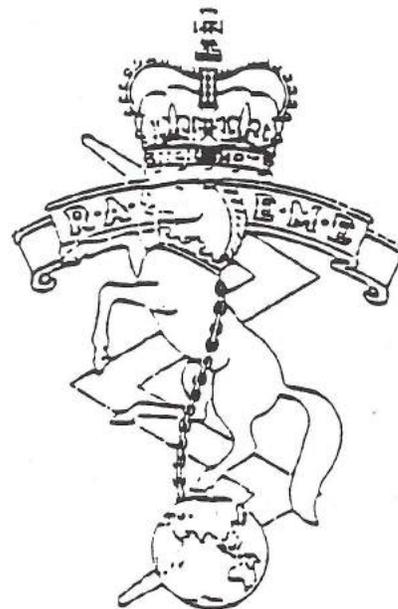
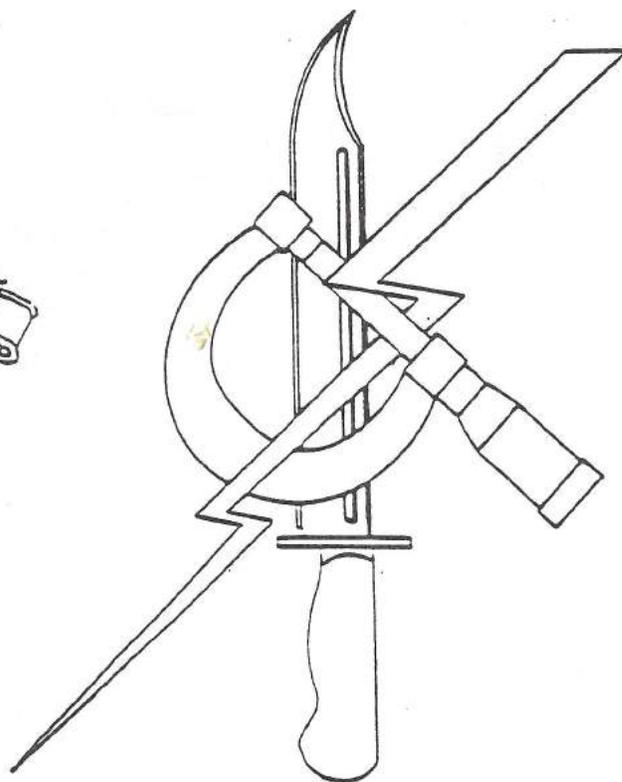
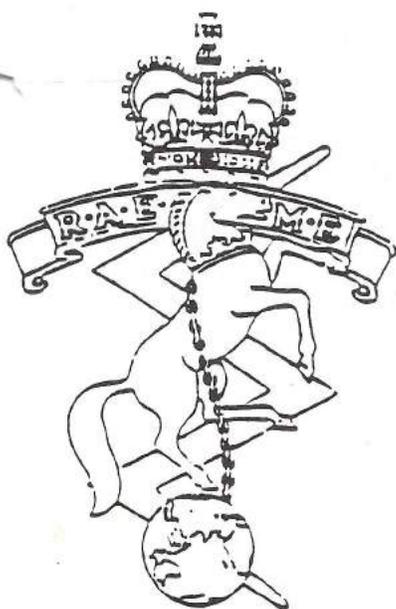


THE LIGHTNING FLASH

Pres Col John Lee RFD ED (Ret'd)

ISSUE 2
MARCH 1992

Editor Capt Bob Hunter (Ret'd)



CRAFTSMAN
and
SOLDIER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE RAEME ASSOCIATION (VIC)
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The message is, that all members of the Association are eligible, invited and encouraged to march in the ANZAC parade through the streets of Melbourne to the Shrine. In this way the Association meets the main purpose for which it was established. That is, "To preserve the memory of comrades who have died on service".

It is fully understood and appreciated that many members are committed to local marches and services, some to marching with their "old unit" and others are committed to quiet reflection in the privacy of their own homes. This message, therefore, goes to those not so committed to other activities but requiring a little encouragement to come and march with the RAEME Association.

It is also a great opportunity to bring along a potential member to share our thoughts and memories on this day.

The RAEME Association has always participated in the ANZAC march, however, the numbers on parade have not been in the expected proportion to the total number of members. Let us change all that. If you are not committed to other ANZAC activities, PLEASE come and march with the Association and, if possible, bring along a potential member.

The details of the ANZAC march are contained in this issue. Hope to see you on parade; all the best,
Your President
John.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

The following is an extract from a very interesting booklet entitled;

"THE STORY OF THE 2/2 ARMY FIELD WORKSHOPS" written by

BRIGADIER GEORGE MORAN OBE

(Printed in Melbourne in 1964)

This is part of a story of Australian civilians, Engineers and Tradesmen, who joined the Army, were trained as soldiers and then applied both of those skills throughout WW11 with distinction.

It begins - When approval to raise the 2/2 Army

Field Workshops was first given, its three recovery sections were to have been raised in Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales and the Main Shop in Victoria. At that time the 'Phoney War' ended, rapid expansion of the AIF began, and significant to such units as this one, rigid manpower controls were eased and highly trained technical men could be selected to very rigid standards. The sections in the northern states became the nucleus for the 2/3 A.Fd.Wksp. and, for the 2/2, two

sections were raised in South Australia and one in Victoria. In addition, light aid detachments of 7 Australian Division and Corps Troops were initially trained with the larger main shop or sections.

The unit really became an entity when Brigadier, then Major Chapman and I had permission to enlist in the AIF on 2 May in the depressing year of 1940 when every trick seemed to go to the enemy. We set up in a tent with a table and form in the car park at Caulfield Racecourse and selection

and organization of a team of high grade men began. At night in the well-lit but cold grandstand we made an untried war establishment into a unit plan. We had little to guide us in this organization but the most apt advice in the Ordnance Manual (War) gave a very good answer: 'Flexibility must be the keynote in our work'. It was also clear that junior leaders in technical fields must also be the military section leaders.

Invasion of Holland and Belgium began on 10 May 1940 and soon western defence was crumbling. Like many others we were deeply stirred when grave voiced volunteer soldiers told their reasons for enlistment. Men of widely different political views and education showed their quality and united outlook. Not 'vocally patriotic' or jingoist they showed themselves worthy of their homeland and heritage.

I had known W.D. Chapman for many years as one of Australia's 'top' engineers but at this time and during the years that followed I, and many others, were to learn of his great leadership characteristics. His human understanding, quick perception and his sense of humour were inspirations to us and we knew that we were fortunate to have him as our unit commander and later Chief Ordnance Mechanical Engineer of HQ. AIF. Middle East.

The C.O., then Lt. Col Chapman, left on tour of the states with the involved task of organizing other mechanical engineering units and sub-units throughout Australia. Meanwhile, the tented HQ in the car park grew to a large unit with officers well qualified technically, and men in trade postings with high-grade apprenticeships and years of practice: in many cases as foremen and leading hands. The non-tradesmen were also first class selections.

Early in June the unit moved to a spacious area of the Williamstown Racecourse with vast training fields. It would be difficult, though, to imagine a less comfortable site for men who had just left the comforts of civil life. At first men slept in open grandstands but later used the horse boxes after partially sealing with tarred paper. Bitter winds from Port Philip Bay gave foretastes of the rough side of service life.

Captain Bryceson and WO. Bourke with the aid of others raised regimental work to a high standard before the embarkation.

Lectures gave guidance in technical maintenance of army equipment to men highly 'civilian trained' and courses were given at army workshops and civilian firms.

The few with army training did much to inculcate others with the knowledge and code of the soldier. Not least, those with experience of orderly room and storehouse procedures helped the keen-to-learn young Australians in these aspects of army life.

Mistakes were made, inevitably, but they were few and the unit quickly developed a character and, I feel I may call it: a 'SOUL'

The unit, at the beginning of August had its Main Shop with the HQ, General Engineering, Mechanical Transport and Instrument-Radio Sections; and with No. 4 Recovery Section at Williamstown, while Nos. 5. and 6. Recovery Sections were at Woodside Camp, near Adelaide. The light aid detachments, which had been enlisted and given their preliminary training with the larger units had been posted to parent units for permanent attachment. The unit equipment, including trailers with their fine machine tools, the stores lorries with stock the hand tools and normal military stores, were fairly complete in accord with tables prepared before the war.

This 'War Materiel' which was to serve us so well in the field, had been designed without experience of modern war. I want to pay tribute to those in civil industry who helped us so wholeheartedly before war's inevitability became obvious. In particular I would like to mention General Motors-Holdens, the Ford Motor Company, the Victorian and South Australian Railways (the V.R. actually loaned a drawing office with full staff when war finally began.) the firm of AWA and McGrath Trailers. They and other firms gave invaluable aid to the small, overworked design & experimental team. In general, the army's vehicles were adaptations of civil road lorries and vans with strengthened chassis, large singles instead of dual tyres and downgraded in load capacity. It is remarkable that they behaved so well as they did in forward areas.

The vehicles were shipped at Melbourne on the S.S. Westralia, a one time German freighter. (not HMAS Westralia) and they reached Haifa before the unit got to Suez. This shipment provided the first well-fitted mobile workshop in the M.E. Theatre.

Where are the survivors of 2/2 Army Field Workshops? Some of them are on our members list but where are the others? What can 2/2 members tell us about their Unit?, anything authentic, not so authentic, humorous or historical information of any kind. Such information will be of immense interest to the rest of the Association.

50TH ANNIVERSARY

1992 is the 50th anniversary of RAEME and planning has been underway for some time on a number of events which should provide a national focus during the Golden Jubilee Year. In order that 1992 becomes a year to remember for all past and presently serving personnel and those with long standing affiliations with AEME and RAEME, it will be necessary for regional committees and associations to conduct supporting events to facilitate maximum participation.

Corps Commemorative Service.

This united drumhead service has already been conducted during the recent visit by the Queen and Prince Phillip during February.

Corps History Release.

"Craftsmen of the Australian Army - The History of RAEME" will be launched shortly. At this stage it is planned to hold the launch at the Australian War Memorial due to the support and sponsorship provided by that organisation. It is anticipated that the CGS may be invited to launch the book. Copies of the book may be ordered using the pro-forma at the rear of this Flash.

50th Anniversary Parade.

This event will take place on 27th November 1992 at the RAEME Training Centre. The parade will be the highlight of a two day 'Back to Bandiana' which will include displays of equipment (old and new), tours of the training facilities of the Army College of TAFE and the RAEME Training Centre, museum tours, and a number of social activities. Parade participants will be drawn from all regions of Australia. Your Committee has lined up an opportunity to travel to Bandiana for these events, including accomodation, so indicate your intentions PROMPTLY on the pro forma at the rear.

Corps Rugby Tour

RAEME has been invited to participate with sister Corps in a REME sponsored carnival to be held in the UK and we will be hearing more about this event as the time approaches.

Promotions

An advertising campaign has been instituted to promote our Golden Jubilee and the following will be available;

A 50th Anniversary Logo,

Advertising posters,

Golden Jubilee Port, and

Tee-shirts with logo.

More details as they come to hand.

ANZAC

Details of the ANZAC day march are shown on the next page. Assembly at the corner of Russell and Collins Streets, as indicated, behind the NG Forces at 1000hrs. Order of march is between NG Forces and the start of the RAAF participants.

The President urges all members to make an effort to join the marchers and represent your Corps and this Association without, of course, foregoing any previous committments.

The route of the march is unchanged from last year.

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Since taking on the role of Secretary I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with many members of the Association with whom I would not normally be in contact, especially country or interstate members.

To mention a few;

Jack Hand - Coorinya Qld.

Horace Caddick (Curly) - Connors Creek.

Bob Young - Woolgoolga.

John McCoubie - Yarraville.

The Committee are keen and interested to hear from our members, their whereabouts and their current activities. As Curly Caddick has told us he has just turned 86, has turned his hand to poetry (some samples are in this edition) and he was just getting over a party at his local RSL.

Yes we are interested and concerned about the welfare of, not only the ex-service personnel, but their wives and families. If we can communicate on any subject, whether it be functions, war stories, help required by members families or whatever. We are here to support and assist, so I invite you to write and let us know how you are.

In relation to our 50th Birthday we have ordered copies of the book "Craftsmen of the Australian Army - The Story of RAEME". A hard cover copy will be available for members to read and in this Flash is a form that gives you a chance to buy a personal copy of the book.

On 24th February the RAEME Commemorative United Drum-head Service was held at the Australian War Memorial which was attended by the Colonel in Chief of the Corps of RAEME, HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh as principle guest.

The service was conducted on the forecourt of the AWM in the Commemorative area. Max Moore attended this service as our representative and no doubt will give us a report in our next newsletter. Unfortunately, due to late notice, we were not able to advise members and make arrangements to attend the ceremony. We intend to complain to the Corps Committee.

On 27th November a function will be held at Bandiana, in the form of a parade followed by an open day on 30th at both Army College of TAFE and RAEME Training Centre (See Social Report)

Well, that's enough from me for this edition; looking forward to receiving your communications, OOPS - don't forget our Re-union on ANZAC eve and family day at Oakleigh Barracks on ANZAC day. (See Social Report).

Bye for now;
Bruce Williams,
Secretary.

OBITUARY

Since our last edition it is with deep regret that we advise of the death of one of our members on 25 January 92. We extend deepest sympathy to those nearest and dearest to;

LEO GALVIN of 28 Whitworth Ave, Springvale 3171.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

All members in arrears with their subscriptions for the year 1991/92 have been contacted so that they may inform the committee of their intentions. If you fall into this category would you PLEASE respond so that we may keep an accurate register of members which is not only a necessity for good management but is a lawful requirement for an incorporated Association.

To get a membership drive under way the President has given all committee members the task of contacting at least five potential members with a view to signing them up before the next committee meeting.

We appeal to all members to encourage and enlist others to join. The stronger our membership the more opportunity we have of satisfying the purposes for which we are established as an Association (see our mission statement).

ANZAC FUNCTIONS

The RAEME Association annual reunion will be held on ANZAC eve at the Oakleigh barracks in the main building - follow the signs. Cost will be \$10:00 which includes food and drink - top shelf drinks will be at half normal bar prices.

On ANZAC day transport has been arranged to and from the dawn service following which breakfast will be on at the depot. A separate dawn service will also be held at the depot and members are welcome to attend. Transport will be available to and from the march and the Committee urges all members of the Association to march. The assembly point is shown on the map in this issue of the Flash.

If you wish to sleep at the depot on ANZAC eve you MUST fill in and post to the Secretary the pro-forma on the back page. A family day will be held on ANZAC day at the depot, so come along with your family and join your fellow members and renew old friendships.



MAIL BAG

Thank you to those members have written to me with comments and suggestions about our first issue. The expressions of interest make the editorial task seem worth while and the suggestions are being considered and developed for future use.

One of those suggestions from "Tiny" was to recall some of the nick-names we used over the years. An intriguing idea that will have to be handled with care; some people can be sensitive about the names they are called, in jest, by other members. (Our President has a most unkind method of addressing me on the phone and one day it may embarrass him) I will, with your assistance, compile a list and then the challenge will be for you to identify each of them.

Another of our members has written a number of poems, one of which is in this issue; thanks Curly. Curly Caddick has recently celebrated his 86th birthday and when he wrote the letter he was still recovering from the party at the local RSL. He has published poems, a book, lumped wheat, been a woodcutter as well as qualifying as a licenced Electrician. He lives at Cannon Creek and would be delighted to see any members who may be in that area.

Many of you will remember "the man with the abacus" Tony See. Tony retired from the ARES a couple of years ago and more recently from his job with the SEC. He is to take up a full time Bible study course to persue a new direction in life. From all of us Tony, best of luck and, from the experiences we had together, I am sure you will make a success of your new career.

THE TELEPHONE

I wake up bright and cheerful
With my body's healthy tone,
But then kind thoughts disappear,
Disturbed by the telephone.

Then sitting on the toilet
Thinking, how can I atone,
Apologise to the lady?
Or to the silent telephone

One arm in my dressing gown,
As I struggle on alone
And reach out in a hurry,
For, a silent telephone.

When you are disadvantaged,
Showering, or on the throne,
Why are people so thoughtless
In using your telephone.

"Oh well, into the shower",
Then the dog barks, for a bone,
I step out, and hear ringing,
It's the blessed telephone.

Or when I set off for work,
Lock the door and leave my home,
I can't get back quick enough
To that ringing telephone.

Quite naked when I reach it
Thinking I am all alone,
Till my cleaning lady coughs,
And I curse that telephone.

As I fumble for the key
It's still ringing merrily,
I scoot across real quick
But the ear piece just says
"CLICK"

It just isn't good enough
For these super modern homes,
That people should be harrassed
By such stupid telephones.

PROFILE OF A MEMBER

HAROLD RONALD (RON) BYRON joined his first army unit on 5th October 1938, his 18th birthday. The Unit was 2 Fd Sqn RAE 2 Cav Div.

At the outbreak of war Ron tried to join the Airforce but was sent home to finish his Turning and Fitting apprenticeship with the Victorian Railways. On 27th April 1940 he joined the AIF and was allocated to the 2/2 Australian Railways Construction Company.

Three weeks later he sailed on the "Stratheden" to England via Capetown. While at sea Italy joined the war and Dunkirk was evacuated. In January 1941 it was a long trip to the Middle East via Durban. Ron saw service in Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon. After Alamein Ron was returned to Melbourne on a hospital ship.

1943 was a time for retraining and then his Unit was sent to the NT to prepare the supply route for planned operations to the immediate north-west of Australia. These operations, in fact, never eventuated.

Life was a little slow for young Byron so he joined 1st Aust Parachute Bn and had just finished his training when the Atomic Bomb was dropped on Japan.

Ron was discharged on 7th Sept 1945 to resume his career with the Railways. By 1949 he had completed Diplomas in both Mechanical and Electrical Engineering as a Re-hab student at Footscray Tech. During this time he also met and married Gwen who had served in the AWAS during WW11 in a Sigs Unit.

The Korean War started and some of Ron's mates from the Parachute Bn had joined so Ron enlisted in the Interim Army on 21st August 1950 with the intention of joining them.

Instead of Korea, Capt Byron and his wife, Gwen, were off to England where Ron was to attend courses and serve with the B.O.A.R. In 1954 it was back to Melbourne, posted to RAEME Broadmeadows, with the rank of Major. The following year he was posted to RAEME Training Centre as Company Commander and Instructor.

In 1956 "Out of the blue" Ron received a letter from the late Mr W G Penney, the Director of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, advising him that he had been appointed a member of the Scientific party that would be responsible for testing Atomic Bombs at Maralinga. During the testing (four atomic explosions) Ron's job was to determine the effect of such explosions on military vehicles and equipments.

In 1959 Ron resigned from the ARA and joined the CMF where he served as CREME 3 Div, later promoted to Colonel and appointed Commander Support Group.

In civilian life Ron joined the Dept of Supply as Engineer in Charge of Mechanical Testing Laboratories at Maribyrnong. In 1963 he was promoted to Supervising Engineer then in 1965 transferred to Dept of Works as Assistant Director General, Papua New Guinea. Following this stint Ron attended Administrative Staff College, Mt Eliza.

Off to Darwin in 1969 as Assistant Director NT Region. Along came Cyclone Tracey and the destruction of Darwin in the aftermath of which Ron took a leading role in the provision of emergency services and the re-construction of Darwin. Promotions followed, to Director General Works Vic & Tas, in 1977, then to Director of Operations and General Works, Canberra in 1978 until a well earned retirement in 1980.

Ron has always been a keen athlete, his great love being distance running in which as late as 1980 he won the senior section of a 10km run.

Unfortunately Ron is on our Lightning Flash sick parade as you will find elsewhere in this edition.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Ken James, because of the pressure of his employment, has asked to stand down from his job on the Committee. Members would remember that over the years ken has given us great support as our "Man on the ground" at Chapel St. Thanks Ken, we hope that sometime in the future you will see the way clear to once again serve on the Committee.

In accordance with the provisions of our Constitution and Rules the Committee has appointed S/Sgt Allan Freeth (105 Fd Wksp) to serve on the Committee until the AGM.

SICK PARADE

As reported in our last issue, Ron Byron is not in the best of health. Ron's wife, Gwen, may be contacted on Tel No 8038407.

Jack (Darkie) Edwards has been in and out of Repat and Austin hospitals since our last issue. Darkie had an "open ticker job" and is home recovering very well, he must be, he has thrown his walking away and is starting to argue again. He can be contacted on Tel No 580 7794.

REMINDER

The "Lightning Flash" is a means of keeping us all informed, so members, please keep the Secretary informed of any matters requiring action. The Secretary will either address the matter personally or contact the appropriate sub-committee. On matters concerning the "Lightning Flash" please contact the Editor.

WELFARE AND BETTERMENT

In our last issue under the heading "Can you help" we called your attention to the problems that befell Ken Kermonde while he was away. While the offers of help have been much appreciated by Ken and his wife the problem is still there. So come on all you members, look around your place and see if there is anything you dont really need and that may help Ken, if so ring Jim McFarlane on 579 3529 and he will co-ordinate the offers.

If you know of any other members who may require our help please let the Secretary know and he will investigate and see what can be done.

THE BOYS FROM THE BUSH

We grew up uncomplaining about our life in the bush.
It was happy and simple compared with the city's push
We got up early in the morn from our chaff or wheat bag beds,
You may think this was hardship but it stood us in good stead.

Dad worked around for cockies, he was paid two pounds per week,
Mum and eight children to keep, food was difficult to seek.
Bran and pollard for breakfast, rabbits for dinner and tea,
Sometimes a fish from the creek and sometimes some poultry.

We grew up strong and sturdy and worked hard for our country.
When the call came for soldiers we were tops in the country.
Two AWAS and six privates, Mom was hardest done by,
Shedding gallons of tears when it came to say goodbye.

At first it was so much fun, in the Quarter Masters store,
With the uniforms too small and hat size up to a score.
Then we met a big Sergeant, we were big, he was bigger,
We couldn't do anything right till we squeezed the trigger.

We were champion marksmen shooting kangaroos and pigs,
The Sergeant became friendly, we weren't really stupid gigs.
He said we could be snipers for an extra bob a day,
Knocking off the enemy, we said it was not our way.

To shoot at sitting targets, the Sergeant he sure got mad,
He'd put us on an "A four" and punishment would be bad.
Then he softened up a bit, he'd like to make a bargain
He would get the foe to jump, or make a hop, a step or run.

Selection parade a gem, this is where the Army shone
Putting square pegs in round holes for Sergeants to practice on
Even our two bush sisters were drafted to base workshops
Six brothers separated, one a gunner for nine mile drops.

Brother Bill was ecstatic till he saw a 4.5
The size of the well oiled breech and shells that went in live.
Three brothers for Infantry and two lowly pioneers.
No doubt we were real hill-billies, the Sergeant shed many tears.

They corrected our hygiene, a daily shower was the norm.
Stand closer to the razor or be sorry you were born.
Parade grounds were our Mecca, falling into serried ranks,
Lining up with the marker, stepping on each others shanks

We learned what discipline meant and learned to be good soldiers,
Then sailed for glory, or death, to conquer our enemies.
We fought alongside Corn-Stalks the NSW Eastern State,
The Sand-Gropers from the West, Crow-Eaters from South Aussie State.

Gum-suckers from Victoria, Taswegians from the Apple Isle,
Queensland Banana Benders, Territory men with style.
Australia be thankful that you had such men as these,
For the Army and the Airforce, the Navy to brave the seas.

Curly Caddick

CORPS HISTORY

"Craftsmen of the Australian Army - THE story of RAEME" will be available in two volumes. You can place your order now at 1990 prices by filling out the order form below and returning it to;

SO1 CORPS
J-4-03
RUSSELL OFFICES
CANBERRA ACT 2600

I would like to ensure my copies of "Craftsmen of the Australian Army - The Story of RAEME" by ordering;

----- copies of the leather bound, gold embossed and cased edition @ \$142:00.

---- copies of the hard covered standard edition @ \$32:50

Name _____ Address _____

Cheque or money order should be made payable to: The RAEME Corps Fund"

BUS TRIP

The Secretary RAEME Association. I would like to participate in the bus trip to Bandiana as advertised in the Lightning Flash March Issue.

NAME _____ Address _____

Please advise of confirmation of booking and manner of payment when finalised.

ANZAC REUNION ACCOMODATION

I (Name) _____ will be in attendance at the Oakleigh barracks re-union on 24 Apr 1992 and require accomodation for that evening.

I wil/will not be participating in the breakfast to be supplied by the Association at the depot on 25 April.



THE LIGHTNING FLASH

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