 1918**. Albert's repat record notes the place as France, probably near Rouen, which was the location of the hospital he was sent to, according to M80738, p.376. The unit diary for the 38th Battalion indicates that they were located at "P14 Cent." on 18 July.

A reconnaissance was undertaken and a German post was discovered. It was noted that 'Trenches re condition and accommodation found inadequate necessitating night working activities...Enemy during night 18/19 intermittently shelled vicinity B.H.Q. in donga below Central Copse. Weather sultry.' Hot meals were carried in, and 'Valleys gassed slightly by enemy.' The entry for 19 July indicates that thunderstorms and downpours made conditions difficult overnight, and that they endured 'hostile shelling intermittent during the 24 hrs.' In spite of the thunderstorms, the full moon made the Battalion more vulnerable and showed up the men working to improve the trenches. German snipers were also at work, shooting Captain Selleck. The appendix to the July diary indicates that during the period 17-25 July the 38th Battalion suffered 23 casualties, 'the feature of these was the large number of M.G. bullet wounds and in most cases these were merely flesh wounds. Two of these casualties died later of wounds, one an abdominal wound + one man whose leg had been blown off by a shell. The evacuation of the wounded by field ambulance was good.' However, the diarist noted disparagingly that the 'Aid Post was 'rather dilapidated...with a blanket for a roof through which the rain (came)'. During two of the days they were able to use a shelter with a wooden roof that was later fitted with bunks, making a 'very fair' Aid Post.

Albert was sent to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen (see <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/rouen> for further information on the hospital). He was then sent to

hospital in England (Sutton Veny), where it was considered he would make a full recovery. He returned to Australia in July 1919, and was discharged medically-unfit on 10/11/1919.

After his return, Albert was able to walk with the aid of a walking stick. His spinal condition deteriorated, diagnosed as TB of the spine, then chronic rheumatoid arthritis, and later Ankylosing spondylitis, which eventually caused bamboo spine (an inflammatory disease of the spine that causes parts to fuse).

There was some question as to whether this was caused by his war injury, but a file note in 1921 attributes his condition to 'War Operation. Disability permanent and progressive 100%.' (File M 80738, p.328)

Albert was admitted to Caulfield Hospital in 1921, and was still there in 1923, when he was admitted to the Anzac Hostel in North Road, Brighton. He lived there until his death at the age of 72 in 1966.

The Anzac Hostel opened in July 1919 after the Government purchased the *Kamesburgh* mansion with a charitable donation from the six Baillieu brothers, prominent Melbourne businessmen. The Hostel provided a comfortable home for totally and permanently incapacitated men whose disabilities required nursing care but no active medical treatment. In 1919 it had a capacity of twenty-five beds and employed seven nurses.

Many residents were what was known as 'cot cases' - bedridden or mobility impaired men. They had conditions such as paralysis, severe internal injuries or multiple limb amputations, sometimes in addition to emotional and mental conditions. Due to their high care needs, the families of these men were often unable to care for them in their own homes.

Albert's repatriation record shows that it was hard for him to walk. He was mostly confined to a wheel chair and from time to time walked with the aid of crutches. He was only able to wheel about one mile from the hostel in his wheelchair. He slept in an iron coach wheel bed with handle for raising himself up to a sitting position.

Albert was a very positive and independent person, and lived a rich and full social life. In 1929 he bought a Whippet car with his pension money. (In 1934 he changed to a Dodge Sports Coupe car, and in 1957 he applied for sales tax exemption to buy another car, an Austin A95 Saloon.) His car was specially modified so that he could get in and out of the passenger side. He arranged with the Repatriation Department for a garage to be built on the grounds of the Anzac Hostel. Between the 1930s and 1960s, he would apply for 'leave' (as his Repat file calls it) to spend several weeks annually (from Australia Day to Labour Day) visiting his brother Robert and his family at Echuca. The family lived on a 10-acre State Rivers property

in an area known as Echuca Village, since Robert was a water bailiff. Albert was not able to drive, but his friend Lena Houlden would drive him up on Australia Day and then catch the train back to Melbourne. She would return on Labour Day to collect him. Albert very much enjoyed these visits, which included fishing outings and visits to soldier friends with his brother. He was given his niece Phyllis' room when he stayed (she moved to a smaller room). Robert helped him in and out of bed, and washed him. Phyllis' mother made increasingly special meals for him, which had to be served at precise times (perhaps because he was diabetic – his diet sheet, dated around 1940, is on page 234 of his Repat file B73, H80738). He used crutches, and didn't bring a wheelchair with him. Phyllis and Albert kept in touch by letter between his visits, and they developed a very fond relationship. He gave her a watch when she was 14, in 1938, at the end of one of his visits, and on another occasion a handbag he had made for her. She uses it to this day, at the age of 89!

Phyllis remembers visiting Albert at the Anzac Hostel in Brighton with her parents. She never went into his room/ward, but saw him in public spaces. He was always on crutches, never in bed or a wheelchair.

After Robert retired in his 60s and moved into a new house with his family, Phyllis remembers, Albert hoped to leave Brighton and move in with them. However, her mother was conscious of the difficulties this would have presented to the family, and the move never eventuated.

Lena married someone else, and Albert became a god-father to one of her children. He left Lena the car in his will.

Albert Ward had 15 siblings (Phyllis says 7 boys and 5 girls) including a number younger than him. His father died in 1923 and his mother in 1934. Albert never married.

After 1945, Anzac Hostel became the home of the first of many disabled veterans of World War II until the hostel's closure on 30 June 1995.

Albert never talked about the war – at least not to his family such as his niece. But his great nephew indicated that Albert had come to terms with his disability and was a positive and outgoing person. Apparently on the media coverage of the Melbourne Anzac Day March each year the commentator would say 'Here comes Wardie!'

Albert died on 20 March 1966, aged about 72, of a heart attack while still a resident at the Anzac Hostel.

Details kindly provided to Margaret Royle by:

Deborah Tout-Smith

Senior Curator, Home & Community Life

Humanities Department

Museum Victoria

Emergency Warning on Ambulance Costs

ONE of our (Probus) members has drawn our attention to a potential problem with Ambulance cover.

One of his friends who is an aged-pensioner received a bill for \$8000 as a result of her husband being transferred from Knox Private Hospital in Wantirna to the Ringwood Private Hospital.

They thought that all of their ambulance needs were covered by the pension. However it appears that as from January 2014, the pension only covers emergency calls for ambulances and not calls classified as 'normal'

Our (Probus) member also checked his private health insurer to clarify their ambulance cover. The conditions of their cover states "Covered for admission or treatment at a hospital. The account must be coded and billed as emergency transportation by the ambulance service".

As a consequence, any normal transfer, for example, from a hospital to a rehabilitation centre is not free of charge.

The couple has now taken out membership with Ambulance Victoria, costing them \$82.60 per year for a married couple to cover the gap.

News of the changes in cover does, not appear to have been very widely publicised, so members are warned." that changes have taken place in the terms relating to ambulance cover , and it is recommended that you check to ensure that your existing arrangements provide the benefits you need.

Extracted from Victorian Probian August 2015

SENATOR MARISE PAYNE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

*from Department of Defence web page
www.minister.defence.gov.au/marise-biography/*



After growing up in Sydney and the NSW Southern Highlands, Senator Marise Payne went on to complete her education at MLC School, Burwood and her Bachelor of Arts and Laws at the University of NSW.

A member of the Liberal Party since 1982, Senator Payne

was the National Young Liberal Movement's first female President. She also served on the NSW Liberal State Executive for 10 years and at branch and electorate levels.

Having served as a political adviser to some of the most significant figures in Liberal politics of their time, Senator Payne went on to a career as a public affairs adviser in the finance industry. In 1997 Senator Payne filled a casual vacancy to represent the people of New South Wales in the Australian Senate, making her inaugural speech on 2 September 1997. She was then elected in 2001, 2007 and 2013.

Senator Payne has served as Shadow Minister for Indigenous Development and Employment, Shadow Minister for COAG [Council of Australian Governments] and Shadow Minister for Housing.

She plays an active role in the Senate and has been a member of both Joint and Senate committees, including as Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and as Chair of its Human Rights subcommittee.

In 2013 Senator Payne was appointed as Minister for Human Services and on 21 September 2015 she was appointed Australia's first female Minister for Defence.

Senator Payne was co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia (PFOD) group from its inception in 2003 until February

2011 and is currently co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Rugby League group.

Based in western Sydney for more than 10 years, Senator Payne has come to know the local community well and now works alongside local organisations and businesses to help the region develop its great potential.

Outside parliament, Senator Payne continues to work in the community on issues as diverse as human rights, emerging technologies and the implications of our ageing population.

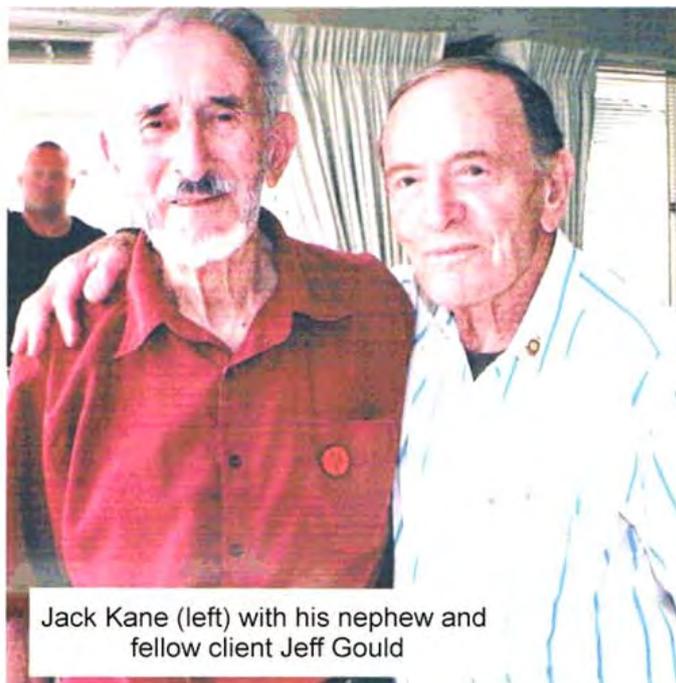
Away from politics, she is a committed fan of the St George/Illawarra NRL team and the Geelong Cats, an enthusiastic supporter of the arts in Australia, spends as much time as she can in the Southern Highlands and she cooks for therapy. Senator Payne and her partner live in a newly built home in Mulgoa.



French WWII Accolade for Man of Honour



mecwacare client and decorated army man Jack Kane (centre) at the Legion of Honour ceremony



Jack Kane (left) with his nephew and fellow client Jeff Gould

Jack Kane (*uncle of RAEME Assoc Vic Member Jeff Gould*) is just 10 years short of his century. He lives at home in Melbourne's outer suburbs and receives support around the home from *mecwacare*.

In July Jack, along with 25 other Australians, was awarded the Legion d' Honneur the French Legion of Honour - at a ceremony at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. He received the decoration of Chevalier, or Knight, for his service in the liberation operations of France during World War Two.

In November 1942 in the very middle of the Second World War, 17-year-old Jack joined the Middlesex Regiment in the British Army. After completing his initial training, and wooing and marrying a beautiful Army girl named Josie, he received his orders to head to France.

As a young Lance Corporal, Jack and his infantry platoon landed at Normandy in the early hours of 6 June 1944. The beach had been cleared of the enemy and they reached the shore safely. The platoon managed to bypass Axis strong points and successfully beat off a number of counter attacks. They encountered Romanian, Hungarian and Polish mercenaries who shot their German officers and surrendered when they came under attack.

"I have always believed that this was the day when I finished being a youth and became a man, and incidentally, started smoking and started growing my moustache," Jack said.

In the weeks and months that followed, Jack and his platoon fought to hold down three SS Panzer divisions to allow the United States Army to break out towards the Seine River.

This never eventuated and the platoon's Corporal was killed in an attack by a fighter. Jack was promoted in his place.

From here Jack fought on through Belgium and the Netherlands. One night after being made Lance Sergeant he and his men unwittingly joined a group of German tanks in the dark. The waterlogged ground meant they couldn't easily escape. Tensions inside the tank were very high until the men found a safe side road, turning off and avoiding detection by the Germans.

Following more battles on and around the German border Jack was promoted to Full Sergeant before his 21st birthday, and not long after this to Quartermaster Sergeant.

Jack and his men moved on through Germany as the Allies defeated the Axis powers, ultimately helping to liberate the concentration camp at Buchenwald. He finished his service as an instructor in Egypt before returning to civilian life.

Jack is now 90 years old. He has grandchildren and great-grandchildren who carry on the legacy of a courageous man who fought through one of the darkest times of the 20th century.

At *mecwacare* we are proud to know Jack and to be able to assist him with our home care services. Jack is self-sufficient but does need a hand with the heavier tasks around the house like cleaning the gutters, lawnmowing and vacuuming. Our support allows him to continue living in his own home. Just like the French government did earlier this year, we would like to say thank you to Jack for the sacrifices he made to make this world a better place.

We at *mecwacare* salute you.

The Plastic Brain and New Tricks



Extracted from: *Mens Health Peer Education Magazine: Vol 14 No. 2 Winter 2015*
Dept of Veterans Affairs

We know about plastics - some have called this the Plastic Age. From the plastic bag to plastic surgery, and in between the components of computers, cars, kitchens, kindergartens and fish bait. But, a plastic brain? The word means "able to be moulded", and our childhood experience with modelling clay gives us some idea - things that can change shape and take on new meanings or uses - plasticity.

Long, long ago in medical school I was taught that we were born with a fixed dose of brain cells. These grew to their full capacity during adolescence, and after that we lost them at a steadily increasing rate - a bit depressing really. Much less long ago my doctor daughter was taught much the same thing. We were also taught that cells in different areas of the brain had specific functions - and if that area was damaged then that function was compromised or lost forever. And it is still essentially true that a brain cell lost is lost forever. But wait, we now know more.

Brain cells have both a central "body", the axon, and a number of wavy branches or arms called dendrites, rather like an octopus. The arms tangle with those of other nerve cells to allow the flow of current which makes us function. If we lose brain cells - from injury, disease of ageing - nearby cells can sometimes reach out across the 'gap' and re-establish connections. Even better, our nerve cells are smarter, more flexible (plastic) than we were originally taught. They can sometimes take over the lost functions of nearby, damaged cells or 'grow new tentacles to re-establish lost connections, or make new ones. One half of the brain can even learn to do some work which was thought to be the exclusive job of the other half.

Great news. We don't automatically get dumber as we get older. But, as you have guessed, this means that we have to do some work. Neuroplasticity - the capacity of brains to adjust, repair or learn new skills- is more likely to help us if we help our brains. This is my brainy daughter's list of what helps our brains to get smarter. (And if you have met some of these before, well, Medicine is really boring).

The right amount of sleep average more than six and less than ten hours.

- *Enough exercise - at least 3 x 30 minutes huff and puff each week.*
- *Not too much booze - more days with two or fewer drinks and some dry days.*
- *More fresh, colourful food. The Mediterranean diet is ideal*

The rest of the list is the "brain specials"

- *Keep up social contacts and try to make new ones: this is really important.*
- *Exercise - Yes, that again! Think about the brain signals involved in just walking motion, breathing, balancing, the weather, where we are and who with ...and all without "thinking".*
- *Look after your general health: especially if diabetes or blood pressure or mental stresses are already present.*

And by no means least: get into "brain training". look up "Neuroplasticity" on the web to find fun games intended to stretch and grow your mental muscles. Or take up new activities which challenge your thinking and concentration (enough, but not too much) to grow a better connected brain.

You will not become Einstein overnight but you are likely to have a more interesting and enjoyable time. Give your plastic brain a chance to show what it can really do. Go on, you old dog.

**Dr Tony Ireland FRACP, OVA Medical Adviser,
With Dr Catriona Ireland FRACP.**

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www.vic.raeme.org.au/html/corps_merchandise.html

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

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