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NO. 7. NOVEMBER 1981





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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS



VOL. 1 NO. 7

DECEMBER 1981

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EDITORIAL



Congratulations to the winners in our 'best article competition', your cheques will be forwarded shortly. Without detracting from the successful contributors, I do consider that everyone that has contributed an article (whether published or not) is a winner, after all, they are the ones that have kept our magazine alive.

You will notice a change in our cover design, it was to be a full page photograph, with title and badge superimposed; however, for technical reasons it was not possible for this issue (budding photographers who wish to see their work immortalised please note - colour slides are required). There are several technical reasons for the proposed change (now scheduled for our next issue) but the editorial board is interested in our comments on cover design.

On the subject of Editorial Boards the present one is about to dissolve—well almost. Mr Derek Peachey (our very capable red pen and white-out wielder), WO1 Trevor Harris (our over-worked secretary), Maj Kev Harvey and yours truly are all departing the Canberra scene. I know that I speak for all of us when I say how much we have enjoyed our contact with the Craftsman and through it our contact with members of the Corps—past and present. We thank you all for your support.

We have gained one new member of the team since our last issue, Maj Lou Gostelow from MEA who is our front man in Melbourne in direct contact with the publisher. Welcome on board (pardon the pun) Lou.

Finally, I would like to welcome, on your behalf, the new editor Lt Col Mike Caldwell. I am sure that with the same support you have given me in presenting our Corps Magazine, he will derive the same degree of personal satisfaction that I have experienced.

The Editorial Board extends to all our readers best wishes for Christmas 1981.

COVER:

Cfn Bob Turner servicing an Allison engine at 5 Base Workshop Battalion. Photo by Cfn Close.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Reviewing the past thirty-nine years of our Corps I am taken with the way in which it has continued to meet its responsibilities whilst evolving in an ever changing Defence scene with constantly varying commitments to accord with Government policy. The Corps was conceived during World War II to meet a specific need by centralising electrical and mechanical engineering skills and associated disciplines.

This centralisation of skills, tools, equipment, facilities and responsibilities provides an essential resource for force commanders at all levels to meet a wide range of operational demands. Our organisation, based on static and mobile units, together with our desire to maintain the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness has ensured a high standard of professionalism, trade training and execution. This in turn has attracted continuing praise of which we have a right to be proud.

There will continue to be difficult times ahead; there has been and there will continue to be insufficient resources for everything we may need. We will always be required to cope with new equipment and thus new skills and techniques. I hope to see some new facilities being provided in the near future and know that conditions of service and rates of pay are presently under review and I continue to hold an optimistic view for the future. As a cohesive, enthusiastically led and motivated force at all levels, I am confident we as a Corps, will continue to meet the demanding tasks expected of our Corps of Craftsmen; thereby enabling the various Army objectives to be achieved.

To all military and civilian members associated with the Corps; thank you for your dedication, and to you and all your loved ones, may I extend Seasons Greetings for a safe and happy Christmas and a mutually profitable and prosperous New Year.

J.E. Faulks
Director General



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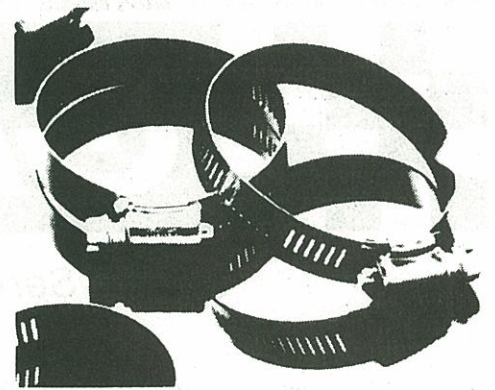
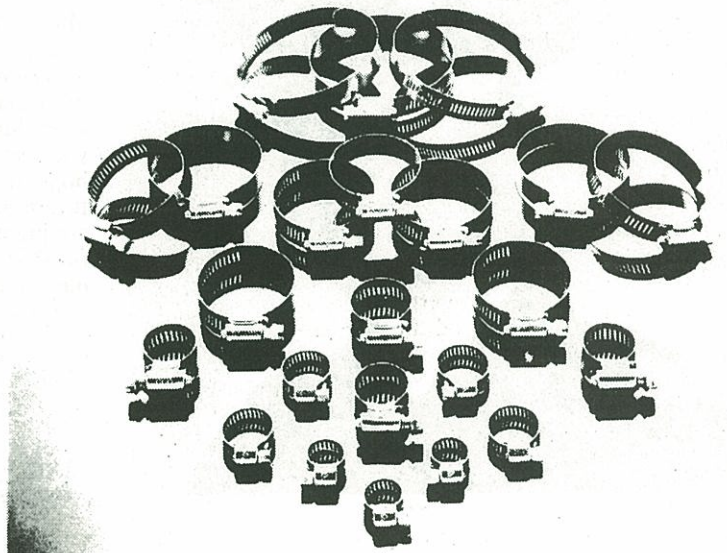
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Regarding Lt. Col Verne Claxton's letter which moves me to question the last sentence.

"The first Instructors at Electrical Wing, Bandiana in 1957." I attended 2/54 ARA Advanced Instrument Equipment Course from 11 January 1954 to 6 August 1954 at the same time as Advanced Electrical and Telecommunications courses were being conducted.

The instructors I remember at the time were: Verne Claxton, Fred Watts, Fred Brown, Alan Bishop, David 'Scholar' Watkinson and Dave Belsen with Charlie Meredith as OC of the wing.

Students I remember were: Arthur Eva, Eddie Nugent, Bill Brooker, John 'Shorty' McLaughlan, Danny Danvers, Ron Edibone, 'Rick' Rickards, Bill Chalmers, Sid Butler, John 'Lofty' Cummins, 'Abie' McLean, Angus Johnson and, of course, myself. My apologies to those I have forgotten.

As you will see, both Ron Edibone and John Cummins were students then.

I must point out that Bauert's Bog was started at this time, as were the Tennis Court and the hobby of digging out onion weeds around 3 Shop.

Colin McAllister,
2/9 Ford Street, Queanbeyan, NSW, 2620

P.S.

Dates were taken from my AAB 89, a copy of which is attached.

EDITOR: *Who are we to argue such documentary evidence of courses? Of course, it doesn't confirm the students of the day and we can only hope our readers can help in this regard!*

Sir,

I refer to RTC Jottings (Vol. 1 No. 6 page 21).

Has RAEME Training Centre come up with the ultimate in camouflage?

The text of the Corps Centrepiece article states, and I quote . . . "The photo shows Mr Spencer holding his mockup which was produced in a couple of days." unquote.

Where is Mr Spencer? Under the mockup—or that well concealed that we just cannot see him?

C.J. Harris, Cpl.,
Puckapunyal Wksp Coy.

EDITOR: *For all those eagle-eyed correspondents that noticed our slip-up on the Corps Centrepiece (we only hear from them when something goes wrong) we admit our error. Two photographs were submitted. The wrong one was printed.*

Sir,

Recently I was most fortunate to have a copy of "The RAEME Craftsman" lent to me by an ARES officer who works with me at ALCOA, Pinjarra, West Australia.

I was pleasantly surprised to read such a fine magazine produced by the 'Royal' Corps.

Just as pleasing was to find the names of old friends mentioned in various articles and have some fond memories recalled.

I notice that 'Paddy' O'Leary can still raise a chuckle with his magic pen and that Kev Harvey is putting his journalistic skills to good use.

The only 'pick' that I have on the magazine is the absence

of an address for correspondence—and that I haven't had my hands on a copy sooner.

Congratulations on a fine magazine.

Allan Cook (ex-capt.)

90 Foreshore Drive, Singleton, W.A. 6211

EDITOR: *Many thanks for your kind words. We are always please to hear from former members of the Corps who, we believe, must have some tales to relate, too. How about joining our list of authors? Your details have now been included on our mailing list. See Secretary's Corner for the address that you may wish to forward an article to.*

Sir,

I have been most fortunate to obtain copies 1 to 5 (Vol. 1) of this terrific magazine.

As an ex-member of the Corps of RAEME, in which I served for twenty years, I am most impressed by the contents and articles forwarded for publication.

I wish to enquire if it is possible to purchase copies of "The RAEME Craftsman" as they are published. I find they are not only interesting reading but also keeps one abreast of the whereabouts of personnel with whom I have served over the years.

Trusting you can assist me with my enquiries.

R. Kempshot,
82 Irene Parade, Norrville, NSW, 2263
Formerly 29366 SSGT R. Kempshot of Singleton Workshop Platoon. Discharged 6th January 1977.

EDITOR: *We are more than a little pleased to hear your views on the magazine which seem to confirm we are achieving what we set out to achieve. Thank you. However, copies are not for sale. Instead they are distributed to all members and ex-members included on our distribution list. Your name has now been included, too.*

Sir,

I refer to information supplied by Major Jackson (Vol.1 No. 5) and the photograph presented.

I must confess my recent bout of shingles has left me dim-sighted but not, I'm pleased to say, permanently.

However, even with the aid of a magnifier, I am unable to recognise any particular face.

Joe Quirk was well known to me both during the altercations and after when a number of us met regularly at the Old Clubhouse on Cook's River in an effort to preserve friendships and, as the nucleus of something greater.

I have prepared a list of names that would be familiar to most of those at Paddington Workshop in June '40—the time of my enlistment.

It amounts to about 65 names out of, perhaps, the 81 shown in the photograph. It is possible that many faces depicted had moved to other places before that date.

I also spent many days with 'Stoker' John Dawson, but even his face, though pointed out to me, is beyond my memory. Dawson went to Darwin before returning to Avoca Street Workshop under Andy Snedden and was engaged, therein, in setting up the 6" Navels on Cruciforms in that area. Jackie Fraser was involved in the 9.2" at Port Charles. The pedestals were set awaiting the 'pieces' but they went to a watery grave when the RMS Ceramic was sunk in the Bay of Bengal. In the last sentence—re, the Ceramic, I could be wrong and will be only too pleased to stand corrected.

On returning to Sydney, John Dawson was involved at the secret installation at Malabar, as well as being ASM to the 6" and 9.2" installations south of the Sydney harbour.

It should be borne in mind that the only view one ever got

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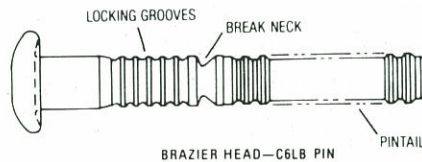
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of his Army pals was 'in the Army Blues'. Uniformed figures were seldom seen in the Workshop proper, thereby minimising the chances of immediate recognition.

It was on the 1st August 1938 that the "proofshoot" preparation was begun at Cape Banks. The actual shoot, three rounds per gun at emplacements 16 and 17. One round in maximum depression, one at zero elevation and one at maximum elevation were fired on the 10th August. I think all work prior to and subsequent to the firing was carried out by the then, Sgt Frankie Batten, who completed all maintenance by the 17th August, 1938.

John Drummon (alias Bullpup),
65 Kleins Road, Northmead, NSW, 2152

NAMES REMEMBERED: Sgt Ellis, Sgt Nelson, Sgt Batten, Trevor Roland, Harold Baxter, George Bardsley, Jimmy Wendon, Capt Fortune, Major Loveday, 'Cascara' Wright (a Pom), Colonel Wright, Jack Scott, Jackie Fraser, Lionel Cunningham, Wally Scutts, Louis McKay, Fred Wheatley, Capt. Phillips, Noel Hayes, Sergeant Major Thompson, Alex Barber, Charlie Mason, 'Snow' Birks, Jackie Mathers, App. Jack Kettlewell, App. Norm McNiven, Jack Hales (Blacksmith), Mervyn Doorhau, Capt. Russell, Capt. Carlysle, Andy Snedden, Fred Skenes, Colonel Izzard, Alf Spring, 'Old' Ben the labourer, Ted Lennard, Joe Quirk, Fred Bartlett, Jack Cartwright, Bruce McAlpine, Bill Elphinstone, Dick Wearne, Em Green, Athol Lowe, Russ Little, 'Ossie' Ocks, Jack Taylor who won the DSO in WW1 and, surnames only—Bouffler, Clarke, Green, McInerney, Rebecca, Walton, Botting, Flack and Frazer.

EDITOR: *Many thanks again, BULLPUP! I wonder how many*

of those you name ever get a chance to read our magazine? Or, come to that, how many can help you in identifying those faces? I'm sure every one of them has a tale or two to include in our pages.

ARES READERS

Dear Sir,

Recently I was reading a copy of the RAEME Craftsman and was disappointed to notice an absence of material from ARES RAEME units. Further investigation as to why this may have occurred revealed that a number of ARES units either did not receive copies of the magazine, or did not even know it existed.

I believe that many of the activities which ARES RAEME units participate in are very newsworthy and would be good stories for the Corps magazine. I feel sure that if RAEME personnel in the ARES received copies of the magazine, it would encourage them to contribute to it. This would certainly be of benefit to all members of the Corps.

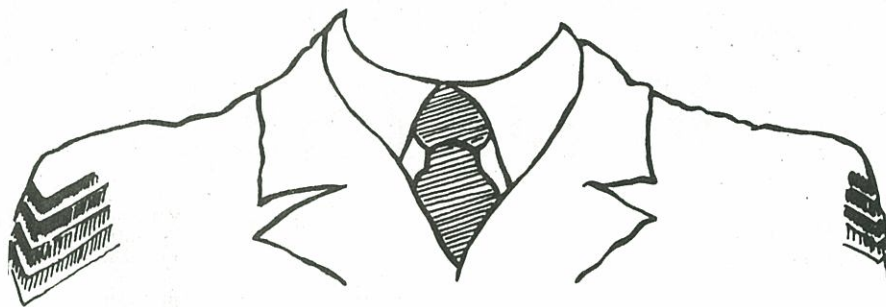
If this change occurs, I will look forward to seeing an increase in Army Reserve contributions in future volumes of the Corps magazine.

J.H. Lee, Col.

Chairman 3MD RAEME (ARES) Corps Planning Committee.

EDITOR: *Yes, we are sure you are correct in saying that ARES RAEME units can contribute newsworthy and interesting articles. But we cannot publish them if we don't receive them. The units you mentioned in your letter have been placed on the distribution list. Thank you.*

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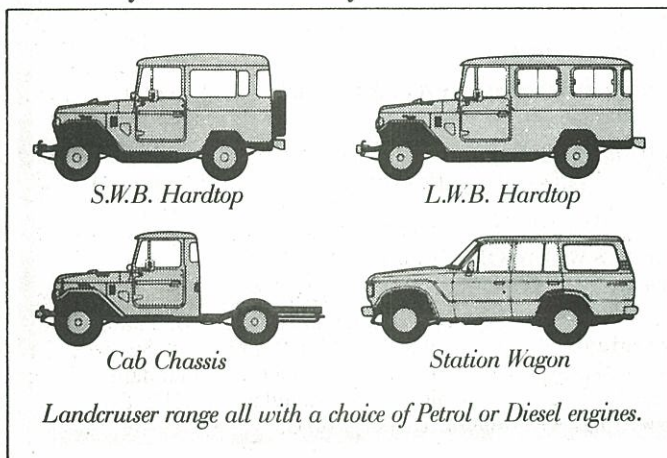
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The Corps Committee

by Col. Schoeffler

What is it, what does it do and who is on it? These are questions often asked by members of the Corps when they hear mention of the Committee.

While it is easy to brush off such questions with the answer "look it up in Corps Instructions" I considered that it would be worthwhile to write a short article for the Craftsman outlining the various aspects of the Committee.

The Charter of the RAEME Corps Committee is:

- a. to foster and develop spirit and tradition throughout the Corps;
- b. to guide the activities and manage the domestic affairs of the Corps, making recommendations affecting them to the DGEME. (This excludes those matters relating to discipline and the military and technical functions of the Corps.)

The Committee comprises the following:

Chairman – The Representative Colonel Commandant

Vice-chairman – All other Colonel's Commandant

Senior Executive – DDEME

Members – Commanders 1, 2 and 3 EME Groups. Senior Representatives 4, 5 and 6 MD, Col EME, Log Comd, SO1 EME, FF Comd, CO RAEME Trg Centre, SO1 EME ARes, DGEME.

Secretary – SO2 from DGEME.

While the current Corps Instruction No. 8 states that meetings will be held at least once every six months, costs have dictated that meetings will be held no more frequently than one per year.

In meeting its charter, the Committee is responsible for:

- a. Advising the DGEME on matters affecting the general well-being, esprit-de-corps and such activities which support the development of tradition throughout the Corps. A current activity in this regard is the establishment of the Corps Museum in the HQ Building at RAEME Training Centre.
- b. General guidance on the form of Corps celebrations such as the RAEME birthday.
- c. Preparation of Corps Instructions for DGEME approval and review as necessary.
- d. Investigating and where necessary, taking action to instigate changes to RAEME dress and embellishments.
- e. Initiating action to obtain distinctive Corps items not available through service supply channels e.g. Stable Belts.
- f. Initiating action on any other matter which may be of value in promoting esprit-de-corps and Corps tradition. Action is now in hand to obtain for the Corps a Colonel in Chief's Corps Banner.
- g. Consider items raised by District Colonels Commandant.

In order to have a more complete Corps involvement in the activities and considerations of the Corps Committee, District Committees are formed under the chairmanship of the District Colonel Commandant, comprising representatives from Functional Commands, the Army Reserve and the RAEME Association.

For further information on those subjects encompassed by the Charter of the Corps Committee I suggest you read Corps Instructions which will be held by your orderly room or unit library.

RAEME Corps Conference 1981

Over the period 14-16 September 1981, the Corps Conference was conducted at RAEME Training Centre.

The theme of the Conference was "Manpower for the 1980s", with the aim of:

- a. updating the senior officers of the Corps on the changes which have taken place in the Army since the last conference in 1978; and
- b. considering the current manpower situation in the Corps to examine possible areas of improved training, structuring and utilisation to better support the Army during the 1980s.

The results of deliberations and discussions are currently being digested at DGEME.



BACK ROW (L to R) – Lt Col G.J.M. Edis, CDEME; Lt Col P.A.P. Fergusson, FF Comd; Maj I.L. Stewart, Perth Wksp; Lt Col K.C. Tunbridge, 2 Base Wksp; Lt Col R.W. Bade, Log Br; Lt Col T.J. Fardell, MEA; Lt Col L.J. Foley, 4 Base Wksp; Lt Col P.G. Snowdon, 1 EME Gp; Maj J.P. Hempenstall, RTC; Maj D.R. Cossart, DGEME; Capt A.T. McManus, DGEME.

4th ROW – Maj M.J. Evans (REME), MEA; Lt Col D.M. Miller, MEA; Lt Col J.P. Power, MBE, 3 Base Wksp; Lt Col J.P. Britton (REME), 2 EME Gp; Lt Col R. Reynolds, MEA; Lt Col R.M. Millar, 5 Base Wksp; Maj G.J. Hawker, DGEME; Maj J. Lewis, DGEME; Col F.S. Curnow, MEA.

3rd ROW – Col M.B. Tinkler, EME Div; Lt Col P.Q. Horgan, DEME NZ; Lt Col C.E. Johnston, DGEME; Lt Col W.E. Sullivan, 3 EME Gp; Maj J.W. Pronk, RTC; Lt Col J.G. Hislop, 1 Base Wksp; Col W.I.N.S. Hicks-Hall, 2 EME Gp; Capt S.A. Pankowski, Hobart Wksp.

2nd ROW – Col T.B. Schoeffler, DDEME; Lt Col R.J. Naylor, EME Div; Maj P.E. Hopper, Adelaide Wksp; Lt Col M.J. Burgess, DGEME; Lt Col M. Croft, MEA; Lt Col D.C. Lever, MBE, DGEME; Lt Col D.M. McDonough, Log Br; Col M.J. Ford, DDTS-A; Col F.J. Tonkin, DOD Central.

FRONT ROW – Lt Col R.G. Law, RTC; Brig J.C. Dean, Representative Colonel Commandant; Brig J.E. Faulks, AM, DGEME; Mr M.W. Buckham, Chief Supply and Support; Lt Col F.W. Statham, OBE, ED, Colonel Commandant 5 MD; Brig H.W. Barker, Colonel Commandant 1 MD; Brig A.D. Powell DCLOG; Maj M. Larocca, RTC.

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A REFLECTION ON SERVICE

PART 1

How many RAEME personnel have you recently seen wearing campaign ribbons of WWII. . .? Not many! in fact we have been able to track down only eight of these venerable gentlemen still growing in the Corps. Before they go out "to pasture", we would like to briefly review their service in the Armed Forces and in RAEME.

These veterans have seen service throughout the world in War and Peace, let us in Part 1 reflect on four of these members.

31224 MAJOR ANDREW JOHN (JACK) BALSILLIE MBE

On the 10th July 1945 a young lad enlisted in the PMF with a mate called Ian Archer to be apprentice fitters and turners.¹ Jack served in the Broadmeadows area till November 1957, then it was off to RAEME Trg Centre as a WO2 Assistant Instructor in Armament. In August 1959 it was off to Malaya where he was WO-in-charge of "A" Fd Bty LAD Section operating out of Butterworth. In November 1959 he carried out the same job with the relief unit 101 Fd Bty. A relocation saw 101 Fd Bty join with a British unit, 26 Fd Regt RA at Malacca. Time was up in Malaya and it was back to Melbourne Area Workshop.

During this time Capt Balsillie was kitted and spurred for Vietnam where he served as OC 1 Task Force HQ LAD and as a Staff Officer HQ AFV.

It was time to return to Australia to an old stamping ground, that of 3 Base Workshop till February 1972 when 3 Task Force called Jack to take command of 3 Cav Regt LAD but it didn't take long till the 105mm Howitzers took his fancy and he took command of 4 Field Regt LAD till he was extracted south of the Tweed to HQ 2 EME GP as a Staff Officer. His next progression was to Sydney Workshop Company as OC.

He anticipated his next posting would be Puckapunyal Workshop Company in early 82. We wish him luck!!

¹ Jack Balsillie and Ian Archer are the last of the PMF apprentices still serving.

AWARDS

MAJ Balsillie's awards include the MBE (Civil list), War Medal GSM with clasp Malaya, Vietnam Medal, LS & GCM, MSM, and the Vietnamese Campaign Medal.

NOTE: The MBE was awarded for his services in collecting war relics from the Malaya/Singapore and the Vietnam Campaigns for the Australian War Memorial. The medal was awarded in the New Years Honors List 1970.

A NOTE OF INTEREST: MAJ Balsillie was appointed Honorary Gunner by the Director General of Artillery in May 1981 for his services to the Royal Australian Artillery.

31225 MAJOR IAN ROBERT ARCHER

Taking the next Army number behind Jack Balsillie, Ian started his apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner but on completion changed trade to Vehicle Mechanic. In 1950 Ian was posted to BCOF Japan where he was assigned to the BCOF Sig Regt but due to the Korean War getting out of hand it was off

to sort it out at the Aust Ancillary Unit, Korea till 1952. After rotation it was back to Broadmeadows until 1955, when Ian was posted to RAEME Trg Centre as an Instructor. Ian was posted in 1960 as ASM at 1 Armd Regt LAD and for a break served as an advisor with the CMF's 4 Company RAASC Wksp.

After being commissioned in July 1967 as a Lt, it was back to Field Force with A Sqn, 2 Cav Regt LAD as OC, to Vietnam with 1 Fd Sqn Wksp as OC at Nui Dat 1968-69 before returning to Sydney. After serving in Singleton Wksp Pl till 74, another overseas posting occurred to the tropics in Papua New Guinea where he spent two delightful years at the PNGDF Apprentice Trg Unit. Good times end and it was back to HQ 2 EME Gp as Production Manager before the long arms of Log Comd EME Div required his presence. His current job is S02 SE/AVN (EME Div.)

MEDALS AWARDED

War Medal, Korea Medal, UN Medal (Korea), Vietnam Service Medal, LS&GCM). The National Medal and the Vietnamese Campaign Medal.

1298 WO1 W.G. BUDGEN (BILL)

On the 20th June 1945 the Army requested Bill's presence, and after training as a clerk, it was off to Japan to join 140 Brigade Workshop BCOF. This Unit disbanded in March 1948 and Bill was posted to British Commonwealth Base Workshop and remained in the land of Cherry Blossom till March 1953. Bill served in a variety of postings in the Brisbane area, e.g. N Comd ARA Cadre Pool, HQ N Comd, 1 General Troops Wksp, 301 Fd Wksp till 1969 when he packed his bags to Albert Park Barracks Melbourne with the Directorate also serving for a short time with HQ CRAEME 3 DIV.

The powder blue beret attracted Bill in 1969 and he was back to Queensland with 1 Avn Regt Wksp then to 1 Base Wksp as an assistant instructor 1 EME SVC Unit from Aug 76 to Feb 78.

Bill was to serve in Canberra at the Directorate till Oct 79 when the urge for Queensland was too much and he returned to HQ 1 EME Gp Brisbane.

In March 1982 Bill will return to civilian life. We, the Corps, thank him for his assistance, his knowledge and his comradeship over 36 years, and wish Bill and his family success and happiness in the future.

MEDALS AWARDED

Include the War Medal, Korea Medal, UN Medal (Korea), the LS&GCM and the Meritorious Service Medal.

56493 MAJOR JOHN ANTHONY POWER

On the 22nd Feb 1945 Major John Power enlisted as an Army Apprentice in the British Army. He trained as a Vehicle Mechanic at AAS Aborfield, graduating in Feb 1948.

After a round of courses at REME Trg Centre he was posted to 4 'C' Veh Depot, then to HQ Trg Regt RE till Dec 1949.

Cfn Power was off to Ceylon to the Command Wksp Colombo, but by Sept 1950 REME records thought he should have a change of environment and that Egypt would be most suitable.

Whilst at 2 Base Wksp in heavy 'B' Rebuild section John gained expertise, but to round out his training he was posted to 3 Inf (Mobile Wksp), still in Egypt.

A home posting ensued and as a Sgt he served as a Permanent Staff Instructor with the British Territorial Army (equivalent to the Australian Army Reserve), with the 256 LAA Regt (TA) LAD. 24 Medium Regt RA and 4AA Wksp/12 Comd Wksp filled in time until his Artificer Training.

After promotion to SSGT it was off to the Mediterranean for three years at Garrison Wksp Gibraltar. (What a life). Then back to the UK for another three years to HQ REME (TA) at Aldershot. The call of the east beckoned, and WO Power was loaned to the Malaysian Army, in December of 1966, he was posted as senior REME rep in country (WO1) in the MALAWI Army (look this up in you atlas). WO1 Power returned to the UK to take his discharge in January 1969.

At Perth, Australia John enlisted as a WO2 in RAEME, and after a short stint in 3 Base Wksp, undertook his A&T course to graduate as a Lieutenant—back to WA, serving with three local units—113 Fd Wksp, 22 Const Sqn Wksp, and as EME 51 Sup Bn, before his next overseas posting to the tropics as OC PNGDF Trade Training Unit as Port Moresby.

Currently in Melbourne Major Power is now SO2 Management Systems at HQ Log Comd (EME Division).

AWARDS FOR SERVICE

Include the War Medal 1939-45, the GSM (1962) with Malay Peninsula Clasp, the LS&GCM and the MSM.

The experiences that these members have had these past 37 years have been passed to many hundreds of soldiers as advice in many forms.

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LIFE AT — 40

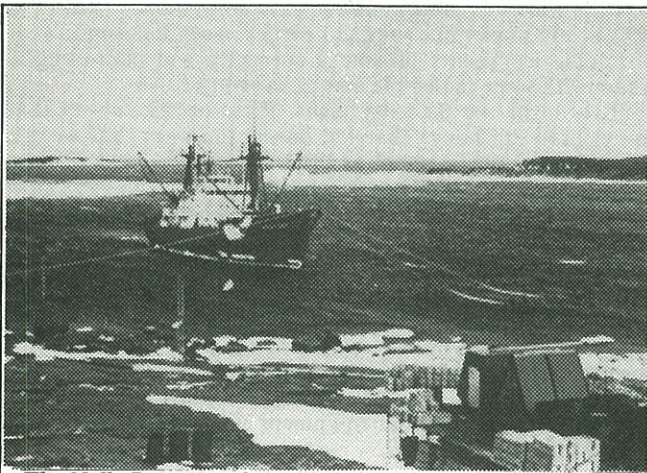
By Lance Corporal S.A. Rollins

“CREVICE!!!”, came the cry over the radio. We stopped immediately. A tractor had gone through the ice, on its side, providing yet another one of many hazards one is likely to encounter when traversing large ice masses.

This one took three hours to extract. An interesting start to our summer programme — a programme we had been preparing for all year.

My arrival at Mawson in February 1979, resulted from earlier experiences on the LARC during resupply trips to Antarctica. I was in Townsville when the call from the Department of Science, Antarctic Division was received. I was to be seconded to the department for the duration of the 1979-80 expedition.

The cruise down on the Danish ice-breaker, “Nella Dan”, proved an ideal opportunity to photograph whales and numerous species of birds. Further south, temperatures dropped appreciably as icebergs appeared, but the run through the pack ice surrounding the southern continent passed without incident.



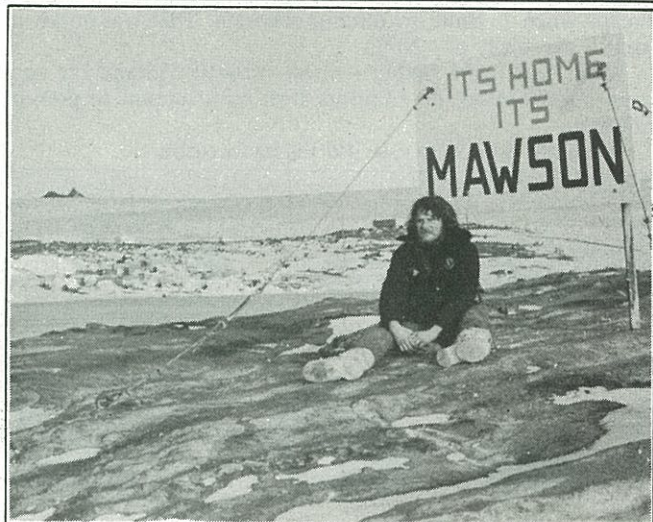
The Nella Dan at anchor in Mawson's Horse Shoe Harbour.

Anchoring at Mawson signalled the start of a hectic unloading schedule — all of which depended on unpredictable weather.

At temperatures below -10°C the stores and equipment were moved from ship to base by LARC. Fortunately the weather held out and the ship, which we were not to see again for about eleven months, sailed on schedule as we set about stowing or tying down stores and building materials before winter.



Scott certainly never had it so good! The 1979 party which includes from left to right (back row): S. Rollins and D. Blaby (Mechanics), G. Hardie (Plumber, A Humphries (Electrician) and front row: B. Keogh (Weather man), R. Yost (Mechanic), J. Forrester (Radio Operator) and P. Magill (Electronics Engineer).



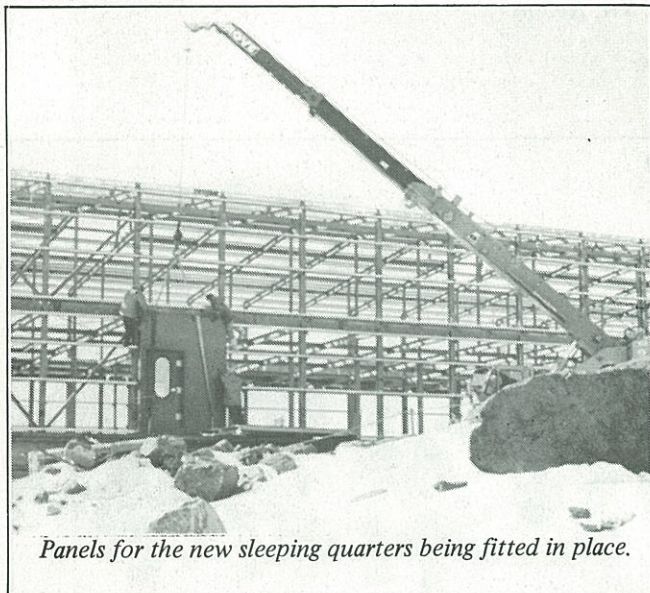
The author proves he was there!

Altogether 29 members of the 1979 expedition, comprising diesel mechanics, carpenters, electricians and plumbers, together with our doctors and scientists, remained behind.

The diesel mechanics, of which I was one, were responsible for maintaining a wide range of equipments, including an electricity generating plant consisting of two, huge British Dorman diesels with a 175 KVA capacity, with their cooling system providing heating for the base station.

Emergency backup was provided by a pair of CAT D3306 75 KVA generators while other equipments included Caterpillar D5 Bulldozers, CAT 950 Wheel Loaders, VW and Porsche Snow Tracs, Massey Ferguson tractors, Austin Western and Grove cranes and motor toboggans, to name but a few.

Naturally, they all conspired to keep us busy, but we still managed time for trips around the local area investigating the wildlife and the mountain ranges surrounding Mawson, which all helped us to know the area better.



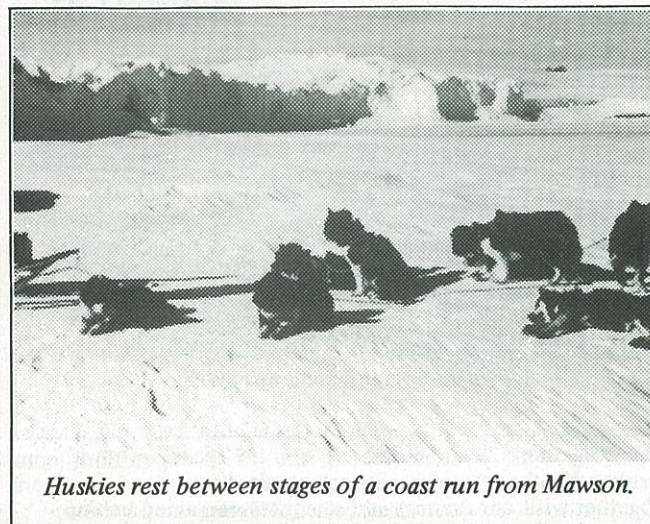
Panels for the new sleeping quarters being fitted in place.

Meanwhile, work got underway in constructing the double storey sleeping quarters with the intention of laying all the foundations and erecting, at least in part, the steelwork before winter.

There were always plenty of able workers to give a hand, except when it came to mixing concrete. That was an art in itself – especially at -20°C .

Water had to be boiled – form work heated and the concrete posts heated for 12 hours after construction to prevent freezing.

As winter drew closer, so did the bad weather.



Huskies rest between stages of a coast run from Mawson.

The ocean froze over and a whole new range of travel, with dog teams of huskeys and motor bikes/toboggans, available to us.

Somehow a VW Beetle had been smuggled down, and eventually made a terrific buggy.



A motor bike/toboggan used during the expedition.

Sea ice was usually about eight feet thick over the ocean, which enabled us to perform road tests and scientific expeditions some 50 miles out from the coast. The skidoos we used for transport were tremendous for chasing penguins, and could traverse the ice at speeds up to 40 miles per hour.

With winter approaching the days grew shorter, which, of course, left ample time for night parties, races and games.

Racing ice yachts became a speciality and interesting to watch with some incredible designs evolving.

Party night was Saturday night. These occasions were used to celebrate birthdays that fell during the week, but we also enjoyed such recreational facilities as 16mm movies, video tapes, an excellent library, a pool table, table tennis, carpet bowls and a bar that was well stocked by the company with drinks and cigarettes, etc., all of which were free to the intrepid expeditioners.

In mid-winter a little twilight lightened the almost twenty-four hours of darkness, aided by the appearance of the Aurora Australis. Its colourful rays of light, lit up the night skies, but for the everyday camera jockey, photographs at temperatures around the -33°C to -40°C were impossible. The scientists with their more complex equipment were much better equipped to study the auroras.

By now, work mainly consisted of maintenance on existing buildings. Our workshop was very small, and although heated, barely managed to remain at 5 to 10 degrees above zero. To make matters even less tolerable, frequent blizzards used to fill the room with snow.

In between building maintenance, we prepared the gear for the coming spring and summer tractor train traverses. It was interesting work with everything from engine overhauls to minor repairs to keep us in tune. After all, there would be no workshops around the corner when we went on inland trips.

The shortest day of the year signalled the start of a four day celebration, normally around June 20 to 24.



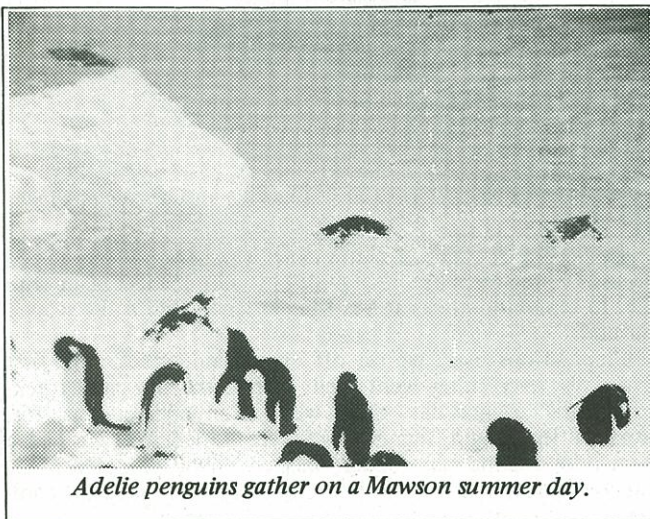
The author, left and a member, aptly named 'Shaggy', at the midwinter celebrations.

On this occasion we had a four course meal complete with wine, whisky and many other refreshments, followed by a commendable evening of entertainment.

The main show was our own version of Cinderella – 'R' rated, of course.

The cast were dressed accordingly, and the closest resemblance to females we'd seen all year. A mid-winter race was won by a dog team, under a handicap with an ice yacht taking second place. Radio messages and radio telephone calls to the mainland helped make the celebrations complete.

As Spring approached, Mawson came to life again. Wildlife returned for the breeding season – a major highlight, with Emperor and Adelie penguins everywhere.



Adelie penguins gather on a Mawson summer day.

Some of us visited the larger rookeries along the coast and one, Auster, about 35 miles from base, is located on a permanent floating ice platform surrounded by icebergs.

The estimated eight to ten thousand pairs of Emperor penguins, the largest of the species, really stood out against the ice, standing about three feet in height.

During our trip down the coast we also sighted seal nurseries, Snow Petrels, Cape Petrels and the larger, Giant Petrel, which has a 6-7 foot wing span.

A trip to Taylor Glacier, eighty miles down the coast rates a special mention.

We planned to spend three days there but a blizzard gusting at

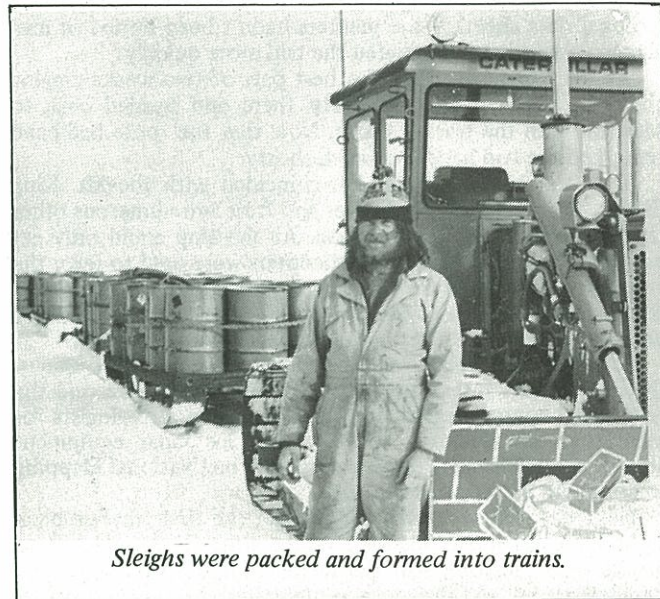


A Weddell seal pup basks in the sun.

up to 120 miles per hour, kept us there for nine days. Temperatures of -30°C didn't help matters either. The blizzard also hit Mawson, burying the base in the process.

Throughout the big blow, three of us lived in a small hut which was 10 x 6 feet and five feet in height. Believe me, it was a relief to get back to Mawson, despite the digging we had to do on our return.

The building programme proceeded smoothly, with all the steelwork up and panels going on, and the traverse preparations were almost completed.



Sleighs were packed and formed into trains.

Sleighs were being packed and formed into respective trains. Each of the three caterpillar D5 dozers would be required to tow about 30 tonnes, most of which was fuel for three Hughes 500C helicopters and a Pilatus Porter aircraft.

One of the trains comprised three, four berth living vans, plus the workshop van in which a small range of spares and tools would be carried. The workshop van was also equipped with a 240 volt generator, powered by a Lister diesel, which supplied the electricity for heating the vans.

All the sleighs were connected to a long cable which, in turn, was connected to the towing machine.

The first traverse started in the latter end of October. Eight people, comprising two mechanics, two radio technicians and four others who could be spared from the base, joined the first stage of the trip to Mt. King.



A midnight refuelling stop enroute to Mt King.

Traversing at an average speed of 2.5 kilometres per hour, the trip took four weeks and was made all the more difficult because the trail markers, either bamboo canes or drums welded together, were mostly buried. Mt. King had not been visited for two years.

Navigation, at times, was extremely difficult by prismatic compass, our main navigational aid, a route guide and a navigational data sheet. If the markers hadn't been buried or missing we might have completed the trip more quickly.

At Mt. King we spent the best part of two weeks digging the base out, left a small party there and headed back to Mawson with the tractor trains. Now that the route had been remarked the trip back was much shorter.

The first visit of Nella Dan coincided with the Mt. King digout, bringing mail, fresh beer and fruit and numerous other items we hadn't seen for a year. As the ship could only get within 30 miles of Mawson, helicopters were used to ferry the stores and personnel from the ship, which was tied up alongside a large flat area of ice which also served as the assembly area for the Pilatus Porter before it was flown to Mawson.

Scientists and surveyors also arrived with the Nella Dan — three geologists intending to fossick for minerals around the very mountainous region near Mt. King, two glaciologists for measuring the thickness of ice, using ice radar equipment aboard the Porter and three surveyors from National Mapping to complete the maps of the area.

Next day I flew to Mt. King to get the first traverse back to Mawson as soon as possible. Temperatures in the plane were in the -20° region, with the heaters fogging up every time they were used, and therefore, quite useless.



A Pilatus Porter, complete with skis, lands on the ice.

At Mt. King we learned the first traverse had already headed back, but at least with the issue of mail to those left behind, our trip wasn't wasted.

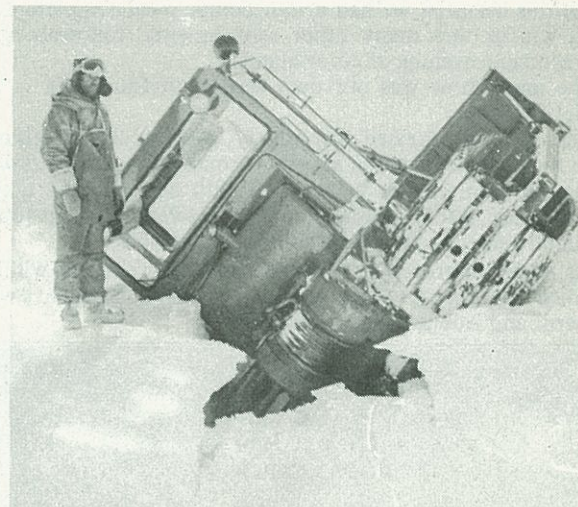
Refuelling, we set off to find the traverse team, and did, 60-70 miles from Mt. King where we landed, issued mail, and I replaced one member who returned with the plane to Mawson.

With twenty four hours of daylight available to us, we were able to drive in eight hour shifts and cover up to 25 kilometres during each shift, breakdowns permitting.

At the end of each eight-hour stint, drivers were changed over, tractors refuelled, repairs, if any, carried out, slings and wire ropes connecting sleighs checked while the oncoming shift prepared a meal, and contact was made with Mawson to notify position and take any personal messages.

Breakdowns on the return trip were few, but frozen fuel was our most consistent problem, as we traversed heights up to 6,000 feet at temperatures between -35°C and -44°C .

The terrain was rough, with many soft patches, but the dozer's extra wide tracks helped considerably even though hours were lost winching or tandem towing. It was also on this trip that the tractor fell into the crevice.



The one that nearly got away! A tractor slips into a crevice.

Once back at Mawson, equipments were serviced and, where necessary, repaired before the sleighs were loaded again with fuel to replenish stocks at Mt. King in readiness for the second traverse.

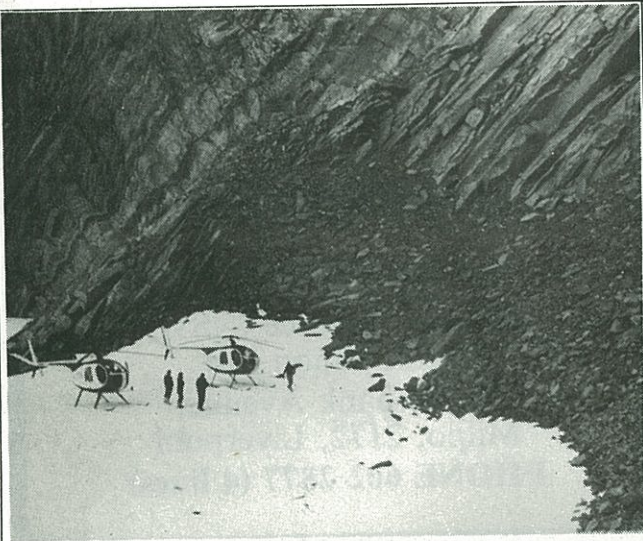
Preparations over, we set off once again, and for the first five days, everything went well — then the blizzard struck.

It was Christmas day and as white as anyone could ask for. Most of the sleighs and tractors were buried, but we had a tremendous Christmas dinner, washed down with dozens of Carlton Draught, which, as you can imagine, needed no cooling.

After the blizzard, it took four hours of digging before we could get moving again, and then frozen fuel hampered our progress, as did slings and towing eyes — snapping due to the intense cold.

Temperatures outside the tractor cabs averaged -30°C , inside about -15°C . Modifications were made to the machines to overcome the cold operating conditions, and even foot warmers were fitted. Cooling systems were kept operational using glycol, but at below -30°C , aviation turbine kerosene was used because it didn't freeze.

However, apart from another blizzard on New Year's Day, Mt. King was reached without too much trouble.



Working with the geologists around the mountains.

Scientific programmes were well under way and many of us went out into the field with the geologists, camping in tents on the side of mountains, and weather permitting, being airlifted around in helicopters.

By the time we got back to Mawson, the sea ice had broken out. Nella Dan and another ship, Nanok S, had been and gone for the second time, again on resupply.

At the termination of the summer programme the whole Mt. King base was dismantled. All scientific programmes had now been completed. Weather conditions did hamper the dismantling operations, and to top it off, a helicopter crashed. Fortunately no-one was injured and the helicopter was recovered to Mawson, slung under another helicopter.

The 1979 party was flown back to Mawson in preparation for its return to Australia, while the 1980 party arrived to return with the traverse.

Flying back to Mawson we saw that the sea ice had dispersed and icebergs were breaking off the glaciers along the coastline. Mawson, snow now melted, looked as if it had been washed down and appeared quite different. Temperatures had risen to zero with an incredible 4°C being recorded.

In between helping the 1980 party and embarking for home, we spent many hours in darkrooms developing and printing films of the traverse and Mt. King.

A week before the ship arrived, an iceberg, estimated at around 2,000 tonnes, floated in to block the harbour entrance. Five cases of TNT were inserted in a large crack, in an effort to shift it. After the resulting explosion the iceberg remained intact, which is more than could be said for numerous windows around the base.

Weather conditions deteriorated rapidly. Nella Dan couldn't get into Mawson and had to head out to sea again until the

winds abated.

Five days later she returned – to find another storm brewing. This time it was too late to head out to sea again so she risked entry to the harbour around the iceberg – which she did safely. The storm remained with us for four days. Unloading proceeded at a slow rate, and we were told that as soon as the weather cleared, an attempt would be made to get the ship past the iceberg regardless of the state of unloading.

During minor lulls in the storm, helicopter reconnaissance showed the sea was beginning to freeze over again. Our departure date had been set for February 1980, but it was March 5th before the weather was considered suitable to try the exit.

No passengers were allowed aboard until the ship was clear. With the remaining LARC acting as a tug to keep the ship against the iceberg and wide of the rocks, Nella Dan passed through the gap into open water.

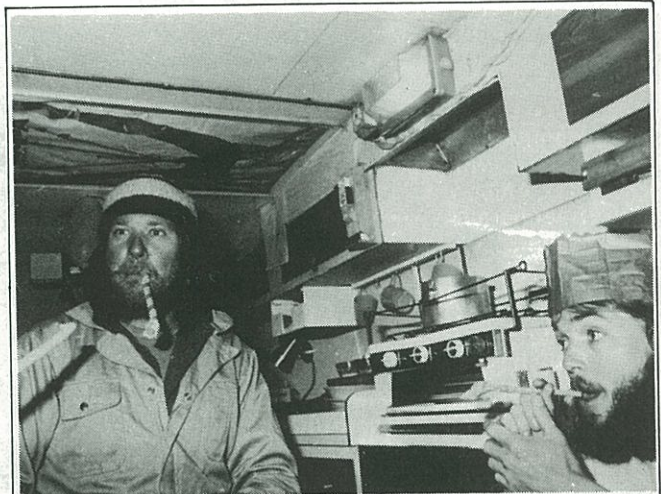
Helicopters began a shuttle service to the ship as it headed out for sea, as fast as it could go.

The excitement of the changeover was evident and demonstrated in the many parties aboard ship on the way home.

Nella Dan forced her way through the ice that was beginning to form and headed for home.

The Captain's party, held two days out from Melbourne, was our last get-together, with everything on the Captain, including the grog.

The rest of the trip and the subsequent reunions with our families, whom we hadn't seen for fourteen months are indescribable. But, what really topped the whole expedition off, was marching into Vic Barracks, Melbourne, prior to leave and pay, for a short discussion with the RSM about the regulations regarding haircuts and shaving!



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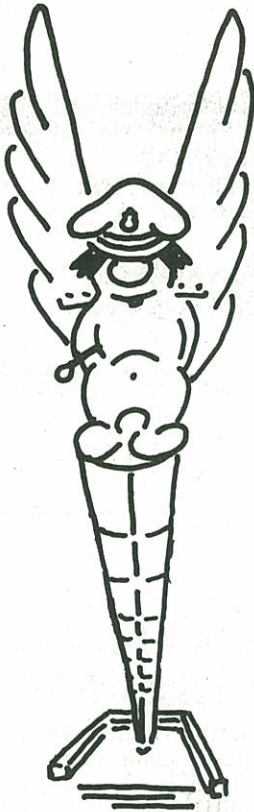
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ARMY OFFICE JOTTINGS

By Sgt Mario Gerhard

The festive season is fast approaching again and with it comes the annual staff turnover. This year DGEME is losing more than its fair share, in fact close to half the Directorate is moving out to greener pastures. The majority of those being posted are moving away from Canberra, while a few are remaining (lucky devils) but are changing jobs either within the Directorate or Army Office.

Those leaving include Col Schoeffler, Maj Harvey, WO1 Brian Miles, WO2 Gary O'Brien and WO2 Alan Pearce, all of whom are moving to the sunshine state, or as Alan Pearce would say "Joh's country". Lt Col Mike Burgess will shortly be taking up the reins of 2 Base Wksp, Maj Kevin Loughrey will be leaving early next year to attend Staff College and Lt Zerbe has been posted to 3 Base Wksp Bn.

A few of the new faces marching in are Col Tonkin (DDEME), Maj Dyne (SO2 Pers), Capt Fulford (SO2 Sys Dev), WO2 McDonald, WO2 G. Hanlin, WO2 Peter Brock (Peter is already with us) and Cpl Chris Cole.

On a sadder note are two retirements. WO1 Kev McCarley has already left us. Kev served with both Navy and Army spanning a period of 35 years. Most of his Army Service was with aviation. The other retirement is that of WO2 Bill Vincent. Bill leaves us at the end of January. Coincidence or not, Bill served with both the Navy and Army. We all wish them the best in their retirement.

Back into a lighter vein, recently the Directorate competed in two fun runs. The first being the Defence Spring Fun Run held over a 5km course around Lake Burley Griffin. The second was the "Canberra Times" fun run which is an annual event run over 9.7km. DGEME entered two teams of 5 runners. As yet results have not been published, not that we expect any prizes, but a lot of fun was had by all.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS 3411421 WO2 W.R. VINCENT (BILL)

Bill was born at a very early age, but not quite early enough because he found great difficulty in convincing any of the three services to avail themselves of his talent. After trying quite a few times, the last being on 16 Feb 1944, the Navy became aware of his persistence and greeted him with open arms, but failed to mention the rates of pay at 35c per day and buy your own replacement uniforms, "kit checks" were very prevalent.

To one who enjoys a cool drink on a warm day, or for that matter on a cool day, this was a disaster, but thank the good Lord and the Government of that time, beer was only 5c per glass.

After initial training at HMAS Cerebrus, he didn't do much but sweep up leaves from wooden trees, but at last in Jul 1945 it was off to Darwin to join his first ship - a corvette of the 169 Mine Sweeping Flotilla operating north of Borneo.

Getting in about three weeks sea time, the skipper announced that all the people who were cross with the Allied Powers now wanted to be friends and his expertise was required in the Inland Sea of Japan, sweeping channels in Kure area. This gave him the opportunity to visit the devastation of Hiroshima. The Flotilla was then assigned to Timor and after a short period it was back to Darwin.

Bill was drafted to a floating-dock in Darwin Harbour and was not impressed with the beer ration - 1 bottle between 4 men per week. (Have you ever tried Aqua Velva and lolly water - don't!!) and if any Airforce members who were stationed at Melville Island still wonder what happened to 14 cases of beer each containing 4 dozen - Bill got his share!

It was back to Melbourne in mid winter in summer dress with a pocket full of money and 10 days before attending a torpedo electrical course at HMAS Cerebus, then to the frigate HMAS Hawkesbury an ASDIC training ship. It was off to the big boats, and Bill was drafted to HMAS Shopshire, a cruiser sailing for Japan as a fleet element of BCOF. Seeing most of Nippon, a lump of China, Hong Kong and the Philippines, he returned to Australia in 1947. When the ship docked for refit, he packed his hammock and went back to sea on the HMAS Australia. It was time up for Bill and he returned

For 17 years Bill took a variety of jobs including construction work on the Snowy Mountains Scheme, the Hume Weir and as a machinery salesman. In April 1964 Bill enlisted in the Army, which was what he wanted to do in the first place.

Allocated to RAE he served with 24 Const Sqn at Enoggera and stayed with the unit on its deployment to Borneo on construction tasks from Tenan to Pensiargan in Sabah, rotating back to Enoggera in 1965.

His best move was to change Corps to RAEME as a Vehicle

Recovery Mechanic and took up regimental duties at RAEME Trg Centre, which had his company for 4 years, then it was up to 2 Base Wksp Moorebank till '72, then off to Kapooka as a platoon sergeant. RAEME records then thought that Bill could instil some regimental knowledge at RAEME Trg Centre where he did so for 4 more years. It was then to 1 Div at HQ 6 Task Force as the EME Clerk until Sept 1980 when Bill came to the Directorate at Russell Offices.

Bill is soon to become a civilian for the second time. Age has caught up with the poor devil, and as of the 31 Jan 1982 Bill will be led out to pasture – (or is it stud!)



RTC JOTTINGS

Historic Target Mechanism Retired

In June, the staff at RAEME Training Centre were made an offer they didn't care to refuse.

The first full-production mechanism for the Dart target, located at the Centre, had been the subject of a long search by Australasian Training Aids Pty. Ltd. of Albury.

The mechanism, which had seen active service since 1967, held nostalgic memories for the staff of ATA and now they wanted it to display as an historical item in the foyer of their premises. In order to gain possession ATA offered to replace the mechanism, free-of-cost to RAEME Training Centre.

Who could refuse such an offer?



ATA's Managing Director, Mr. Lindsay Knight hands over the replacement equipment to Lt. Col Bob Law, officer commanding RAEME Training Centre and electronics instructor, Sgt Bob Martin.

We, the members of the Directorate, will miss his exaggerated "true stores" that keep the Directorate smiling whilst wading through the paperwork.

From us all, and from his many friends, we wish Bill all the best for now and in the future.

MEDALS AWARDED

War Medal 1939-45, GSM (1962) with Borneo Clasp, and the National Medal.

RAEME Corps Museum of Archives and Historical Items

Over the years a considerable quantity of items of Corps archival and historical interest have found their way to RAEME Training Centre. In accordance with Corps Instruction No. 13, it has been the intention to establish a Corps Museum at RAEME Training Centre for the storage, custody and display of these items.

After much work by a large number of Corps members, an embryo museum was ready for opening during the Corps Committee meeting held at RAEME Training Centre on Thursday 17 September 1981. The museum was opened by the Representative Colonel Commandant BRIG J.C. Dean OBE (RL). A plaque to commemorate the opening is displayed just inside the door of the museum. The museum itself is located on the top floor of the two storey wing of HQ Building.

All Corps archives and historical items located at RAEME Training Centre which are not sub-accounted to the Offrs' or Sgts' Messes are now located in the museum. A number of items have already been received from Military Districts; notably from 2MD under arrangements by MAJ Jack Balsillie, MBE and his Sydney Wksp Coy staff who also significantly contributed to the establishment of the museum.

The establishment of the museum will necessitate a rewrite of Corps Instruction No. 13 – RAEME Historical Items. Until this is complete, items for the museum should be despatched to:

Secretary Corps Property Ledger,
QM,
RAEME Training Centre,
Mil PO
BANDIANA, VIC. 3694

Due to the limited refurbishment capacity at RAEME Training Centre, wherever possible items should be refurbished and suitably mounted with an inscription plate and description of the history and significance of the item prior to despatch. If this is not possible at source, the item should be despatched through the Senior RAEME Representative in the Military District. However under no circumstances should this aspect discourage units or individuals from donating items. In addition, units who have items which they consider are of Corps historical significance but which they wish to retain, should despatch the appropriate documentation with a photo of the item to the above address. The item will then be taken on charge as Corps Property and sub-accounted to the unit.

During the Corps Committee meeting on 17 September

1981, the committee expressed its gratitude and appreciation of the fine efforts of all involved in the establishment of the museum.

An invitation is extended to all past and present members of the Corps to visit the museum when next in the Bandiana Area.



The Representative Colonel Commandant BRIG J.C. Dean, OBE (RL) signs the Museum visitors book watched by the CO and CIRAEME Training Centre, LT COL R.G. Law.



Showing interest in historical photos are BRIG K.A. Gibson (RL) and BRIG H.W. Barker (RL) the Colonels Commandant of 3 MD and 1 MD respectively, and LT COL K.T. Thomas the ARES representative on the Corps Committee.

Corps Distinctive Items

As most members of our Corps will be aware, the Corps fund is mainly funded by profits from the sale of Corps distinctive items. The items are managed on behalf of the Corps Committee by the Treasurer, RAEME Corps Fund.

To aid Corps members in knowing what is available and how to order a 'Catalogue of Corps Items' has been prepared

at RAEME Training Centre. It will shortly be despatched on a wide distribution. As the catalogue has been produced by internal resources, the quality of reproduction of photographs is well below commercial standards; however, it is still considered that the catalogue will be a valuable aid.

It is suggested that within the larger HQ/Units a cabinet be manufactured and placed in a prominent position to display the Corps distinctive items for sale. In this way the Corps fund can be built up, Regimental funds can share in the profit via the bulk order discount available, and members can display their esprit-de-Corps by possession of the Corps distinctive items.

Artificer and Regimental Awards, Raeme, 1980/81

As a result of the change of the OR promotion system in the mid '70s, Corps Instruction No. 11 became out of date. At the 1980 Corps Committee meeting RAEME Training Centre was tasked with drafting a revised Corps Instruction No. 11.

The draft was subsequently approved by the DGEME. The new instruction provides for the following awards:

Artificer Award RAEME. Which is to be an electronic calculator suitably housed in a polished wooden box with an inscription plate.

Regimental Award RAEME. Which is to be a Warrant Officers cane of turned and polished wood.

A specially prepared certificate is to be presented with each award.

The recipient of each award is selected by a panel of judges appointed by the DGEME. Selection is based on the excellence of results of training which are to be tempered by the candidates assessed personnel qualities as reflected by his course report. The Regimental award is for Subject 2 for Warrant Officer Courses and the Artificer Award for Subject 4 for Warrant Officer Courses (Armament, Vehicle, Electrical and Electronic) conducted at RAEME Training Centre during a training year, that is July to June.

The recipients for Training Year July 1980 to June 1981 are:

Regimental Award: 219233 SGT J.W. MANDERSON who attended the 2/81 Subj 2 (WO) Course.

Artificer Award: 447147 SGT T.M. RUSSELL who attended the 2/80 Subj 4 (WO) (Veh) Course.

Both awards will be presented at the forthcoming RAEME Birthday parades in the respective Military Districts.

Special mention is made of 1201106 SGT C.V. SIMPSON who rated in the top three for both awards. Congratulations to both recipients are extended on behalf of all members of the Corps. Their names will be the first to appear on the newly manufactured recipients' board located in the Corps Museum.

Established 48 years



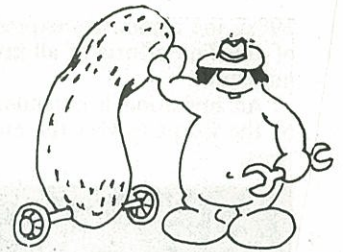
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IMD JOTTINGS



CRAFTY SCORPIONS AT TST B SQN 3/4 CAV REGT

By Lt I.J. Wilson

By the time this letter goes to print good ole B Sqn 3 Cav Regt TST will be good new B Sqn 3/4 Cav TST. Don't let it fool you though, we're still the same ole bunch (minus some blood, sweat and gears).

However, we won't bore you just before Xmas leave with great tales of our many and varied exploits with the mighty scorpion. Undoubtedly though, 1981 has been a hectic year for both the Sqn and TST. At this stage we're not sure if we are grunts, tankies or greasers. We have worn the black beret with the prancing horse as far afield as Magnetic Island, Shoal Water Bay Training Area, Puckapunyal, Gulf of Carpentaria Malaysia. This of course has been intermingled with some good old High Range Training Area exercises, just to stave off the boredom.

There will be a few changes of personnel for 1982. The most notable one of course is that the OC TST, Lt Ian Wilson is off on an unknown posting. His replacement is Lt Phil Edwards from Adelaide Wksp Coy. Welcome Phil, we just know you are going to enjoy it!

One of our brighter soldiers, Cpl Perry Mason has been duly inspired by his stay at 3 Cav. So in memory of the old unit and also as a parting jesture, he has recorded these following sentiments for posterity:

Crafty Capers

*A few years ago in old Melbourne town,
Acting less like a Crafty, and more like a clown,
To learn how a soldier should behave,
I was posted north, to a place called 3 Cave.*

*Did I say 3 Cave?
I should say 3 Cav,
But out in the back,
It's a Cave not a Cav that they have.*

*3 Cav is up north, way up in the tropics,
Rarely mentioned down south, kept out of the topics,
It's a good place to be, someone told me at last,
Plenty of sunshine and booze, if the money will last.*

*The first few weeks there weren't much to do,
Just housing and duties and all that's taboo.
Then the family arrived and settled in well,
Liked it better up here as Melbourne was hell.*

*The first query I has, of which I had many,
Was about 3 Cav's horses of which there weren't any,
Cavalry are normally mounted on horseback,
Instead of these "things" that went clickety-clack.*

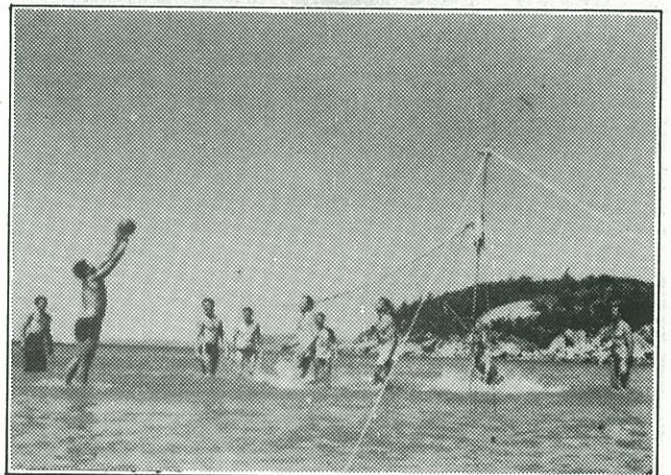
*Things fell into place as the weeks went past,
Horses it seemed were a thing of the past,
So machines were acquired to do the job better,
The horses were sent to their pasture or maker.*

*Machines are in now we've been told they would last,
But most of them look like a thing of the past,
But with fitters and mech's and RAEME support,
EIS each year would have nought to report.*

Well that's all from the scorpion TST for 1981 and we wish you all a grease free Xmas and a non-Field Force new year.



"THE BOYS" at Magnetic Island for Adventure Training.

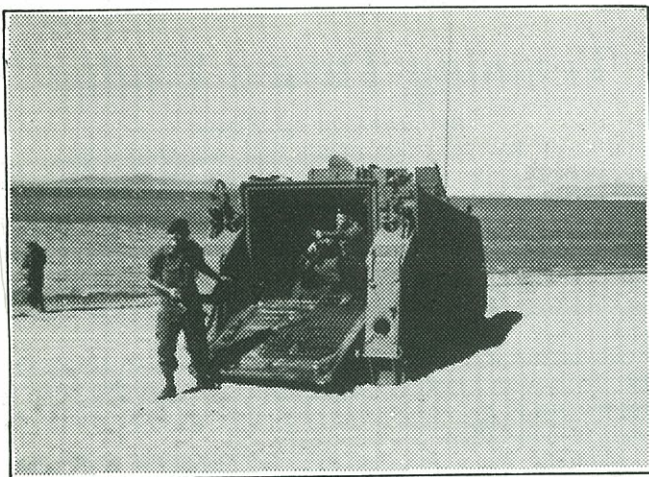


"THE BOYS" playing our tropical variation of netball and Waterpolo called "Waterball".

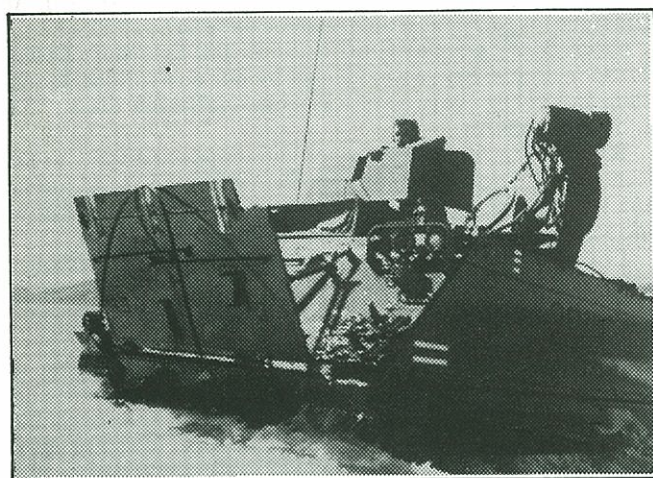
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Spades down and ready to go! Cfn "Stewy" Stewart and Cfn Dave Taylor preparing for a recovery task during Sqn Amphibious Trg near Townsville.



Lcpl Jimmy Galvin brings the Fitters Track out of the water under the watchful eye of Cpl Neil Gibson (RAAC).

A New Coat for Army Aircraft

Proposals for camouflage painting the present series of Army aircraft were made as far back as 1974 but, until late 1979 they still carried the traditional colour, white lettering, large strips of red "Dayglo" and large red, white and blue roundels. Now the change has been made.

After extensive debate over the merits, or otherwise, of camouflage painting, it was decided to conduct trials with five LOH helicopters, each finished in a different plain or patterned coat.

The trial was conducted by 171 Comd and Liaison Sqn at Oakey and, ultimately, the RAAF Iriquois pattern of matt black/light green/tan was chosen as the most suitable.

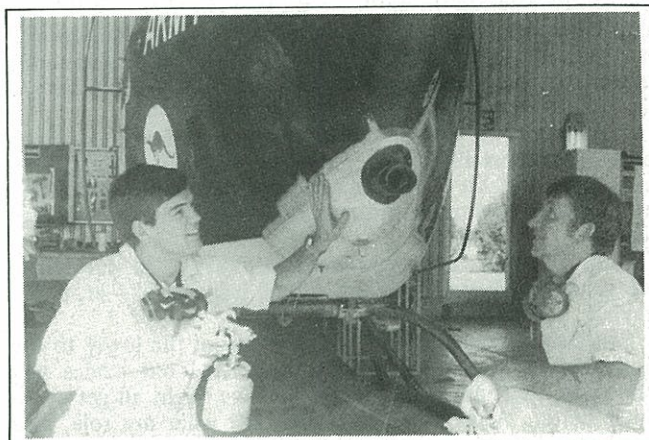
Over the past eighteen months Sgt "Tubes" Gerhardt and his band of merry painters have camouflaged twenty of the fleet of 49 LOH and another four have been painted by the three Squadron Tech Spt Gps at Oakey, Townsville and Hols-worthy, of 1 Avn Rgt.

However, owing to the effort and time involved, the Spt Gps now find it more expedient to utilise the facilities at 5th Base Wksp Bn, with Spt Gp personnel helping to strip the old paint and prepare the aircraft for its new coat of many colours.

With most of the Sqn LOH now completed, it is envisaged that the remainder of the fleet will be multi-coloured by the end of 1982.

The success of the scheme has led to trials with Porter and Nomad aircraft and approval is expected in the near future.

It takes approximately two weeks to prepare and paint an LOH, three weeks for a Porter and four for a Nomad.



CFN Kev Miles and CFN Chris Manning pictured inspecting a KIOWA helicopter prior to painting it in a camouflage scheme. The KIOWA suffered major damage to the underside section in a heavy landing accident at Oakey in Mar 80. It was repaired by Bell Helicopter Company in Brisbane and, after painting, will be stored as a reserve aircraft at 131 Sup Coy, Wallangarra.



5 Base Wksp Bn Paint Shop personnel pictured with a Porter aircraft that they have recently painted in a camouflage scheme. From left, CFN Chris Manning, CFN Kev Miles, CFN "Shorty" Smalley, SGT "Tubes" Gerhardt, CPL Ben Buckley.

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The Far North Agents (Exceptionally Intrepid Soldiers)

By WO2 J. Czapracki

A study of past pages of "The RAEME Craftsman" have highlighted the very real fact that no mention has been made of the Corps' Exceptionally Intrepid Soldiers, better known to many as, Equipment Inspection Section, or simply, E.I.S. for the uninitiated.

Here, in the north of Joh's land, and in seclusion, is a band frequently referred to as "... those *x†+*&!@ SS!!" and sometimes, even, "... the Gestapo." Call them what you will but, they are harassing, misguiding or CANNing all those units at their mercy during annual inspections. . . or so others would believe. To me, they are all misguided souls.

Sometimes we get the impression no-one loves us, which tends to turn us from dear, loveable souls (our natural tendency) into veritable Mr Hydes with an added tendency to sway our assessment of units, prior to the inspection, from good to poor.

Still, if yo 'all change your opinion of us we 'all will change our grading of you at the next annual inspection - er, um - maybe!

Seriously though, if more personnel from the lowly to the lordly found time to understand and heed our advice and references, such as EMEI GEN 1005, we might all get on so much better. After all, it even tells me what my role, as a member of EIS, is.

I wonder how long that piece of good gen has been around? Better still, I wonder who has bothered to read it?

Turning now to our "Lost and Found" membership list - although, personally, I haven't served with some of 'em as members of EIS NQ Det. We do, however, meet them on our limited (through lack of finance) trips to ARES units and reminisce.

Former agents we've come across include ex-WO1 Clive Connors, now with the management staff of NQEA (Cairns), WO1 Harry Russell - an avocado farmer at Atherton, WO1 Kevin Burns - a retired gentleman, Sgt John Burdell - Sales Manager with Makita Tools in Townsville and Sgt Ron Rothe - an overseer QME in Townsville, currently on furlough.

Recently, we the agents of the far north, were privileged to be visited by the SO2 Inspections from HQ 1 EME Gp, Capt "Sailor" Banham, who has taken over from ex-Maj Bill Haines. The latter, I understand, has become involved with "MACK" in Brisbane.

To ensure "Sailor" didn't get lonely or lost, "Mad-dog" Madigan accompanied him too, possibly to escape Brisbane's colder weather - or even sample the delights of the far north region. So much for the "lost" element of the list.

Under "found" we have the IC EIS, WO1 Dick Finney and his offsider, Sgt John - or is it Captain of something O'Connor? Oh, yes, the Army Golf Club.

WO2 "Scarlet Pimpernel" Douglas will soon exercise all his 4 RAR training at 101 Fd Wksp Tels Section which leaves Cpl "Canopy" McPherson, our Technician Elec Systems Ground, who, as strange as it seems, enjoys jumping out of aircraft which are perfectly serviceable.

Oh, I almost forgot my own offsider, Cpl "Dutchy" Holland. Since joining our agency he's finally discovered what RAEME is really about.

Finally, to all our EIS colleagues, scattered far and wide - HI! Keep in touch - technically.

Training Down Under

By Lieutenant A.J. Barton

It's sad, but its a fact of life that, whenever a group of humanoids gather there has to be one in the party who is either a comedian, or a natural jinx.

Craftsman Kel Lyons was ours - a jinx, that is, but one that provided more than a few laughs for the 5th Base Workshop Battalion members who made up the party to Byron Bay for "Exercise Dolphin", a Scuba diving adventure training trip back in May.

No matter what young Kel tried it seemed to go against him. If he wasn't jinxing the motors of the inflatable boat, it was the fuel or the steering until even the boat threw him overboard in desperation.

Naturally, the exercise had been well planned in every other respect, starting with the pre-training in Oakey's swimming pool in the week prior to the trip. Mind you, if you think that's fun in sunny Queensland at the end of April - try it sometime! It gets cold at that time of the year.

From Oakey we moved off and into Bill Sylvester's Diving Hostel in Byron Bay, accompanied by our own rations, snorkelling and diving equipment, a borrowed inflatable dinghy and an outboard motor.

Bill Sylvester is an experienced and respected diver who has been diving since the Scuba sport first started in Australia. Apart from running a diving school he also runs a boat charter operation as well as a sports store and small hostel.

During our first weekend we continued with our swimming and snorkelling training. Happily the water was much warmer than that in the Oakey pool and we could remain in the water for a reasonable length of time.

Mind you, it needed to be warm considering the number of times the inflatable dinghy, used as a safety boat, tossed us back into the sea as we attempted launching it through the surf. On one occasion it did a full somersault, tossed us all in the briny along with other equipment, and righted itself - and the motor didn't even stop.

The diving course began on the Monday with a lecture on diving safety and other basic knowledge, followed by a swimming test in the surf to ensure everyone was a competent swimmer. After lunch, an introductory dive was conducted in a nearby swimming pool, which, unlike the sea, was filled with cold water.

During the following days the beginners among us spent the morning diving in open water and the afternoon attending lectures covering practical tests and theory as laid down by the Australian Underwater Federation. Our aim, of course, was to become qualified Scuba divers.

Advanced students also made up our party and they concentrated on marine illnesses, rescue and resuscitation techniques leading to the award of the Royal Life Saving Society's Subaqua Bronze Medallion and Senior Resuscitation Certificate.

While all the advanced students qualified, only seven of the beginners graduated as Scuba divers, after two members were forced to withdraw due to ear problems. They did, however, complete the theory requirements and are determined to return for the practical tasks at a later date.

During the second week we consolidated our training by exploring some of the many diving locations in and around Byron Bay. A storm prior to our arrival had stirred the waters enough to limit visibility but it was adequate.

In between times we sampled some of the Bay's night life, which at that time of the year, had already quietened down somewhat, although we did manage to fit in some birdwatch-

ing. Cpl Bob Pederson, our cook on loan from Base Squadron, had taken along his camera, complete with telephoto lens, just in case.

But what of Kel the jinx? Well, apart from his obvious lack of certain talents, he did manage to keep us laughing for all that, particularly when our instructor nearly stood the boat on its tail in trying to clear a wave. When everything had settled again — Kel was missing.

Apparently he had inadvertently taken a dive out of the back of the boat — over the top of the motor.

We, that is Capt Nick Dugley, Cpl "Blue" Stuart, Cpl Dave Norgate, Cfn Andy McCallum and Cfn Marcus Ford (the experienced ones) together with Lt Andy Barton, Cpl Al Freeman, Cfn Russ Shields, Cfn Bon Fuller, Pte Gren Chauvier, Pte Jans Marquart, Pte Julian Kempin, App Anthony McWatters, Cpl Bob Pederson and Kel the Jinx, returned to base on Sunday May 10, much fitter, more experienced and qualified than when we'd left, having had a most enjoyable exercise and hoping to repeat the experience — when the opportunity next arises.

2MD JOTTINGS

It's Not Easy Being Green

By WO2 J. van Reyk

This yarn tells of a workshop — a Field Force workshop. It didn't happen all at once, but rather, in a series of events that taught its members a few lessons . . . and gave them a few laughs to lighten the boredom of some otherwise, very ordinary exercises.

For a couple of years it had been occupied in the support of army engineers who, in typical style, were building one of those typical army roads. You know, the ones that start, but . . .!

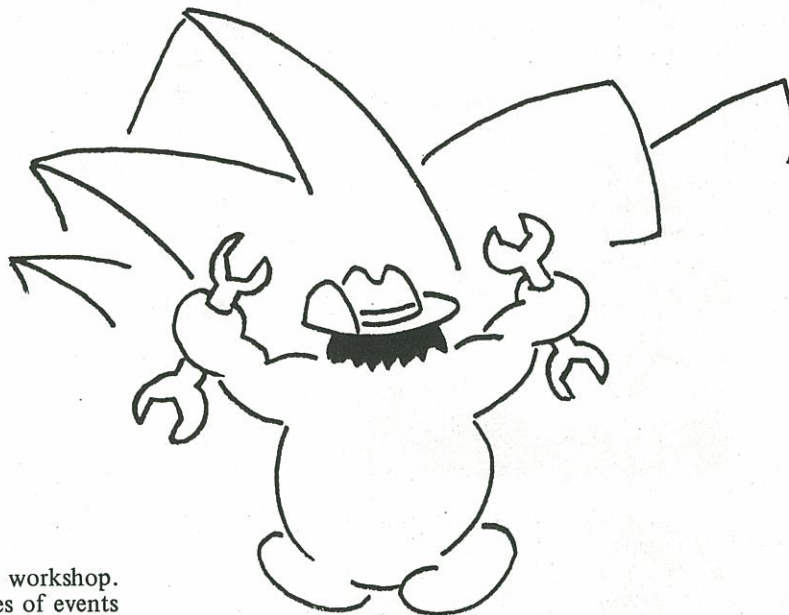
Thus, apart from the odd subject course, workshop members had not been practising the "greener" skills of the Corps. As a consequence, news of an impending field exercise was received with more than the usual degree of whinging and groaning.

However, after a period of frenzied activity, including the usual round of conferences, briefings and mandatory "show and tell" parades, Lawrence of Lavarack was well satisfied that his troops resembled a band of merry marauders.

All that remained to be satisfied was the warnings on snake bite, heat exhaustion, field hygiene, alcohol and the mass crucifixions that would ensue for those who failed to turn up on Monday morn. Mortified at the thought of a dry two weeks ahead, the troops knocked off for a weekend of B, B&B (Beer, Barbeque and Bed).

On the dawn of Monday morn, under a clear sky, bets were paid and received and the troops gathered around the Armoury for their first, of many, lessons on hurry up and wait techniques. You know the kind . . . Hurry up and collect your weapons! — Wait for Armoury keys to be found — Hurry up and start your engines! — Wait for the others to move out first, etc., etcetera!!

Nevertheless, move out they did, but not before Norm the Pieman had fortified his income by fortifying the troops with assorted pies, pasties, sausage rolls and goffas. So much for the cut lunch so lovingly prepared by the catering staff. I never did care much for "wheel meat sangers", or soggy cheese and tomato anyway!



The advance party had moved ahead (a normal occurrence, I'm told!) and left suitable markings in their wake, negating most map reading instruction.

After a few — "I think we should have turned back there", and "We should cross a creek soon!" even the most optimistic navigator would have had to admit — we were LOST!

Distress flares and a "send help" message was about to break the peace of the countryside when Capt Cordial turned up. God save the Salvos!

After accepting a cold drink, some bikkies and a packet of PK, we followed his directions to the staging area.

Cam-up was the order of the day. We spread the cam, propped the cam and reduced the surrounding bushland to a close facsimile of the Simpson Desert, but our aim was achieved as five ton trucks and Landrovers took on the appearance of a lush tropical jungle.

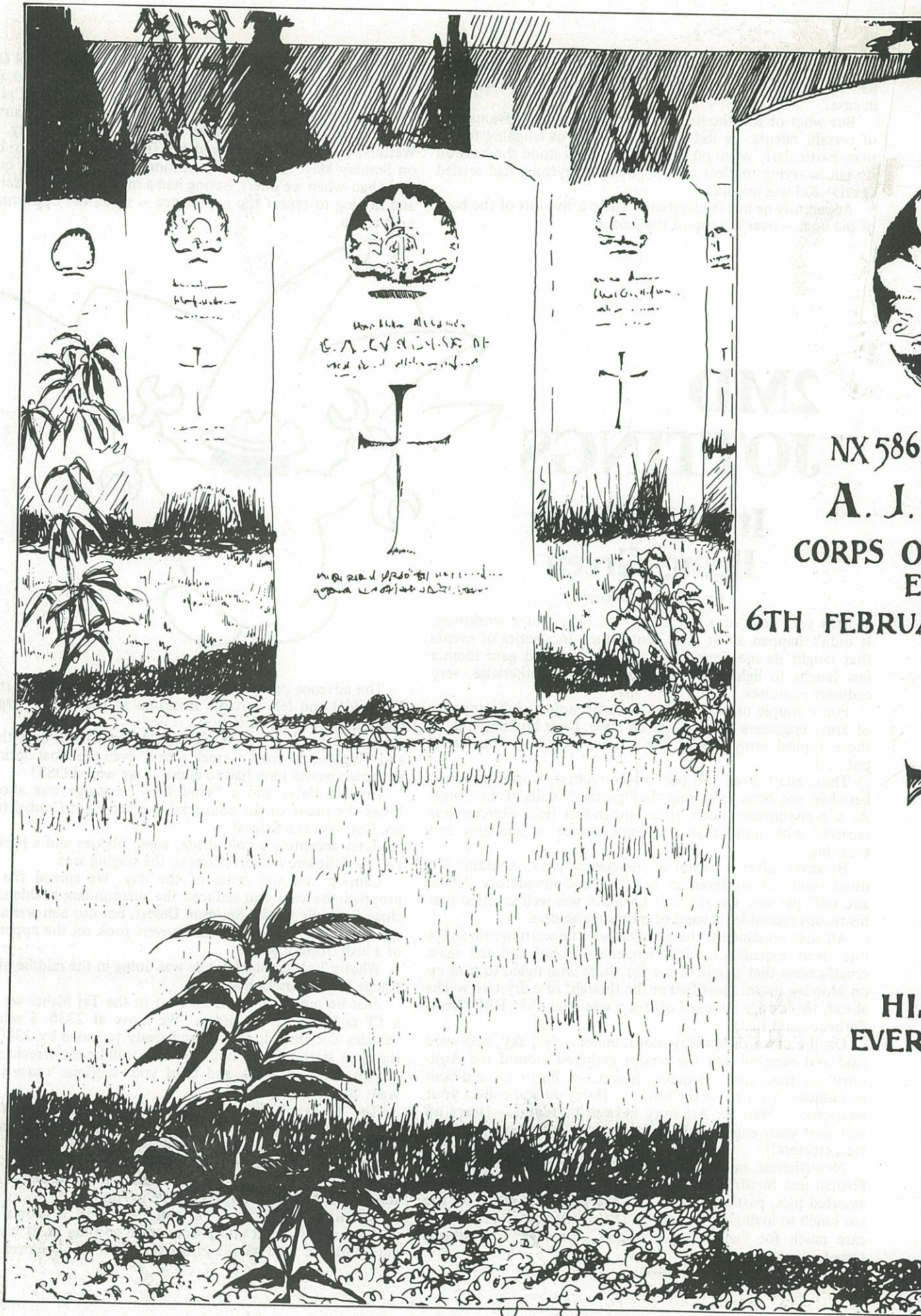
What a lush tropical jungle was doing in the middle of High Range is quite another story.

Just before dusk the OC's brief in the Taj Mahal we called a CP ended with the order, "We move at 2330. I want the vehicles decammed, packed and ready to move by 2300. The signal to start engines and move out will be the Wrecker starting up. Now, go back and brief your sections 'cause I don't want any foulups!"

The Wrecker moved out on a recovery task an hour later. Need I say more? The lesson was well learned and one our King Cockaroach will never forget.

Next day the move went smoothly. Well, a lot smoother than the last. After all, anyone could have mistaken a firefly for the blackout light of the vehicle in front.

Our new staging post was going to be it . . . for a while, anyway. So, it was cam-up time again and dig in. It was very dark but the blue sparks emanating from tools entrenching,



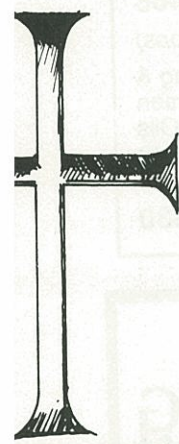
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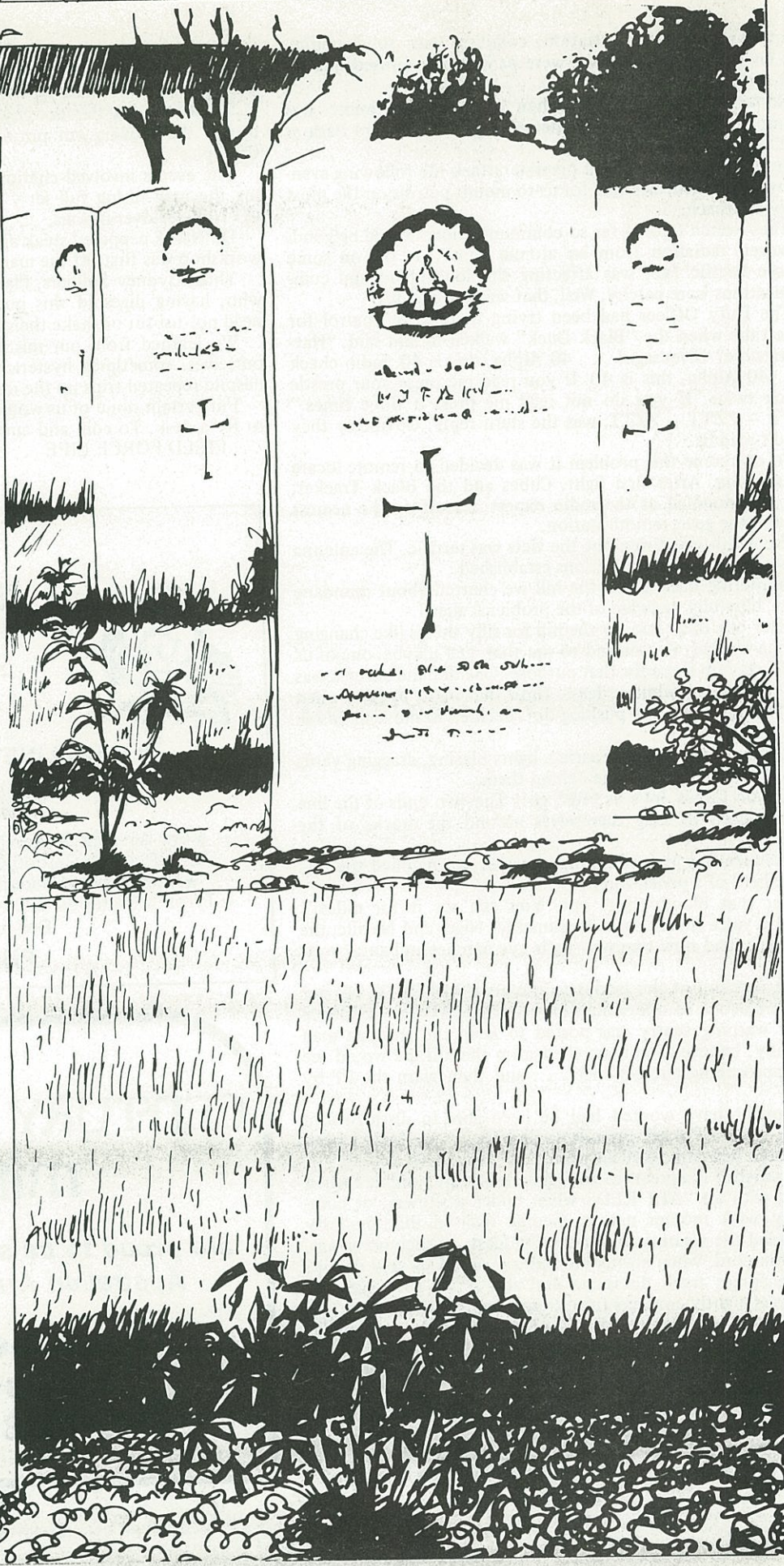
The artist of this fine work is:
Mr. Mark Piekcainen who is the Sign Writer at Sydney Wksp Coy.



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DUTY DONE
REMEMBERED



swung with pent-up frustration, colliding with solid granite, was enough to show us we were parked in a disused quarry. Still, we dug.

Some troops were lucky. Their part of the perimeter was swampy. Easy digging and water enough for a decent bath as well!

Intelligence reports of a possible attack the following evening was sufficient warning for us to mount patrols on the most likely approach.

They weren't going far so communications would be good. However, radiation from an atomic bomb, set off on some remote Pacific Isle, was affecting the ionosphere and communications were patchy. Well, that was my excuse.

The Duty Officer had been trying to raise the patrol for some time when the "Black Duck" walked in and said, "Having trouble? Giveusago! . . . 40 Alpha, this is 40, radio check over. 40 Alpha, this is 40. If you read me press your prestle switch twice. If you do not read me press it three times." ZZTT - ZZTT - ZZTT, was the stern reply. Obviously they couldn't read us.

To overcome this problem it was decided to remote locate our antenna. After first light, Cubes and the Black Tracker, who also doubled as the radio expert, set off up the nearest hill with the gear, remote station.

The climb was tiring but the view was terrific. The antenna was set up and communications established.

Sauntering back down the hill we chatted about mundane things, blissfully unaware of the problems ahead.

After our third trip up the hill for silly things like changing antenna lengths, it occurred to me that, just maybe, one of us should stay up there for that purpose. One did and success was ours. Well, for a while at least. Until that night in fact, when the "Planties", tired of pushing dirt, decided to move in beside us.

In they came, engines roaring, lights blazing, dragging yards of our DON 10, remote line behind them.

"C'mon Cubes, let's ††*+&* go!! The two ends of the line had managed to snag themselves around the tracks of the 955K.

After abusing the offending operator we patched the line by the light of a pencil torch.

"Get that bloody light out. You can see it for miles!" roared a voice in the dark. Presumably, Nigel and Neville, the Nusorians, had now removed their eye patches and aural protectors.

The reaction of the troops to the cry "AIR RED" was not as spontaneous as one would have wished. As a consequence an air warning sentry was posted to keep the antenna man company, believing that, perched atop the hill, he would see any approaching aircraft first . . . and then warn the CP by line.

It might have worked had he been able to distinguish a Mirage from a Fokker Friendship and IF . . . we hadn't been harboured beneath a civil air route.

Experience is a great teacher and all men are humbled when sprung with an "AIR RED" when under a shower, or communing with mother nature. George realised that modesty demanded the wearing of a tin hat, at least, on such occasions.

Nylon cord, when strung around a position, is very handy.

It enforces track discipline and also serves to trigger off numerous nightly contacts from trigger happy picquets.

We must have brassed off half of Queensland's 'roo population in the process of being probed by the enemy. Still, I suppose, it's one way of keeping everyone awake when performing boring gun picquet duties.

Speaking of guns, did I mention the F EME 4 raised on the 0.50 calibre breech block . . . just in case someone asked us where it was?

No, it wasn't lost! . . . just locked in the boss's safe back in

Lavarack—for security reasons!!

However, all good things must end sometime and, at last, it was the final move back to base, de-brief and home.

The CO, being the nice guy he is, decided the fairest way to decide the moving out priorities would be to hold a "Bush Olympics".

The events involved chariot races in half-ton trailers, carrying the mail—using full jerry cans and cooking lunch for the CO from leftover rations.

Da Nangs peppered steak and veggies, I suspect, ensured the workshop was first off the mark.

Those Sydney Soldiers, Plaza Playboys and Russell Rogues who, having digested this portrayal of an apparent debacle, need not tut-tut or shake their heads in dismay.

We learned from our mistakes and were able to laugh at ourselves, sometimes hysterically, maybe, but laugh we did despite repeated trips up the range.

I'm certain none of us would have swapped that experience to fly a desk. To coin and amend a modern hackneyed phrase . . . FIELD FORCE LIFE . . . BE IN IT!



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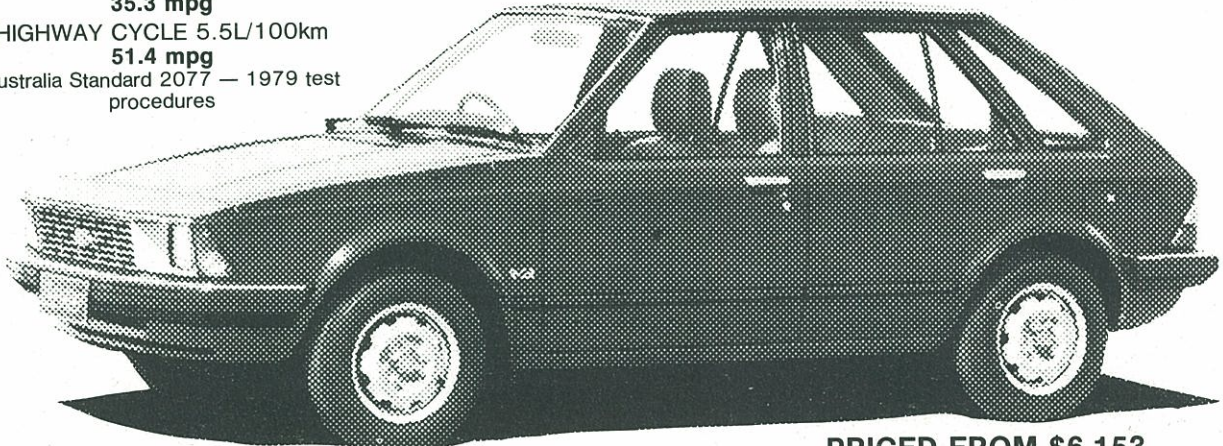
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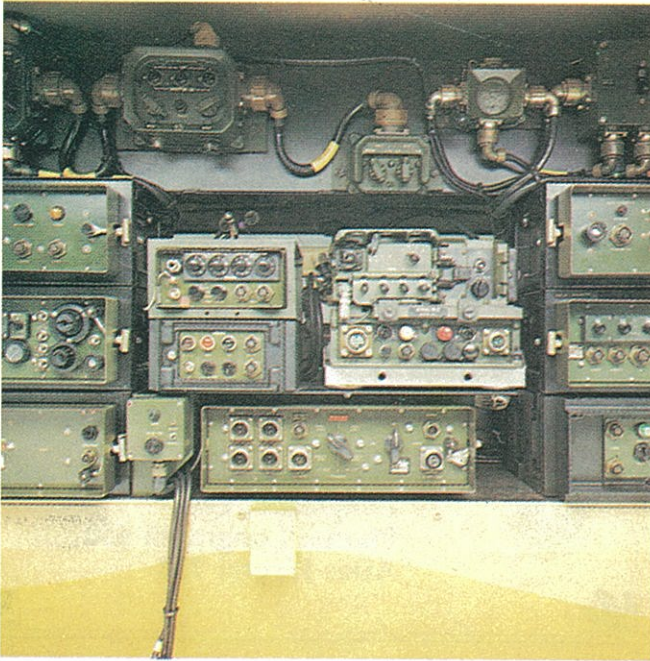
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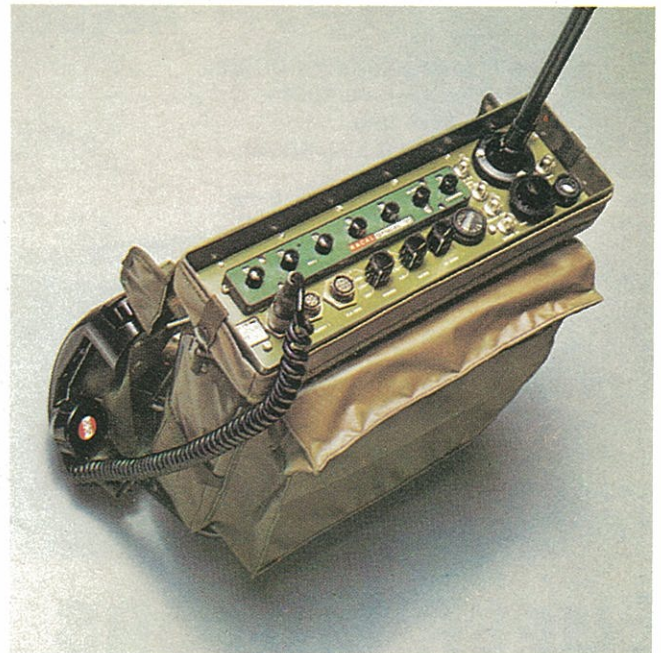
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Craftsman or Private?

By Major A.J. Balsillie

A week after we celebrate our 39th RAEME birthday this year the 40th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Malaya will occur. There is a connection and one that we in our Corps can be proud of.

From their initial contact with the Japanese to the fall of Singapore on the 15th of February 1942 the two Brigades of the 8th Australian Division and its Corps and Divisional troops maintained the proud Australian traditions and against enormous odds. One such unit was No 73 LAD who in the final days prevented what would probably have been a catastrophe even greater than the imminent surrender.

A major factor effecting tactics in the final days of Singapore was the behaviour of the uncontrolled victorious Japanese troops when Hong Kong had fallen. Surrender was inevitable as artillery ammunition, food and water supplies were almost exhausted, but when that time came it needed to be done in a disciplined and organised manner.

On the morning of the 12th of February the Japanese sharply increased the tempo of the battle on the South Western front where the perimeter was only 5000 yards from the centre of the city. Bukit Timah road, the main trunk road and the direction of the Japanese thrust to the city, ran through this area. It was also the demarcation for a change of British divisional command which had been made only a few hours before. Perhaps in the confusion of this, a packet of Japanese tanks was able to dash 2000 yards down the road and the city lay open before them.

This perilous situation was resolutely saved by an Australian element fortuitously patrolling near the Bukit Timah road. The patrol was from a modified infantry battalion named the Snake Gully Rifles that had been formed earlier from cooks, signallers, ordnance etc. The patrol commanded by Captain Couch of the 2/20th Bn was otherwise composed of members of No 73 LAD. Armed only with 303 rifles the LAD with sustained fire attacked the tanks and held them long enough for other forces to arrive to help turn them back.

The thrust by the tanks had caused confusion and consternation however the LAD stopped the tank blitzkrieg long enough for the major forces to reform. The perimeter was then contracted and although much fierce fighting continued until the capitulation three days later the surrender was orderly and far better conducted than if a Japanese breakthrough had succeeded.

73 LAD was of the Engineering branch of the AAOC. Later that year, on the 1st of December 1942, all the AAOC (E) units transferred to AEME as phase 1 on the formation of the Corps. Although 73 LAD was AAOC at the time of their anti-tank action they were of the units and members who formed our Corps. The AAOC (E) had experienced much combat in the Middle East as well so it was actions such as that of 73 LAD which made the designation that AEME was a Combatant Corps so right and proper.

The units and members who were transferred to AEME on the 1st of December 1942 included those of the 8th Division who for the previous 9½ months had been incarcerated as prisoners of war. Although news of the formation of REME in the previous October had been received by a hidden prison camp radio, the formation of AEME was not broadcast because of Australian security requirements. Therefore, those who were transferred to AEME did not know until their release from captivity in 1945.

A poignant but interesting example of this unusual situa-

tion is reflected in the headstone of a Craftsman Paradise buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Kranji in Singapore. The Headstone has the following inscription:

NX 58692 CRAFTSMAN
A.J. PARADISE
CORPS OF ELEC. & MECH.
ENGINEERS
6TH FEBRUARY 1944 AGE 32

The rank title and Corps appointment invites debate. The Corps designated as AEME instead of AAOC appears at variance with War Graves Commission policy on POW's ex Malaya, as the regimental particulars on headstones were to be as at date of capitulation (15th February 1942).

For the rank to be inscribed as Craftsman rather than Private also contradicts the Commission's policy which was made in deference to families who had only known ranks and Corps as at the time of internment.

There is another reason to question whether the rank of Craftsman is correct for those particular instances. That rank only came into use and then apparently only by convention, during the latter part of 1943 and through 1944. Strangely, that excellent book on the history of REME "Craftsmen of The Army" does not recount the background and policy regarding the rank of Craftsman but then again it appears there is very little common knowledge regarding its introduction into our own Corps. Hopefully, someone can provide the story of how, why and when we adopted this most noble and ancient of titles to designate the rank of our primary members.

Although he did not know what his final rank was I am sure that Craftsman Allan John Paradise, a Group 1 Fitter (MT) with 74 LAD (a sister unit to 73 LAD), would have approved of the change from Private to Craftsman.

In Conclusion

by Staff Sergeant Col Harley

The best way to get to the end of something is to start from the beginning. However, as an article has already been published on the role of Sydney Workshop Company's Survey Support Section, and its work in Papua New Guinea, a brief beginning will suffice.

When field results were completed for the 1:100,000 scale survey mapping of PNG in '74, work began on the 1:50,000 scale mapping, with more modern equipment.

Satellite tracking receivers were operated in very remote areas of PNG to fix and photograph these points on the earth's surface. To relate all these points to known heights, such as airstrips and oceans, the surveyors required more sophisticated equipment and the Laser A.P.R. was born.

The Airborne Profile Recorder (APR) was designed and manufactured by the Defence Research Centre (formerly Weapons Research Establishment in Salisbury, South Australia).

It was first used in PNG in 1974. The size of the undertaking can be understood better when one realises that the 1:100,000 scale operation has just been completed, using data collected as far back as 1970!

The Laser, a spinning Q switched prism, with a frequency doubling capability, was formed from the Yttrium Aluminium Garnet Laser (or Green Laser) doped with Neodymium. Fitted into a hired Beechcraft Queen Air, together with associated recording and timing equipment, it was flown back and forth across some of the most rugged and spectacular terrain in the world which is—Papua New Guinea.

Working conditions for the technicians were primitive and often included hotel rooms and hangar floors.

Main repairs were carried out inside a wire cage structure inside a local air charter operator's hangar in Wewak. Plastic sheeting, on top of the cage, prevented rain from the leaky hangar roof getting in. A lone light bulb provided illumination, supplemented by outside light—when the hangar doors were open.

However, a dozen or more inquisitive indigenous people hanging on the wire of the cage, as often happened, did little to help us see what we were doing—until, that is, our Pidgin improved.

Twice, colonies of ants attacked boxes housing the spares and test equipment—not because they were technically inclined, but because they liked the glue holding the padding in place. Unfortunately, these glue sniffing ants decided to cut their journey short by making a home inside one of the spare lasers. After sending it back to DRC for a clean out all boxes were placed atop oily tins, thereby solving the problem.

Basically, the laser pulsed green light to the ground, 25 times a second. The time taken for the pulse to reach the ground and have its reflection spotted by a telescope receiver in the aircraft was used to determine the height of the aircraft at any point above ground level.

A continuous strip film camera recorded the track of the laser across the terrain.

While the process sounds quite simple, it isn't! Neither the laser, nor camera equipment, can work through cloud. PNG is notorious, not only for bad weather, but also for rapid changes in weather conditions.

Trying to fly over a predetermined area, hoping there is no cloud around while the area is being profiled, is extremely frustrating.

At one stage last year the aircraft flew six days a week for six weeks. On only one day did it achieve the required results! However, the two technicians were kept busy throughout, with checks, preventative maintenance and a continuous stream of minor faults which are a characteristic of the APR.

There were compensations for the type of life, though. One was the scenic Cape Moem golf course often frequented by the then Prime Minister of PNG, Mr Somare. Even then we couldn't get used to one hazard created by night invading sand crabs which left golf ball sized holes all over the fairways.

Eventually there was but one lone profile to be carried out. It had been eluding the APR team for almost two years. The task required a profile from a couple of hundred metres above sea level, up and over Mt Hagan—a 4000 metre high mountain, and back down again.

Everytime the valleys were clear the mountain was clouded over, or vice versa. On occasions the valley and mountain top were clear—the profile was started—and then promptly aborted when it was discovered that the valley on the other side couldn't be seen for cloud.

Then, in mid-April of this year, a jubilant crew returned with the news that the profile had finally been completed and with that news, of course, RAEME support for survey operations in PNG also concluded—after nearly ten years.

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Army Trials of the LSH HMAS Tobruk

By Capt R.A. Studholme

Members of 10 Terminal Regiment Workshop were afforded a unique opportunity recently when they participated in the first of a series of Army trials of the Navy's new amphibious lift ship, HMAS TOBRUK.

The trials conducted by their parent unit 10 Terminal Regiment during the period 16 July 1981 to 12 August 1981, were part of an eighteen month trial and evaluation programme, the ship has been undergoing since commissioning into the RAN on 23 April 1981 and were designed to evaluate her capabilities in relation to terminal operations.

The Regiment trials were conducted in six phases in the Sydney/Jervis Bay area. Phase One, the preparatory phase, involved the assembly and concentration at Woolwich of vehicles and cargo to be used in the latter phases of the trial. A representative range of in-service army equipment likely to be carried by the ship in an operational deployment was selected and included the following: variants of the M113 range of tracked vehicles, 105mm howitzer and tractor, LCM8, LARC V and naval lighterage equipment (NLE), ¾, 2½ and 5 ton GS vehicles, forklifts (including the 20 tonne container forklift) cranes and miscellaneous plant equipment, and 20 Tonne containers, BMSS and palletized dummy cargo.

Units other than 10 Terminal Regiment which provided equipment and personnel included 2 Cavalry Regiment, 1/15 Hunter River Lancers, 8/12 Medium Regiment, 1 Field Engineer Regiment, 104 Signal Squadron, 1 Air Transport Support Regiment and 9 Transport Regiment.

Phase Two consisted of a one day familiarization visit to HMAS TOBRUK by trials personnel. During the visit the group received a detailed briefing on the ship's facilities and capabilities. HMAS Tobruk designed as a heavy lift logistics ship, has a displacement of 5,800 tonnes is 127 metres long with a beam of 18 metres. She is powered by twin air reversible Mirrless Blackstone K major diesel engines each developing 4800 shaft horsepower and giving a speed of 17 knots.

The ship's load capacity includes a squadron of leopard tanks, large numbers of wheeled vehicles and up to 550 troops. Tanks are carried on an internal specially reinforced deck which extends the length of the ship. Entry is via ramps at either end of the ship. The upper forward deck, known as the vehicle deck is designed to carry a range of wheeled/tracked vehicles up to 10 tonnes gross weight. This deck incorporates two folding hydraulic ramps which extend to the tank deck and provide access to the upper deck from the stern and bow ramps. The vehicle deck also has provision for carriage of two LCM8 which are supported on specially designed demountable cradles NLE pontoons which can be carried on the ships side may be used as a causeway to bridge any water gap, or as powered lighterage. Cargo can also be taken on and discharged using the ships cranes, a 70 tonne derrick amidships and two 7.5 tonne cranes forward.

Of the ships company of 130 officers and men, 15 are army personnel. Known as the Army Detachment HMAS Tobruk, they comprise principally RACT personnel having the task of assisting in loading and securing of equipment and administering embarked forces.

Commencement of the trial proper, Phase Three, was conducted with the ship anchored in Sydney Harbour off Woolwich. The following mid stream activities were carried out during this phase: marriage of LCM8 and powered NLE to the

stern ramp of the LSH over the stern ramp, the loading of vehicles and cargo to LCM8 and NLE using the ship's cranes, and the loading of LCM8s aboard the LSH.

On completion of Phase Three the ship was berthed at a commercial wharf in Darling Harbour for further loading and unloading trials. During Phase Four, loading storage and discharge of a complete ship's cargo was completed using ship's cranes and roll-on roll-off methods, over the stern ramp. The 500 tonne load consisted principally of wheeled/tracked equipment and 200 pallets of dummy cargo.

Phase Five was conducted in Jervis Bay following the reloading of the ship in Sydney and a six hour overnight passage. Prior to sailing, RAEME personnel were involved in the supervision of operator preparation of equipment for movement by sea and later wading. The team consisted of Cpl Brian Dark, Cfn Ian Lovett and Cfn Dave Lee. A detailed instruction covering preparation methods for various equipment types was produced for the trial by the workshop.

During this phase beaching of the LSH was successfully carried out along with the landing of vehicles over the bow ramp. Detailed reconnaissance of the proposed beaching site near HMAS Creswell produced a profile against which the ship's trim was adjusted for beaching. Following the beaching vehicles waded through a wet gap ranging from 500 to 750mm deep. No problems were encountered and operators gained valuable experience in driving under unusual conditions.

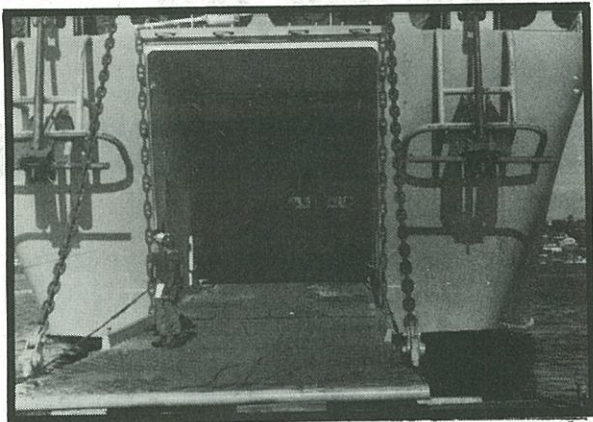
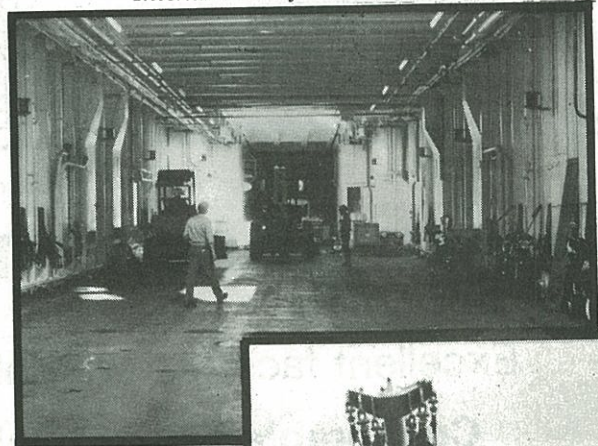
Throughout the phase weather was a critical factor and from time to time strong winds on a high swell caused postponement of some serials. One further serial which was completed following the beaching was the ship to shore transfer of cargo using LARC V, LCM8 and NLE (which were carried on the ships side to and from Jervis Bay).

For the ships company and sixty trials personnel and operators who lived on board during this phase, it was the beginning of a firm bond of friendship which would be reformed when the Regiment is deployed on HMAS Tobruk during Exercise Kangaroo 81.

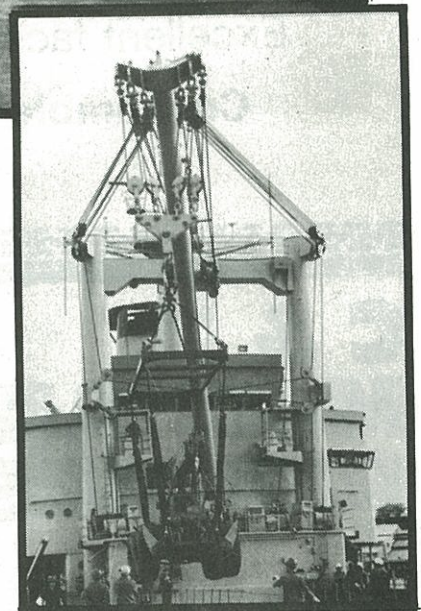
The final phase, Phase Six was something of an anticlimax following an overnight return to Sydney and the discharging of the ship at Walsh Bay by the fastest and most convenient method.

There is no doubt that the trials, provided some unique experiences for the individuals involved. At the same time elements of the Terminal Regiment who will be principally concerned with the loading and discharge of Tobruk during Exercise Kangaroo 81 were able to practice their skills.

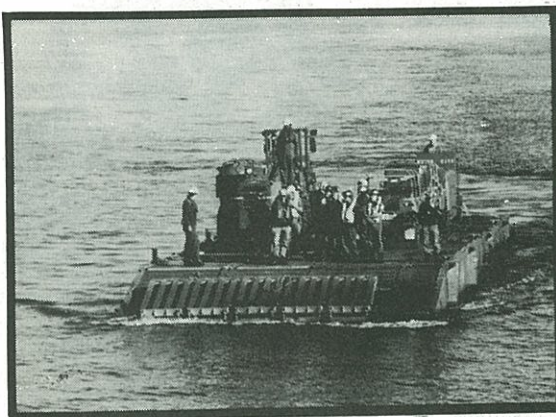
Internal view of LSH tank deck.



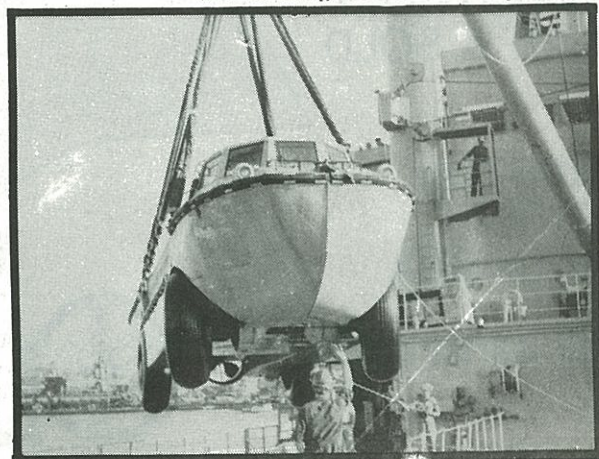
LSH Stern ramp and NLE mooring looking into tank deck.



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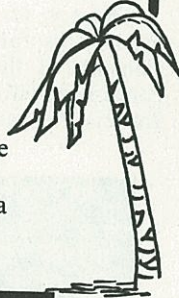
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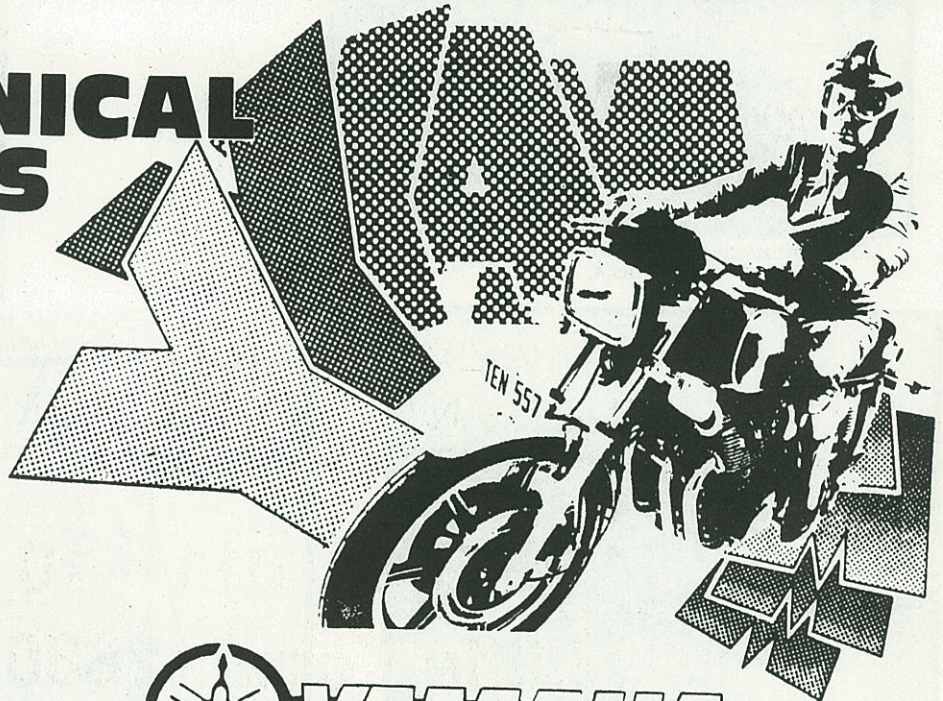
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The Men From Snowy River

By Lieutenant J.W. Frost

Whilst not being as adept in controlling bucking steeds as Banjo Patterson's famous stockmen, there's no doubt thirteen lucky adventurers who recently rode bucking steeds down the wild and beautiful Snowy River, can claim considerable improvement in their control and expertise in their handling.

The steeds on this occasion were bucking Beaufort boats in the hands of Brigadier G.I. Young, Capt. George Vander, Lt. Jack Frost, WO1 Geoff Cartwright, WO2 Ron Moon, WO2 Steve Pearman, WO2 Gavin Bicknell, WO2 John Miller, SSGT Paul McBow, SSGT Barney Tempest and Sgt Daryl Hawke of RAEME, as well as Sgt John Scheuermann of REME and Sgt Graham Elsley of RCT.

Setting off from Broadmeadows with two D400s and a Landrover we arrived at our destination, Mackillop Bridge, about 70 kilometres north of Orbost in the Snowy Mountains. By mid-afternoon, stores were unloaded, tents pitched and our first batch of culinary Olympians set to work on the ten man ration packs. Their efforts were complemented by the fine dust entree of the last dozen kilometres and washed down with sparkling Snowy water, liberally boiled and spoiled with coffee, tea and sugar. Appetites satisfied, large heaps of black rubber unloaded from the stores truck were carried off to clear areas by pairs of members, whereupon they were prodded, sworn at and danced on in a quite inexplicable ritual—probably encouraged by the recent repast!

All the time the ritual continued the black heaps writhed and twisted until, finally, a boatlike shape became obvious—and just in time by the look of some of the 'dancers'.

Unable to contain themselves the couples—er, no, pairs sounds better—launched their unusual looking craft for a five minute splash and paddle in a quiet backwater before dusk fell on an exuberant group looking forward to the dawn of day one.

That night they experienced, first hand, the meaning of Banjo Paterson's immortal words—"Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze, at midnight in the cold and frosty sky."

Dawn broke, teeth chattered and eager hands prodded the fire into life. A brew, breakfast and in next to no time everything was packed into the boats and we were off—into the stark, silent majesty of the Snowy Mountains.

Gentle rapids encountered on the first day boosted our confidence whilst improving our boat handling.

Our earlier than planned start enabled us to reach our first night's objective comfortably. There we met our safety vehicle, pitched our tents and set about repairing minor boat damage. A short distance from the camp site we came across an extremely well-constructed hermit's hut, complete with fenced garden, watering system, outdoor living area, etc. Apparently it was built over a two year period by a couple who live in the hut most of the year.

The second dawn was as clear and crisp as the first with mist rising from a ghostlike river, as the sun's rays gently warmed the air around us. However, as the day aged the head winds strengthened and the sun shone relentlessly on bare skin. By late afternoon a tired, pink-faced group straggled into the



Devil's Backbone, some four kilometres short of the intended camp site.

At this point, at the base of the Devil's Backbone, Brigadier Young and Capt. Vander left the party to return to the polluted wilds of Melbourne. Nobody envied them their seven to eight hour drive after a gruelling day on the river and no doubt they had a few nervous moments on the way out, too.

The track along the Devil's Backbone suited the feature perfectly. Two weeks earlier, one section had been attempted six times before our reconnaissance vehicle, driven by a perspiring Maj. Owen Robinson had been able to clear it.

Meanwhile, back at the camp a red bellied black snake devouring a small brown frog became the subject of a photograph by Sgt John Scheuermann—taken from the safety of the vehicle bonnet, naturally! After swallowing the frog the snake took a leisurely look around for other delicacies before casually slithering on to its next snackbar—leaving ol' shaky hands Scheuermann free to climb back into the vehicle and open his eyes.

On the third day the group was eager to make up the lack of distance the previous day and tackle the little known rapids of Tulloch Ard Gorge.

One last expanse of shallow water, inhabited by numerous eels—some close to a metre long, heralded the sheer, rapidly closing gorge walls and the distant roar of water as it pounded and jostled its way through and over well worn granite reefs, cliffs and boulders.

Excited anticipation gripped the group as rapid followed rapid, each with its own peculiar obstacles and characteristics. Several members shot the rapids—without their boats, creating a nerve racking experience, even though fully kitted out in wet suit, life jackets and crash helmets. Swimming after the boats with limbs and pride bruised, to the accompaniment of screams of laughter from those watching, wasn't the easiest of tasks.

That night we camped near Museum Spur where more than the usual amount of wet gear was spread out to dry. Fortunately the 30 litre plastic barrels we each had ensured, dry bedding and a set of dry clothing was available. Everything else, though, was fair game for the river which came up through the bottom even when it couldn't get in over the back or sides of the boats.

Next day more rapids and very strong head winds forced us to walk in the shallows and pull the boats at times. Ron Moon and I experienced a few nervous moments when a red bellied black snake we wanted to get close-up photos of leapt off the bank into the water and swam straight at the boat. In unison we stood up quickly, cameras poised, nearly pushing each other in, waiting for the snake to come in over the side. Instead it swerved a dummy and vanished under the boat, re-appearing some thirty metres downstream. Whew! Regaining our composure we decided to try and get a picture of a swimming snake and paddled after it. Again it headed for the boat and

again it ducked under, so we agreed that we didn't want to photograph the slithery creature anyway and left.

We arrived at Jackson's Crossing amidst a haze of smoke from bush fires astern and large, thick, billowing clouds of smoke ahead. A large goanna greeted us but our stories managed to keep Graham Elsley peering from afar, while Steve Pearman proved his hunting skills by adding six rabbits to the larder. Mind you, the way he eats it's the least he could have done!

Our safety vehicle was beginning to show its age, limping in with genuine steak, onions, eggs, bread and a tinnie or two to supplement our diet. Geoff Cartwright, our chef, excelled himself that night to provide a gastronomic delight which was heartily enjoyed.

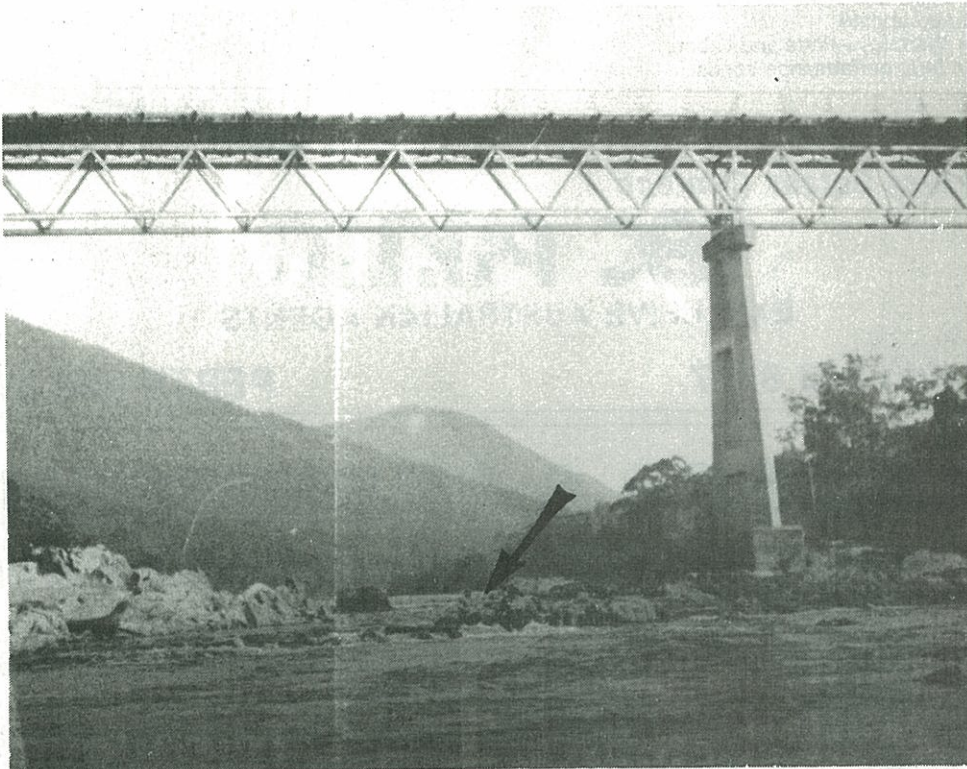
That night's steak must have been the tonic we needed for, on the following day, we covered 21 kilometres against varying head, tail and side winds.

Sailing, with the aid of shelters individual, became a common sight although arms were almost torn out of their sockets by vicious wind gusts which died as suddenly as they were born.

An echidna feeding under rocks at the water's edge added to the variety of wildlife spotted along the river banks.

The river itself started widening out more often, becoming shallower and slower as it did so, and the crews frequently abandoned their boats to tow them across the shallower stretches.

After camping just south of the Buchan River junction with the Snowy River, for the night, we moved on through yet another smoke haze, more narrow canyons and lively rapids on day six but, by mid-afternoon, we'd passed the 100 kilometre point and were well on the way to our Woods Point camp site. That day we knocked up a total of 26 kilometres in eight and a half hours—our best in one day, despite being hampered by strong, gusty head winds.



MacKillop Bridge dwarfs boat and crew (arrowed) at the start point for the trip.



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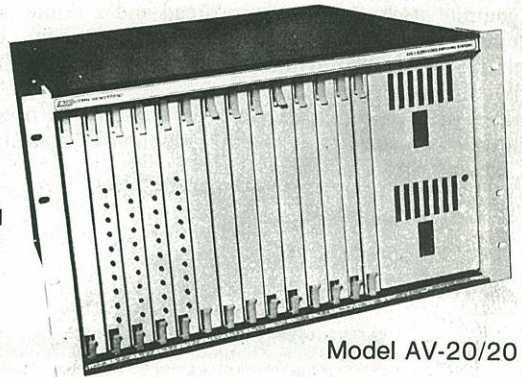
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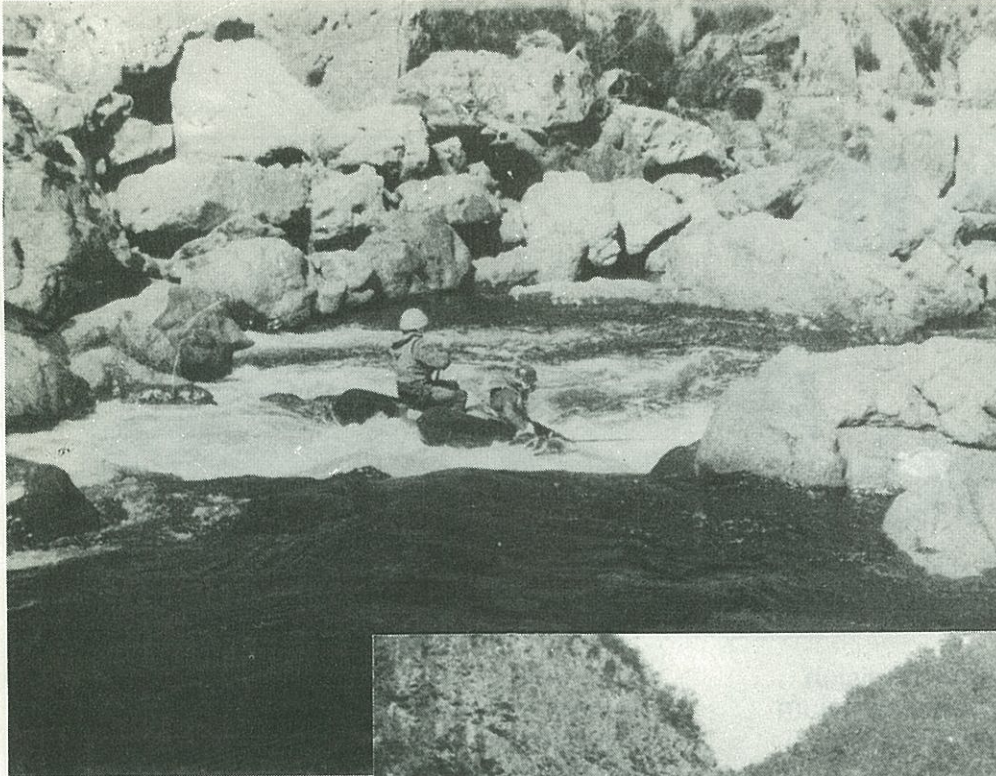
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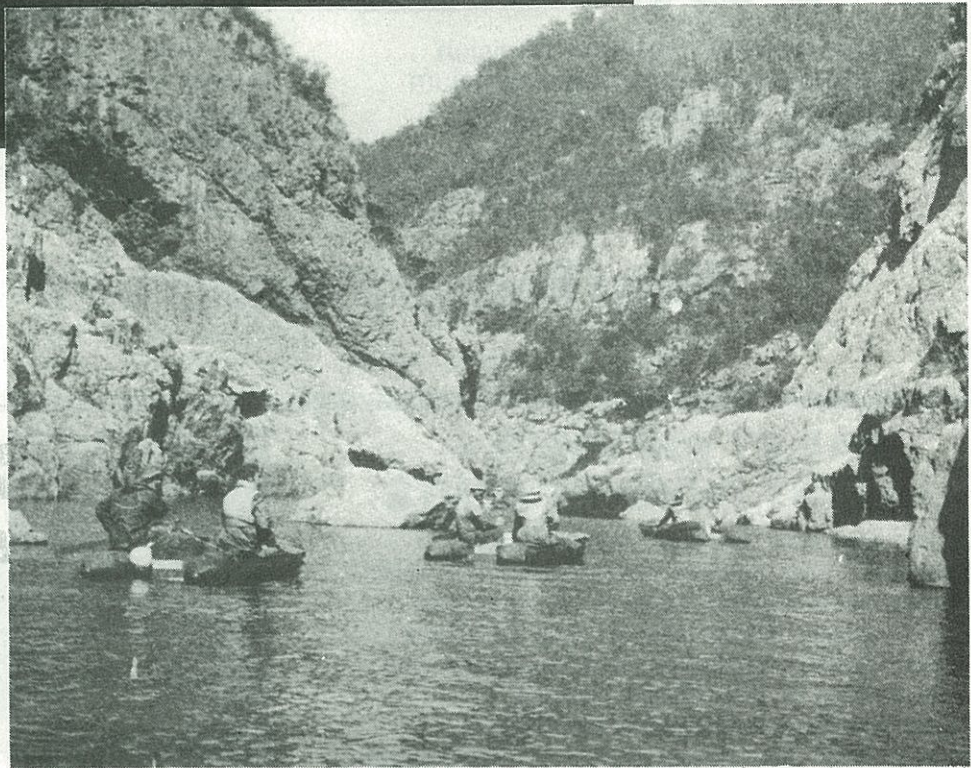
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SSGT Barney Tempest and SGT. Darryl Hawke (both from RAEME Trg Centre) negotiate one of the many small rapids along the Snowy.



The Lull before the storm—entry to the Tulloch-Ard Gorge, the most dangerous and exciting rapids encountered on the journey.

As dusk fell it became evident that the bush fire we'd seen approaching was almost upon us. The wind changed and was now blowing smoke and ash directly at us, with the roar of the fire clearly heard above the wind.

A news helicopter flew back and forth filming the fire, but never indicating it had seen us.

The glow in the sky brightened as darkness fell and we all waited for the fire to breast the ridge on the other side of the river.

Most of the crews had pulled their tents down and covered them with sand to prevent them being burned by falling cinders and we prepared our gear for a night on the river, should the fire get too close.

Fortunately it never crossed the ridge which, to some of our keener photographers, was something of an anti-climax.

Come daylight a very tired group prepared for the last leg of the journey. By now we were eager to get home as the thick smoke haze, which had trapped the heat in all night, effectively

blanked out the sun to give us our first cold day.

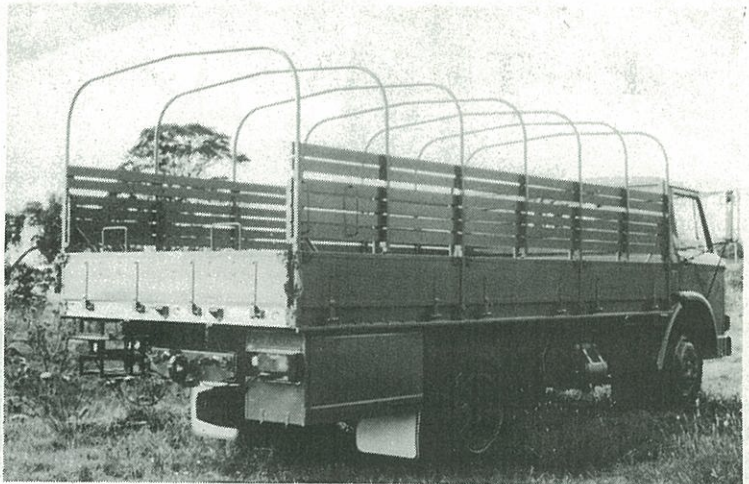
Paul McBow and Gavin Bicknell proved that following birds isn't always a fruitless task. Following black swans down the river, through the shallows, they were able to negotiate the entire distance without getting their feet wet. The rest of us, however, made numerous exits into water which was too shallow to sail through.

On reaching our destination the safety vehicle ferried us to the Orbost Caravan Park where Darryl Hawke had arranged a free camp site and full use of the very welcome facilities. Hot showers, fresh food and a good night's sleep behind us we made an early start next day for home, only to become enshrouded by a pea-soup fog for a good part of the journey.

We arrived back at 'beautiful' Broadmeadows that afternoon to join a suburban rat race that Banjo Paterson never knew but, if he had, would probably have written some equally fine verse about—for future generations.

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The effect of this can be seen when one considers a military class 60 — 49M span — Extra wide bridge, the total weight of components can be reduced from 143 tonnes to 102 tonnes. The military advantages are obvious in that considerable less transport is required to move the equipment to site and the TSBB1 bridge is built much more rapidly due



Sir Donald Bailey K.T. OBE, the inventor of the Bailey Bridge (centre) with Major J.A.E. Hathrell R.E. (ret.) OBE, Managing Director of Thos Storey (Eng.) Ltd. on the occasion of Sir Donald Bailey's 80th birthday.

to the fact that much less equipment is required.

Other developments over the past few years are the introduction of steel decking, steel grid decking and additional components which has enabled Bailey Bridging to maintain its versatility in modern day military and civilian use.

IS THERE LIFE PAST RAEME TRAINING CENTRE?

By WO1 C.P.J. Bahnerth, Assoc (Eng) IREE

After many moons of struggling with Ohms Law and other pearls of applied physics, you are finally let loose on equipment that becomes unserviceable through normal use – rather than the wiles of your ingenious instructor. Now what . . . ?

More training, qualifications and recommendations will certainly help you up the promotion ladder but, sooner or later, the day will come when civvy street appears more attractive and, in many cases, even necessary.

Still, with your trade knowledge and supervisory-cum-management experience getting a job will be no problem. A cinch, in fact. Right? . . . WRONG!!

To start with, what job – at what level, do you think will be a cinch to get?

You're a senior Artificer, with years of valuable experience to your credit . . . the stuff all employers require from people half your age . . . including five years successful experience as an instructor. Would you expect to *have* to go back to school to qualify as a Senior Mechanic, *before* you can hope to be accepted as a trade instructor in an education department college? Of course not – and yet, it's necessary, as one of our senior WOs is finding out.

Is it really sensible to expect a skilled aircraft tradesman, again with years of valuable experience to his credit, to become a skilled labourer in order to keep working on aircraft (refer ARMY newspaper, 4 Jun 81)?

No doubt there are numerous other cases and experiences that can be quoted also.

Until recently the electronic trades suffered identical disadvantages. But now, thanks to some practical thinking and solid groundwork by members of the Royal Australian Signals, the door has been opened for such trades people.

The RA Sigs' Supervisor Technical Telecom (STT) may now, upon qualification, be admitted to the Institution of Radio and Electronic Engineers (IREE) in the grade of Associate (Engineering).¹

Previously the RAEME Artificer Telecommunications, could only be admitted to IREE in the grades of Affiliate, or Associate (Technical). This was due, in the main, to the fact that IREE was not aware of the training our Artificers received.

While the IREE is still, as yet, not fully briefed on all training details, individuals may, on application – and supported by evidence of experience and appointments held – be admitted to, or elevated to, the grade of Associate (Engineering), which is as far as you can expect to get without a 4 year degree in Electronics Engineering behind you.

Of course, this is a giant step in the right direction and yet, it is only one step along a long, long road.

At last some of our tradesmen are able to achieve – in service – civilian recognition, above that provided by the Tradesmen's Rights Regulations Act 1946-1966, or the regulations for Army Apprentices.

A further step in the right direction, in the interests of all Craftsmen, would be the rigorous pursuit of formal civilian recognition of post-basic tradesmen.

The IREE has shown an increased interest in electronics tradesmen trained within RAEME. If this interest is matched, and contact established and maintained with the General Secretary of IREE we, as a Corps, could reap the obvious benefits of our members being introduced to professional people "outside". Enabling them, through regular IREE meetings, to keep abreast of technological changes within their

trade at no expense to the Corps, must be of benefit. At present, it would seem, IREE membership is the only one available. To cover all our sub-professional members approaches could, and should, be made to the Institute of Marine Engineers, Institute of Mechanical Engineers and the Institute of Electrical Engineers, to name some of the more prominent.

Unfortunately, the highly respected Institution of Engineers Australia (IEA) admits no-one with less than a 4 year degree in Engineering, or equivalent, but there is the Institute of Engineering Associates (AIEA) – which is recommended by IEA.

The need for Craftsmen, in general, and Artificers in particular, to keep informed of and involved in current developments in technology is obvious. After qualifying on their last Subject 4 the ultimate test for our sub-professional engineers is their continued interest in their discipline and keeping abreast of developments. The alternative is stagnation and, ultimately, falling by the wayside.

So, is there life beyond RAEME Training Centre? Of course there is, but . . . nobody, but nobody will bring it to you.

Membership of the IREE, or similar institutions, will assist a great deal. However, like everything in life, it's up to you to do something about it.

Membership of an institution will bring some measure of civilian recognition beyond tradesman level which, as you can imagine, is of tremendous value when you leave the army. More importantly, however, it will keep you in touch with your own branch of technology and latest developments. Vital for entry to civvy street. The addresses of the institutes mentioned in this article are provided below. Get in touch with the one that is most applicable to your trade. Your CO/OC may be able to put you on the right track and, if he's a member himself, may even invite you along to a meeting where you can gain first hand knowledge.

What about age? What about it? If you're in good mental health there is no barrier to improving yourself. The oldest person to gain a degree by course work was well beyond retiring age.

Note 1: The grades of membership in the IREE range from FELLOW, for a very senior engineer to grades available to technicians and students. Tradesmen could equate to Affiliate Members, Artificers to Associate (Technical), at first, and to Associate (Engineering) after experience and recognition. The latter equates to the Electronics and Communications Certificate of NSW or, an approved 2 year full time Diploma. Ten years experience is the minimum requirement for elevation from Associate (Technical) to Associate (Engineering).

Note 2: Institution addresses:

- Institution of Radio and Electronic Engineer Australia, P.O. Box N127, Grosvenor Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000.
 - Institute of Marine Engineers, Institution of Mechanical Engineers and Institution of Electrical Engineers . . . all located at 191 Royal Parade, Parkville, Victoria.
 - Australian Institute of Engineering Associated, C/- Mr. P. Thompson, P.O. Box 183, Eltham, Victoria, 3095.
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FAREWELL TO MAJOR PRENTER

By Lt S. Vujovic



Being towed out by a 50 manpower ARVN. A final tribute.

Once more the 4th Base Workshop Battalion is the last stop on the road for yet another distinguished career in RAEME. Major "Black Bill" Prenter, a well known Corps identity has decided to take a first look at the grass on the other side of the billabong. For his last day in uniform, the CO, LTCOL Larry Foley appointed him as Commanding Officer of the Battalion, and so Friday 4th September saw the 4th Base Workshop Battalion farewell Major Prenter with a formal parade and the traditional three cheers, a privilege normally reserved for Commanding Officers.

The parade was a credit to both soldiers and Major Prenter. With the minimal of rehearsals (due to the Major's strict production targets at the "coal face") the soldiers put on an excellent parade. Mr. "Jock" Reid, the units resident piper aided by a drum solo provided the music for the parade.

Following the parade Major Prenter was bestowed the

honour of being "towed out" by a 50 manpower armoured vehicle. He is the first member to depart in the new leopard tank. Former distinguished members have had the privilege of being towed out in the Centurion tank. It is symbolic of the workshops role that the tank was an Armoured Recovery Vehicle Medium.

Earlier in the week, he was given a formal dining out night in the Corps Mess which was attended by the DGEME, several senior Corps Officers and a host of interstate visitors.

Major Prenter has had a colourful career since enlisting as a 3rd intake Army Apprentice in 1949. With his radio trade behind him he has served in virtually all types of RAEME units including Woomera, Antarctica, Vietnam and small ships. He progressed through the ranks to Warrant Officer Class One, in May 1963. In October 1969 he was commissioned and saw his first appointment as an Instructor at RAEME Training Centre. He was promoted to Major in March 1977 and took up the position of Production Manager at the 4th Base Workshop Battalion. His efforts and achievements in the workshop have been considerable. In particular he had shown a flair for the combined management of civilian and uniformed personnel.

With his natural ability, resettlement training and desire to work with his hands, Major Bill Prenter intends to enter his retirement by establishing a modest upholstery and furniture restoration business. The textiles section of the workshop has raised apprentice reports certifying that he has achieved the standard required after he started on a self training programme in the workshops.

Activity has always been one of his strong points, and his involvement in the community especially with the Murray Valley Centre for the intellectually handicapped has been to his credit. No doubt his retirement from the service will give him more time for the activities that he has strongly pursued in his own time.

Undoubtedly, men of Major Bill's calibre are hard to find, but the ARA's loss could well be the Army Reserve's gain. From the Corps and especially the 4th Base Workshop Battalion, we wish him the best of luck for the future.

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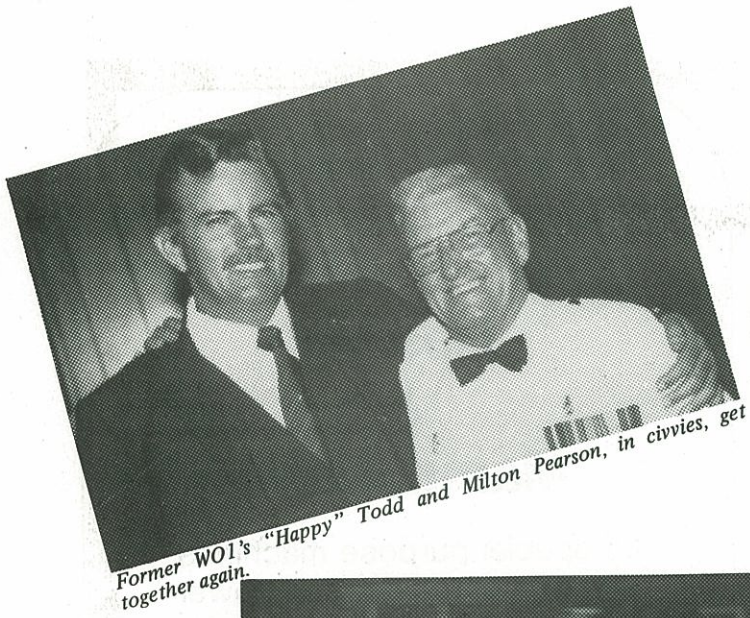
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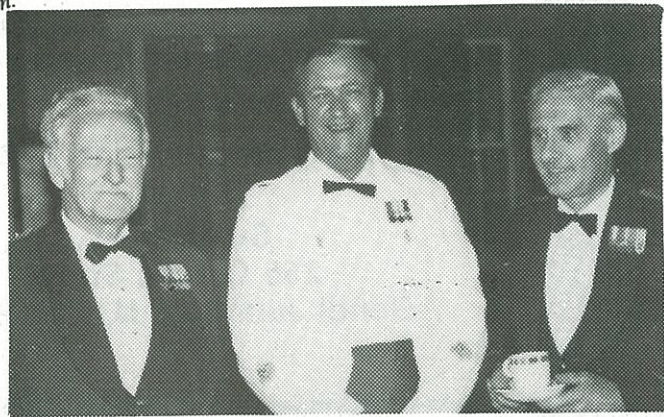
**Slade Point Road,
SLADE POINT.**



Former WO1's "Happy" Todd and Milton Pearson, in civvies, get together again.



Former WO1's Frank Doyle (left), John Reimers, and Frank Maxwell, with WO1 Laurie O'Dwyer.



Brigadiers Dean (left) and Gibson (right) recount old times with John Reimers.

A CORPS STALWART FARWELL

Warrant Officer First Class John Reimers, a near legend in his own time, as far as many members of the Corps are concerned, was farewelled in true style by numerous personalities who, themselves, are well-known within the Corps.

Believing that pictures speak a thousand words, we've opted for a collage of the personalities attending this auspicious occasion, whilst, at the same time, wishing John Reimers every good fortune in the future and a fruitful retirement that has been well-earned.

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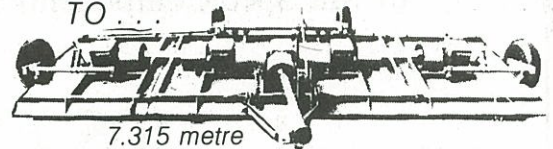
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SOLDIERS BEFORE CRAFTSMEN

By Capt A. Nadudvary

It all began with an invitation from Australasian Training Aids (ATA), for members of the Twin City Army Pistol Club to act as a demonstration squad. The Police Minister for NSW, the Hon Bill Crabtree, was to inspect anti-terrorist training equipment being demonstrated under simulated real life situations.

The opportunity for Club members to perform on static and moving electronic target ranges was most welcome, and it was difficult to decide whom to select. When it was discovered that Rick Willis of Channel 10 (Melbourne) was covering the demonstration, the selection was eventually based on members' photogenic attributes; the team subsequently comprising WO1 A.W. "Fred" Read, SSgt Russ Montgomery (RAE) and myself (no facetious remarks please).

The courses of fire were designed to test a variety of skills required by anti-terrorist squads such as fast draw, rapid (and accurate) fire on static and moving targets, speed reloading and even an unrehearsed clearing of a jammed weapon. Throughout the display the accent was on team work in providing covering fire during movement and reloading, to spotting hostile targets for each other. The team's training in weapon safety had ensured that at the end of the day's shooting, with hundreds of rounds fired (mostly on the move), the only holes to be counted were in the hostile targets.

Clearly, it was a most successful day. The Hon Bill Crabtree was impressed (with the target system as well) and the NSW police will be getting new training facilities. Rick Willis was also impressed, for he insisted on reshooting the whole scene from which he produced a six minute documentary. It was here that I had my first meeting with a professional news cinematographer. They are a special breed of people - dedicated, methodical, imaginative and definitely suicidal. At one stage to ensure realism, he had proposed to position himself and his camera behind a target to get a close-up of the holes being shot through it. Eventually it was only by highlighting the danger to his equipment that we managed to dissuade him from his idea.

The key to good marksmanship is in the lesson; aiming, holding and firing. Unless the skills in this lesson are properly taught and mastered by the trainee, the sophisticated ranges available will only have a marginal influence on the trainee's ability to improve his marksmanship skill.

The purpose of the rifle trainer is to show and teach trainees the correct method of aiming, holding and firing the weapon. It enables both the instructor and the firer to monitor the consistency of the firer's hold. A consistent hold is necessary if the firer is to achieve an acceptable group size.

The rifle trainer is a modified service rifle that has been fitted with strain gauges to measure and display the pressures applied to the rifle by the firer. These pressures are displayed

on the display unit in a simple colour code, that has been related to the various interface points between the firer and the rifle. The display "freezes" when the trigger is squeezed, on the face of the display unit. The display unit shows the levels of pressure applied by the firer at the contact points of:

- a. butt to shoulder;
- b. cheek to stock—vertical and horizontal pressure;
- c. Master-hand to pistol-grip - pull to shoulder, squeeze, twist and cant;
- d. finger to trigger - sideways pull; and
- e. forearm to hand-guard - palm pressure, squeeze and twist.

The Rifle Trainer is an instrument which measures hold. No human being no matter how experienced he may be as a marksmanship instructor, can determine the amount of information in the same time with just one shot, as is provided by the Rifle Trainer. The firer and instructor are able to see what is occurring to the weapon before and at the instant of firing. A printout of each shot fired (dry or live) is available so that the trainee and instructor has a record of performance and progress. The information relating to twenty shots can be stored and recalled for comparison and analysis. Variations in the holding pattern may be analysed.

Proficiency in the correct firing technique can be achieved by trainees using the rifle trainer in the dry firing mode. It is especially useful for diagnosing holding and firing faults in trainees who require remedial training. The instructor may "lock in" a reference shot or use a trainee's best shot as a reference and allow the trainees to practice and monitor their own progress in achieving the correct firing technique from all firing positions, supported and unsupported.

A continual improvement in performance will stimulate and motivate the new shooter. Existing standards of marksmanship can be achieved sooner and with less ammunition expenditure than at present.

The accompanying photos show the display unit. For the technically minded (as relayed in the words of a layman), the Rifle Trainer is based on an 8085 Micro Processor with a capacity of 20 shots memory recall. The holding pattern display for each shot may be recalled at random or, replayed in sequence from 1 to 20 with 4 seconds per display. It is available with a print out option to record the results for posterity.

Future development? A visual display unit to reproduce the firer's sight picture. Placed forward of the rear sight aperture will be a prismatic system with a closed circuit camera to reproduce on the display unit a picture of the target, fore-sight, rear sight and the firer's iris. I consider the ATA Rifle Trainer one of the most outstanding aids in marksmanship training today.

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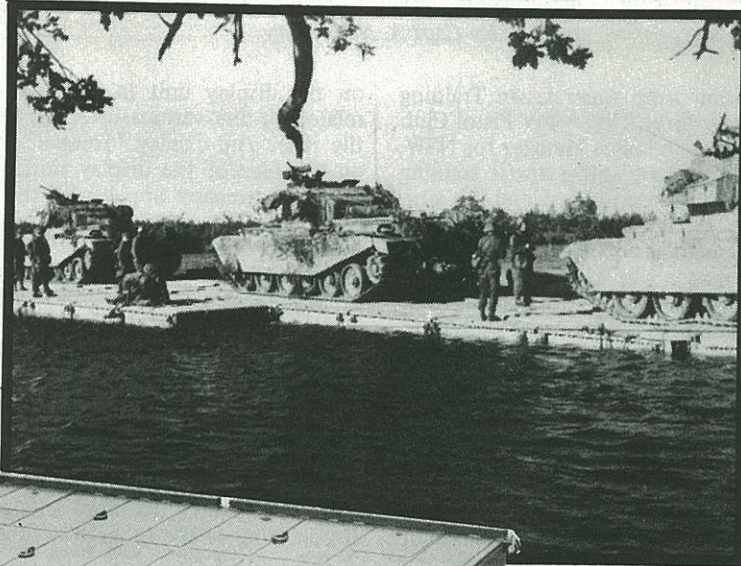
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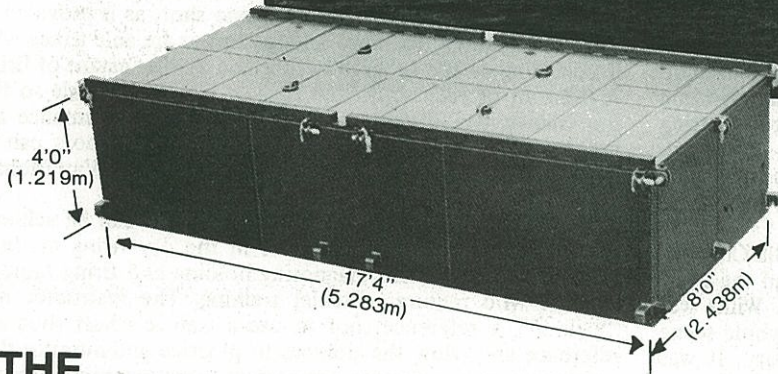
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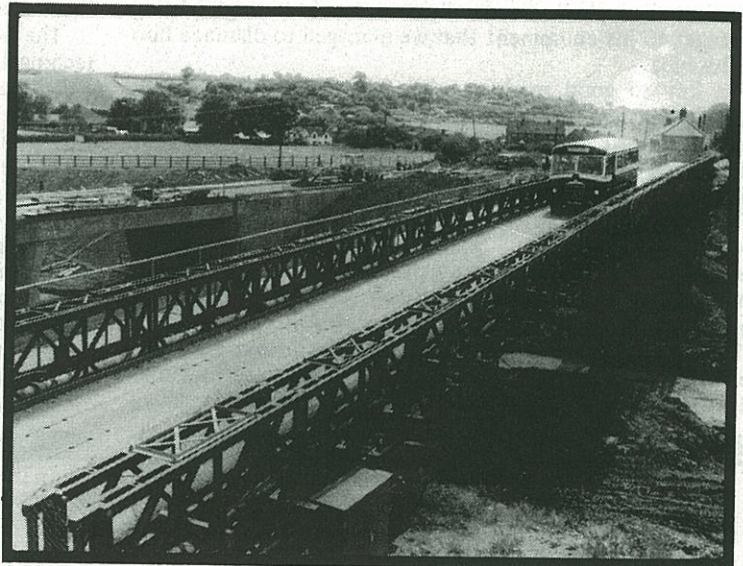
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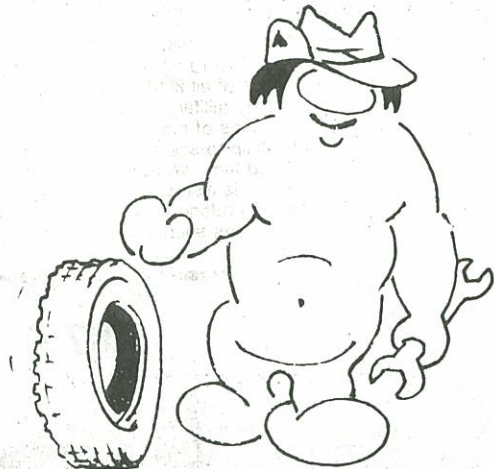
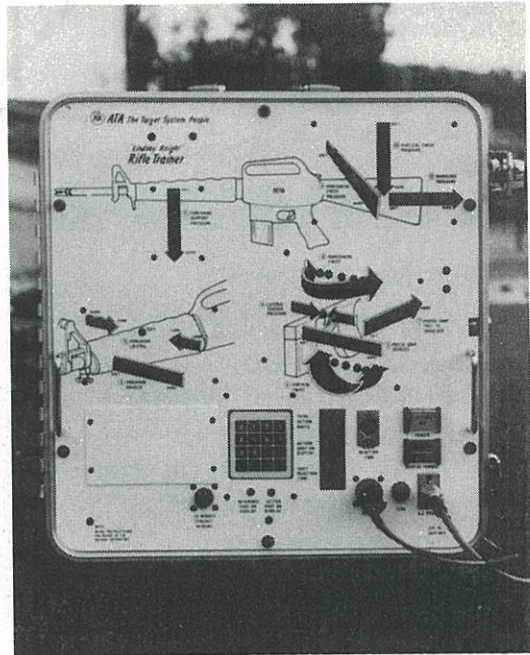


For further information contact: Ray Baxter
ACROW PTY. LTD., 11 Ferndell Street, Guildford, NSW, 2161.
Telephone: (02) 681 3222

I can still recall my frustrating days with 2 RTB and later 2 RAR on the range. Just how do you zero a rifle at 25 metres with a four inch group. With such an equipment you can train 100 or 5,000 soldiers all to shoot the same way – no more instructors' idiosyncrasies, after all, aren't training systems designed to standardise?

And so ended my visit to ATA. As I was departing, my host gently prized my fingers from around the stock and guided me down the passage way. In the entrance hall a photo of King

Hussein of Jordan smiled down at me and I wondered if I would ever see the Rifle Trainer again.



SECRETARY'S CORNER

As this is the last RAEME Craftsman I will be involved with as Secretary, I would like to express my sincerest thank you's to several people who have made my involvement with our magazine a very enjoyable and once in a lifetime experience. My thanks to our sub-editor, Mr Derek Peachey, the breakfast sessions, the after dinner sessions and the many cups of coffee at Derek's home when we have been putting the magazine together have been an enjoyable part of the "Crafty". We have not always agreed, but largely due to Derek's efforts, the magazine is where it is today.

I would like to thank Miss Gabriella Geh for doing the bits and pieces typing that is required to put the magazine together. Even though Derek types the articles, Gabriella's contribution is very much appreciated. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles, we can not print them all, but almost everyone who has contributed has been given a fair go. It is sometimes eighteen months, in one case two years, before

some articles reach print. Please do not be discouraged if your article is not in the next issue after you write, the editorial board will place the article eventually, if they can.

I would like to thank the people who have constructively criticised the magazine. Unless we are told about aspects that you, the reader, do not enjoy, then change for the better becomes very difficult. I will thank Mr Byron (Snow) Snowden, then Corporal, who is now residing in sunny down town Perth, for several suggestions and the constructive creative ideas he put forward one evening in Melbourne, over an ale (or was it port?) regarding our magazine; his comments were duly noted and a few of them implemented.

A special thank you to Mr Graham Aston from Magazine Art. Graham has always been available and has always given me sound advice when it has been required, even sometimes when it was not required; thank you Graham.

Best Wishes
To All Army Engineers

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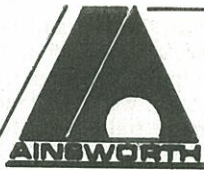
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Best Article Awards

Congratulations to the winner and runner up. The Editorial Board considered a short list of eleven (11) articles for judging. After lengthy discussion, a unanimous decision was reached and the first, best article award goes to:

Lt Col R.D. Manley,
TANKS, SHELLFIRE AND A DAZZLING TORCH
Vol 1 No 1, page 52

Second Prize goes to:

WO2 Ron Moon
RAEMEOTHERIUM YATKOLAI – OLDER THAN REMUS EVEN!
Vol 1 No 4, page 37

As the editor mentioned in his editorial, your prizes will be forwarded to you shortly. Thank you for your contributions.

Not to be left out of the trend to hold high powered conferences, RAEME held its Corps Conference at about the same time as CHOGM. It was suggested by one officer attending the Conference that RAEME was having its own CHOGM (Conference of Hapless Officers Going Mad).

The following comments are some that were overheard at the Corps Conference and are fit for publishing –

VSP: (Very Senior Person): Come here Les, I want you to have a look at this paper.

SP: Hmm – it looks like a heap of gobblidiegook to me.

VSP: I wrote it!

SP: Yes, well – it's very good gobblidiegook.

The conversation regarding professionally qualified engineering officers and the need for more engineers was becoming animated. In exasperation, one SP stated:

"Well, we all know that when engineers die, they go up and sit at the right hand of God".

Research of the relevant scriptures reveals that JC sits at the right hand of God and also that JC was an ex-apprentice. (He was an apprentice carpenter).

Talk of the need for engineers was discussed at the meeting. One very junior, and now more junior member who was seated to the right of the Chairman, Brig J.C. Dean (retired), was heard to say:

"Well look at me, I'm not an engineer, I'm not dead and here I am sitting at the right hand side of JC"

CO Base Wksp talking of trade repair of electronic equipment:

"Well, we have got difficulties here in Sydney, but in Brisbane – well they have not even heard of transistors up there in the Deep North".

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Let's Laugh

A group of diggers were standing at the edge of the parade ground talking when the RSM appeared and said, "What's going on here?". "Oh," said one of the diggers, "I was just telling them about my dream."

"Tell me, then" demanded the RSM, "and we'll all know". "Well," replied the digger, "I dreamt there was a tall ladder reaching up into the clouds. An angel appeared, gave me a piece of chalk and told me to mark off a different rung for each sin I'd committed. So, I started and then, to my great surprise . . . I saw you coming down for more chalk!.."

When a Royal Marine was asked, by his girlfriend, what, exactly a Marine was, he replied, "We're half soldiers and half sailors." "In that case," said the girl, "you'd better tell me which is which. I trust soldiers, but not sailors."

To all EX members of our Corps or anyone that has had a memorable association with RAEME, is there any other type of association, and wishes to enjoy the articles in our magazine, twice per year, June and December, please drop a line to:

WO1 L.A. Wiseman,
Building J, Room 4-14,
Russell Offices,
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Spike Wiseman is the person who will place your name and address on our distribution list. The magazine is free, please do not send money, and remember if you change your address, let him know and he will speak nicely to the computer and you will receive your two copies per year, at the correct address.

"OLD PHOTOGRAPHS"

To this point in time, the credibility of the Editorial Board, in relation to returning photographs loaned to us to use in conjunction with articles is excellent. If you have not received your photograph back yet, do not worry, you will.

MELTING MOMENTS?

(as recalled by Major E.H. Colley (Retd))

A young officer instructor carefully described the aiming, firing of a rifle, position of legs . . . butt hard into the shoulders, etc., and finally came to the final sighting . . . hold breath . . . foresight in 'V' of backsight . . . up to 6'oclock now, "Slowly! Hold your breath. . . hand well around the trigger guard and SLOWLY, SQ. . EEEEEZE YOUR FINGER".

"What happens then?" asked one of the trainees. To which a wag at the rear replied . . . "The bullet OOOO-ZES OUT!"

My last and final thank you is to the reader that pointed out to me that the spelling of Secretary in Secretary's Corner was not correct, it is now.

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RAEME ASSOCIATIONS



Dear Sir,

The President and members of the RAEME Association (NSW) have asked me to write and thank you and your staff for the copies of the Craftsman we receive each issue. It is a very professionally produced magazine and is much sought after by our members.

We now find that the distribution of the magazine to units is such that we now only require fifty (50) copies of the Craftsman to distribute to non-serving members.

Once again, thank you for this very fine magazine.

BRIAN WICKS
Honorary Secretary
RAEME Association (NSW)

Editor: Thank you for the kind words, the number of copies you have requested is now the number you will receive.

A Repair Ship for Raeme

By Major E.H. Colley (Retd.)

With army vessels operating in forward areas of the south-west Pacific during World War II there was an obvious need for suitable repair facilities.

This need was satisfied by the formation, in Sydney, of the 1st Australian Floating Watercraft Workshop A.E.N.E. The workshop was accommodated and functioned in a vessel which was, in fact, the first of its type in the Australian Army.

Formerly the Sydney showboat "Kalang" it was converted to a repair ship, complete with all the equipment required for the task.

The "Kalang" was a steel-hulled vessel of 525 tons gross (approximately 1100 tons displacement), 187 feet long with a beam of 36 feet.

Powered by a triple expansion condensing steam engine and coal fired boilers – later converted to oil – she was built as a double-ended vehicular ferry, at Cheshire, England in 1926. She sailed from Liverpool, England, under her own power to Sydney where, under the flag of her owners, Sydney Ferries Ltd., she entered the harbour trade, operating between McMahon's Point and Dawes Point. The latter Point, still in existence, is an interesting relic of those earlier days.

When the Sydney Harbour Bridge opened in 1932 the ferries became redundant. After a period of inactivity "Kalang" was converted to a harbour cruise vessel and re-named the Sydney Showboat, proving most popular with the citizens of

Sydney and overseas, to whom she showed off the beautiful harbour from the luxurious comfort of her promenade decks – as well as providing a convenient and exciting venue for parties and conferences.

At the start of the war she was requisitioned for war duties and ultimately handed to the Army for duties as a repair ship.

In her grey battle dress she bore no resemblance to the former Showboat. Commissioned as AB97 on the 28th June 1944, she was now fitted with a false bow to facilitate her movement through open waters. The 'AB' (Army Barge) suffix was later changed to a more fitting 'AV' (Army Vessel).

High-sided deck structures housed the workshop, offices and administrative quarters, and a large derrick crane occupied the after deck.

Anti-aircraft protection comprised of twin heavy calibre machine guns in elevated side turrets while her sole remaining defensive equipment amounted to nothing more than energised cables as protection against magnetic mines.

Her wartime crew was approximately 95 which included deck, engine room, workshop and administrative personnel.

The workshop group included shipwrights, carpenters, riggers, painters, fitters and turners, electricians, divers, telecommunication and instrument technicians, diesel fitters, motor mechanics, welders, blacksmith, sailmaker, draughtsman, pattern-maker and moulder.

Equipment provided included lathes, universal milling machine, radial and pedestal drills, power hacksaw, air compressors, diesel and petrol engine overhaul equipment, electric and oxyacetylene welding gear, forge and small foundry (for the production of ferrous and non-ferrous castings. There was also woodworking equipment such as heavy and light circular saws, band saws, thicknesser/jointer wood lathe and pattern making equipment.

An extensive range of stores for land barge engines, chandlery, fastenings, paints, steel and bronze shafts, steel plate and structural sections as well as electrical spares, were held aboard ship.

The ship's power supply was provided by a three phase 415 volt alternator driven by a Bellis and Mercom compound steam engine as well as a diesel driven alternator for emergency use.

The heavy lift derrick crane on the aft deck had a 30 ton capacity and a 60 feet reach with steam winches for hauling, slewing and luffing.

Changes in Kalang's command caused some delays and inevitable inefficiency. There were two officers of equal rank. One Captain for the one deck engine room and another for the workshop.

This combination was unworkable, as in any plan for one Corps (DTN) to provide ship and crew while another Corps (AEME) manned the workshop. The vessel had to be under one Corps and one senior officer.

Sailing from Sydney on the 27th July, 1944, Kalang proceeded to Brisbane where she was docked for hull-cleaning.

On the voyage from Sydney it was observed that Kalang was deeper in the water at the aft end. On opening the aft hatch cover several sealed drums of carbide were found floating in water.

The rudder bearing packing had not been replaced and sea-water had leaked in. Had the drums not been sealed the result could have been very serious.

Late in August she arrived in Cairns. By that time it was evident that her original double-ended design, with a propellor at both bow and stern, was unsuitable for her new role and she returned to Brisbane for the removal of the forward propellor.

The return trip to Cairns in the December proved the removal of the propellor resulted in much better handling in heavy seas.

Five months elapsed before Kalang, following one delay after another, finally left the Australian coast.

The morale of the unit, already under stress common to crews cramped in small ships, suffered badly. Here the sterling qualities of Lieutenant, later Captain B.V. Rutherford, his RSM, WO2 R.V. Trevivian and his senior NCOs – a team that was the backbone of the unit throughout its service – rallied the discipline and spirits of all hands. Publication of “Kalang Cuts”, a weekly, by the Orderly Room helped considerably.

With all the sundry stores required for an extended period of service in the tropics finally aboard, Kalang set sail from Cairns, in a northerly direction, on the 21st December 1944, arriving at Milne Bay on the 24th, Christmas Eve. From there she proceeded to Torokina Harbour, Bougainville, where she began operations.

Throughout her war-time operations Kalang remained unescorted but undoubtedly under enemy observation on many occasions. Her appearance, which belied her true purpose, probably ensured her safety.

At Torokina the foresight of her planners became immediately evident.

From the moment she dropped anchor she was available to carry out her role as an advanced workshop, catering for the large number of army craft in the Solomon Islands area. She also provided a valuable service in lifting heavy equipment, such as landing barges, etc, from the decks of freighters arriving from Australia.

Without this facility the barges would have faced a long, dangerous journey under their own power. Kalang's flexibility was such that heavy lifts took place with no interruption to normal workshop activity.

Jobs flooded in to the workshop. There were 170 Australian Army Watercraft, comprising 86 ALC, 22 LCP, 30 cargo vessels, launches, tugs, etc. each of which was recognised as a priority and treated as such.

However, refusing assistance to the RAN – with four corvettes, 1 frigate and 6 fairmiles, Liberty ships and USA River Class (3-4) LCT was never contemplated, despite objections from 4 Base Sub Area. Self-interest, alone, was a consideration. RAN vessels carried personnel and supplies to forward areas and boiler fuel for Kalang, while merchant ships had general supplies for the whole area.

The unit provided repair, maintenance and overhaul facilities for “D” and “E” class army freighters, small hospital ships, landing barges, work boats, tugs, vehicle and tank transport vessels. A similar service was provided for naval vessels, also.

The machine shops proved invaluable in rendering service of all kinds, from engine overhauls to the manufacture of replacement propellers, on the spot, as well as canvas work, repair of communication equipment and underwater inspection and repair by qualified divers.

Appreciation for the work carried out was demonstrated in the following signals:

FROM: LITHGOW

TO: KALANG

MANY THANKS AND APPRECIATION OF ASSISTANCE RENDERED THIS STAFF DURING OUR STAY AT THIS STATION(.) GOOD LUCK AND CHEERIO.

TOR 030915L

TO: KALANG

INFO: 2 AUST CORPS 4 AUST BASE SUB AREA

FROM: NOIC TOROKINA

I WISH TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION OF THE SPLENDID ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO THE RAN BY PERSONNEL UNDER YOUR COMMAND. SUCH WORK AS THE RAN HAS BEEN ABLE TO DO TO ASSIST THE OPERATIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY HAS TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT BEEN MADE POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY BY THE

WORK DONE BUT BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT A CAPABLE AND WILLING TEAM WAS AVAILABLE IN KALANG TO BACK US UP IF REQUIRED. IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE TO BRING THIS TO THE NOTICE OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING AND THE COMMANDER OF THIS BASE AREA.

//312216Z AUGUST 45

The signals followed repairs carried out on the frigate Hawkesbury, and to the auxiliary generators of the Lithgow which avoided the need for the vessels to return to Australia. A letter, now misplaced, was also received from naval authorities in Australia.

With Command approval RAN's appreciation was further demonstrated when RSM WO2 Trevivian and WO A. Moss were invited to join a task flotilla during the bombardment of Japanese defences on the southeast Bougainville coast.

Cramped accommodation, heat, humidity and hygienic needs, such as showers, ventilation and sanitation, resulted in both alternators being in constant use.

Consumption of fresh water was high, and, due to the limited capacity for storing it, frequent visits were necessary to the harbour's waterpoint.

Clean upper decks, awning, canvas collector chutes and heavy rains were utilised to augment the water supply with as much as 35 tons being collected overnight.

As boiler fuel wasn't an army supply it led to the rather dangerous practice of using dieseline, which has a low flashpoint. However, our good relations with the RAN were put to good use resulting in loads of up to 60 tons of heavy furnace oil being supplied – and the danger ceased.

Landing Craft cooling water pumps were a constant major repair task until a visiting officer advised that ample complete assemblies were in stock at bases in Australia.

Unfortunately there were other instances of where the lack of advanced planning and requisitioning in forward areas were evident, as well as the lack of prompt and purposeful follow-up procedures.

At times workshop personnel worked on a three-shift basis to meet deadlines in order to maintain the total effort against the Japanese forces. At such times the Kalang looked every bit the mother ship with up to a dozen vessels, in varying stages of repair, strung out from the port and starboard sides, connected to her through a tangle of compressed air hoses and electric supply cables – like so many umbilical cords.

Frequently it was necessary to send vessels away to anchor to minimise the danger of Kalang dragging its anchor. As one can imagine, individual anchoring in a group calls for close and successful anchor watched to avoid fouling in a tide, or when winds change direction.

At the cessation of hostilities Kalang proceeded to Rabaul – the main Japanese base in the Pacific. Once again she proved of immediate value to army vessels in the area.

Considerable work was needed to rebuild Rabaul prior to the return of civilian personnel and, once again, Kalang's workshop services were called upon. When her work was finally done, all her equipment was removed for installation in army establishments in Rabaul to enable repairs to essential services to continue until life returned to normal.

Kalang sailed for home on the 20th January, 1946, via Port Moresby, Thursday Island, Cairns and Brisbane, arriving in Sydney in early April, after her crew had endured a tropical hurricane during the voyage and had escorted a small RAN craft with engine trouble, from Cairns.

Although the war was over for Kalang, life itself wasn't, and some drama remained to be played out.

She was eventually restored to her former pre-war role as Sydney's Showboat and re-named “Sydney Queen” before cruising the harbour in all her splendour.

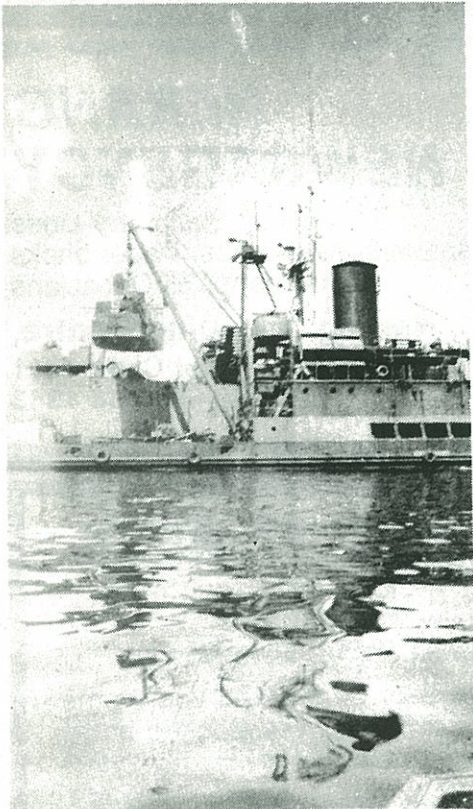
However, the tempo of life had now changed. With the advent of television she was no longer the attraction she was. Eventually she was withdrawn from service and left to languish at a remote harbour berth. Sold and re-sold a number of times she finally became the property of overseas interests.

Seafaring men assert that ships have souls – and certainly a mind of their own, as Kalang proved.

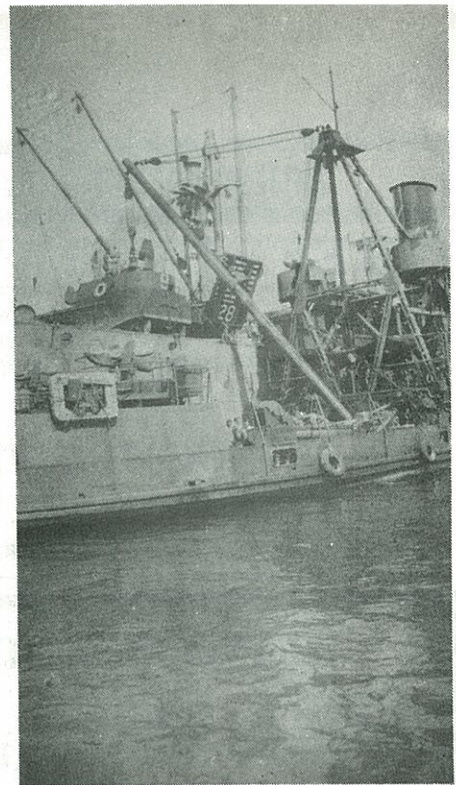
Almost as if she, herself, had made the decision to end her days at home, Kalang broke away from the tug sent to take her overseas and beached herself at South West Rocks on the New South Wales coast, near Kempsey.

Every effort to refloat her failed, and eventually she broke up in heavy seas, although not entirely.

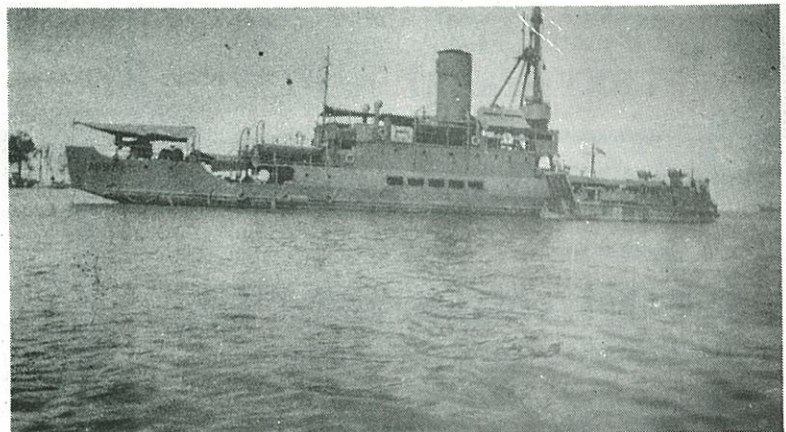
Her skeleton is still visible. A soul she had, without doubt, for in true Australian style she ended her days – on the beach in the sun.



The old girl, Kalang, lifting barges from the decks of a liberty boat in Tookina harbour.



Close-up of aft deck superstructure and landing barge being placed aboard.



AB (later AV)97-KALANG, RAEME's first repair ship- the former Sydney Showboat, in battle dress.

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Promotion — The First Rung

By "BULLPUP"

Ed: Regular readers may remember "Bullpup's" previous article in which he graphically described his thoughts throughout his induction medical. The following tale takes the reader a little further from the former . . .

A mere two days were allowed for recuperation between the "survival" test and the trade test — to prove that the victim could function reasonably well in any state of health or debility and the test benches were designed in such a manner as to provide him with the utmost support.

They were strongly built and a candidate could safely lean on 'em from any angle.

Wide passages were also provided to allow unhindered access for stretcher bearers, should they be required to carry off inert bodies.

I well remember the day I walked past the picquet, just inside the Park Road gates, wondering why the army posted a full grown man to prop up a bush lavatory, or whatever it was, when timber props would have been sufficiently adequate.

Still, he was a "nice bloke" and came to point me in the direction of the workshop, a good fifty yards away.

Knocking on the office door, and entering, I was confronted by a huge chap in working gear.

A brown badge adorned his lower sleeve. I thought, "He must be a Brigadier!" His name was Ellis.

Also in the room — the Orderly Room, were others. A Mr Skene, a Mr Stathers, Mr Birks, Mr Hayes and a fella referred to as the Orderly Sergeant.

At the time I thought extraordinary sergeant would have been a more fitting title. I'd never seen such an active chap.

H'anyway, without so much as a by your leave, a "blueprint" was thrust in my hands, together with a bunch of store tokens, a toolbox (complete with tools) and a few other items, which included two pieces of 3 x 2 x ¼" — straight off the saw.

"Choose any vice at any bench", a voice said. "You've got an hour and a half to complete the job!"

Examining the "blueprint" and testing the saw cuts for accuracy, I chalked up, scribed and punch marked before setting about shaping the dovetail required of me.

At the other end of the row of benches an elderly chap seemed to be counting the cinders in a portable hand forge.

Ben, as I later discovered he was called, was an assistant fitter. A very likeable and competent chap who, before the day was out, provided invaluable help in a welding job assigned to me. But that was later.

Halfway through the test I noticed the entire place deserted. Not a machine working. Not a sole in sight. All gone, just like that. I was alone. What was on?

Was it a mere retreat or a mass evacuation? I'd heard no bugle! A stranger passing through set my mind at ease. It was lunch time. You'd have thought someone would have said something.

When work resumed, another of those Brigadier fellas passed me, down the ramp to the lower benches, where he was accosted by a Sergeant. I knew his rank by his stripes.

"Hey, Snow! Look at this!!" said the sergeant, George Bardsley, holding out two broken cast iron gear wheels — both in half. "They're from the long lathe. What'll we do?"

"Well," drawled 'Snow', "you'll have ter find a foundry and remake 'em, using these as patterns."

A worried frown crossed both their brows. After all, the

long lathe was the trade test lathe. Now what?

In I went, boots an' all.

"I'll weld them up for you," said I, "I've plenty of time and you can add it or deduct it from my time on the trade test job".

The Sarge looked me up and down, recognised me and said, "I know 'im! He can do it!!"

Snow shrugged his shoulders, resignedly, passed the pieces to the Sarge who brought them to me. "Ben'll give you a 'and!" he said.

Surrendering his forge and welding set, Ben got a fire going while I prepared the gears for welding and borrowed a second welding set from cheery Jack Hale, the blacksmith. We needed it to maintain the heat.

Welds finished and dressed, I passed the gears and the trade test dovetail to the respective officials for examination. Personally, I was more proud of the welding job than the filing job, but only the dovetail was marked.

After some arguing with a colleague, the examiner appeared with my test piece and his gauges . . . to tell me I'd passed, but . . . "You took long enough, didn't yer! Still, I s'pose yer'd best report back on Thursday to be sworn in". That was two days hence, but I made it.

First, however, I had to wait for Eastern Command to receive their pay before being ushered into the Orderly Room to face the awe-inspiring WO Stathers.

Reaching into a trouser pocket he withdrew a shilling, head side up, he placed it on the table. Recognising a challenge, I did likewise, to cover his.

Ol' Jack, he just brushed it aside saying, "This is for swearing in". Blushing, I retrieved my "bob", made the necessary vows and oaths and the army was enriched beyond its wildest dreams.

My hand was shaken vigorously — but I wasn't offered a celebration drink. Instead, I was pointed to a door and told to report to Capt Carlisle.

He was very gracious — but directed me to the office of Capt Russel, OME, to which I dutifully strode and knocked on the door.

Bidden enter, I did and halted briskly in front of the seated officer. I stood rigidly before him, every inch a soldier. Chin in, chest out, on the ball of my feet, hands straight down the seams, thumbs forward.

"Good morning soldier," he said, "so you are now a member of the Australian Military Forces!" "Yessir!" "What do you know?" he asked. "Pardon, Sir!" "What do you know?"

It is said the whole life of a drowning man flashes through his mind in a matter of seconds. Mine took milliseconds — as I wondered what I was supposed to know.

Perhaps he meant soldiering, I thought and my reply, somewhat timid and croaky, came out as . . . "N-nothing, Sir!"

"Did you say nothing?" A look of puzzlement crossed his face. "Nothing about what?"

My lips trembled. "Er, nothing about anything." "Good," he replied. "Welcome to the army, Sergeant!" How about that? If I'd been really cluey I might have made Major!!



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