

## God and the Soldier

To all that serve and have served

The soldier stood and faced God  
Which must always come to pass  
He hoped his shoes were shining  
Just as brightly as his brass.

“Step forward now, you soldier,  
How shall I deal with you?  
Have you always turned the other cheek?  
To My Church have you been true?”

The soldier squared his shoulders and  
Said, “No, Lord, I guess I ain’t  
Because those of us who carry guns  
Can’t always be a saint.

I’ve had to work most Sundays  
And at times my talk was tough,  
And sometimes I’ve been violent,  
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny  
That wasn’t mine to keep...  
Though I worked a lot of overtime  
When the bills got just too steep,

And I never passed a cry for help,  
Though at times I shook with fear,  
And sometimes, God forgive me,  
I’ve wept unmanly tears.

I know I don’t deserve a place  
Among the people here,  
They never wanted me around  
Except to calm their fears.

If you’ve a place for me here, Lord,  
It needn’t be so grand,  
I never expected or had too much,  
But if you don’t, I’ll understand.”

There was a silence all around the throne  
Where the saints had often trod  
As the soldier waited quietly,  
For the judgment of his God,

“Step forward now, you soldier,  
You’ve borne your burdens well,  
Walk peacefully on Heaven’s streets,  
You’ve done your time in Hell.”



# *The Horse's Mouth*

## *The Newsletter of the* **RAEME Association** **of WA (Inc.)**

# Winter 2000

This newsletter is the official journal of the **ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF WA (INC.)**. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month, except for January, at 7.00pm, ANZAC House, 28 St. George's Terrace, Perth. Membership or other enquiries may be made to any of the committee members. A list is printed on Page 2 of this journal.

**The RAEME Association of WA (Inc.)**  
**PO Box 186, Bayswater, WA 6053**

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Chris Renall	9341 6941		

**DEADLINE**

All contributions for the next edition of THE HORSE'S MOUTH must be with the editor no later than 25th of August 2000.

**DISCLAIMER**

Thoughts expressed in articles in THE HORSE'S MOUTH are those held by the writer/contributors and not necessarily those of the Association.

**Editorial**

Another General Meeting has come and gone. The debate was lively at times, but we survived the election of a new committee and have begun the years work. Again our main function for the year will be the Corps Birthday Dinner. This function will again be held at ANZAC House on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December. So keep that date free and look forward to a really good night. The two dinners we have had have been very successful. Again this year the dinner will be mixed as it was last year.

The recording of the history of the Association is advancing. When it is all scanned into the computer a CD-ROM is going to

be burnt as a permanent record of the Association. When it comes out it will be available to anyone who wishes to have a copy. There are a lot of old names in the minutes and, doubtless, a lot of memories. We were very lucky that an interested member went to all the trouble of squirreling them away for future reference.

We, at the Horse's Mouth, are very appreciative of the effort people are beginning to put into sending articles in. Every one we have received so far has proven to be interesting to our membership. The more we have the bigger we can make the newsletter and possibly in the next year or so have it come out more frequently.

plained to her that the amount of daylight changes, not the actual amount of time. Needless to say, she was very disappointed.

**LOUISIANA**

A man walked into a convenience store, put a \$20 bill on the counter and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer?

Fifteen dollars.

**ARKANSAS**

Seems this guy wanted some beer pretty badly. He decided that he'd just throw a cinder block through a liquor store window, grab some booze, and run. So he lifted the cinder block and heaved it over his head at the window. The cinder block bounced back and hit the would-be thief on the head, knocking him unconscious. Seems the liquor store window was made of Plexiglass. The whole event was caught on videotape.

**NEW YORK**

As a female shopper exited a convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately and the woman was able to give them a detailed description of the snatcher. Within minutes, the police had apprehended the snatcher. They put him in the car and drove back to the store. The thief was then taken out of the car and told to stand there for a positive ID. To which he replied "Yes, Officer ..... That's her. That's the lady I stole the purse from."

**Payment of Subs.**

**Here it is June of 2000 and a number of members have not yet paid their subscriptions for the year. If you normally pay your subs to The RAEME Officer's Association, The RAEME WO's & SNCO's Association, or the RAEME Vietnam Vets Association then make sure you have paid them to those Associations. If you normally pay your subs to the RAEME Association of WA, then please pay as soon as possible by sending your cheque to The Association at PO Box 186, Bayswater, WA 6053**

**The Association needs its members to maintain their subscriptions in order to fulfil its charter to the members. We have the Horse's Mouth that we try to maintain contact with all members right across the state. We also have the welfare side of our charter to help members. This all takes money. No subs means no money to run the Association with.**

**Please help us to help you by getting your subs up to date.**

**John - Secretary/Treasurer**

**By Any Other Name**

In September of 1942, Maj Watkins of the HQ 1 Aust Corps in New Guinea, referred to **AEME** when he said "...first time **AEME** were in direct contact with front line action apart from bombing; this coincided with the Eoribaiwa Ridge fighting about September 11<sup>th</sup> when the Japs were first stopped and put to flight." The workshop, at that time had disassembled and manhandled 25 pdr guns up the Kokoda Trail and reassembled them at the gun sites. This was three months before the founding of the Corps.

## Jim's Life in the US

Here is the latest offering from our brother in arms from the US of A. Jim is really giving Perry a run for his money this time.

### Druggist's Bad Day

Upon arriving home in eager anticipation of a leisurely evening, the husband was met at the door by his sobbing wife. Tearfully she explained, "It's the druggist! He insulted me terribly this morning on the phone."

Immediately the husband drove downtown to accost the druggist and demand an apology. Before he could say more than a word or two, the druggist told him, "Now, just a minute, listen to my side of it. This morning the alarm failed to go off, so I was late getting up. I went without breakfast and hurried out to the car, but I'll be darned if I didn't lock the house with both house and car keys inside. I had to break a window to get my keys. Driving a little too fast, I got a speeding ticket. Then, about three blocks from the store I had a flat tire.

"When I finally got to the store there was a bunch of people waiting for me to open up. I got the store opened and started waiting on these people, and all the time the darn phone was ringing its head off. Then I had to break a roll of nickels against the cash register drawer to make change, and they spilled all over the floor. I got down on my hands and knees to pick up the nickels - the phone is still ringing - when I came up I cracked my head on the open cash drawer, which made me stagger back against a showcase with a bunch of perfume bottles on it, and half of them hit the floor and broke. The phone is still ringing with no let up, and I finally got back to answer it. It was your wife — she wanted to know how to use a rectal thermometer.

Well, Mister, I TOLD HER!"

### Dumb & Dumber

#### IDIOTS ON THE LOOSE:

##### ANN ARBOR

The Ann Arbor News crime column reported that a man walked into a burger joint in Ypsilanti, Michigan at 8:50 am, flashed a gun and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

##### KENTUCKY

Two men tried to pull the front off a cash machine by running a chain from the machine to the bumper of their pickup truck. Instead of pulling the front panel off the machine, though, they pulled the bumper off their truck. Scared, they left the scene and drove home. With the chain still attached to the machine. With their bumper still attached to the chain. With their vehicle's license plate still attached to the bumper.

##### IDIOTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbour call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason ..... Many deer were being hit by cars and he no longer wanted them to cross there.

##### IDIOTS ARE EASY TO PLEASE

I was sitting in my science class when the teacher commented that the next day would be the shortest day of the year. My lab partner became visibly excited, cheering and clapping. I ex-

## Museum site on defence sale list

FREMANTLE Artillery Barracks will be sold, says the office of Defence Minister John Moore.

Military adviser Dick Sherwood, who handles defence estate matters, said the barracks would be disposed of because it was deemed surplus by the Defence Estate Office in Canberra.

"It's presently on the list for disposal," he said.

He was not sure if the barracks was one of the assets expected to realise \$324 million over the next four years as outlined in the Federal Budget.

The 3ha precinct is home to WA's Army Museum and University Regiment and is worth about \$4 million.

Premier Richard Court said last week that the prime property was one whose present use should not be changed.

Notre Dame University is keen to buy the elevated site, though angry veterans and volunteers said a big part of WA's military heritage would be lost if, it was sold or broken up.

Mr Sherwood said there had been a misunderstanding over an assurance to former WA Governor MajGen. Michael Jeffery over sale proposals.

He said that assurance related to Swanbourne barracks.

**You can help us to preserve our heritage and the Artillery Barracks by filling out the accompanying petition and send it of to the address at the bottom of the petition. Remember, when the barracks are sold and the Museum put into mothballs, it will probably never see the light of day again.**

## Your Committee

The annual General Meeting elected a new committee for the Association. John Klein was elected President once again, this time with acclamation from the floor. It is John's third term as President.

Our new Vice President is Chris Thomas. Chris is still a serving member of RAEME and works at 13BASB Workshop Company. He was welcomed into the Executive Committee by the President. Chris shows the promise of being an excellent understudy to John.

John Curtis was again elected as Secretary/Treasurer. He says that he is looking forward to the complete incorporation of the Association and feels that it will go from strength to strength as time goes on.

Chris Renall, who works at 7 Field Battery, has been elected as Assistant Secretary for another term. Chris is a very capable person when it comes to taking the Secretary's place at short notice.

Our new position, that of Publicity Officer has gone to Ron MacKenzie. Ron is responsible for our web pages and the production of the Horse's Mouth on line. Although Ron features in the General Committee, his position is going to become more and more important in the coming years.

We would like to welcome the new members to the committee. Don Gunn and Geoff Sutherland have stepped into the breach. We feel sure that they will be a definite asset to the Association.

Finally, we welcome Peter Humpston, Michael Kerrison, Mal McWhinnie, Norm Wells and Tom Harris back into the committee for yet another term. We at the Horse's Mouth know that these members will be working hard for the Association.

## **RAEME ASSOCIATION OF WA** **Annual Financial Report**

The association maintains a banking account with the Police & Nurses Credit Society (Account No 170980). The Treasurer has regularly reported the account to the committee of the Association for a full inspection.

The Banking account is divided into three parts, the S1, S2 and S3 accounts. The S1 represents the membership account and all monies paid out and received for membership is contained in this account. The cheque account is tied to this account. Currently there is \$119.26 in the S1 account. There has been a full expenditure of the petty cash account, which needs to be added to. Normally the Petty Cash Account can have up to \$80.00, depending upon the forecast requirements for the association.

The S2 account is an operating account for the purposes of maintaining monies for the "Corps Shop". Stocks for the shop are purchased as required and, as orders are made, the suppliers fill them. The exception are the RAEME Thermo mugs which are purchased 50 at a time. Other suppliers are being sort to cut the costs of items for the members. Investigations are being made to provide more items to members. These include ties, Metal thread RAEME Badges, Photos of the Corps Banner etc. There is currently \$433.70 held in this account.

The S3 Account is operated as a function account. Here all monies paid in for any function held by the association is kept in trust until the payment date for the activity. The Corps Birthday dinner was a very successful func-

tion that cost us exactly \$3000.00. Unfortunately one couple did not come to the dinner although requesting to do so about 10 days earlier and promised to pay on the night. This couple cost the association \$80.00. Even though they were contacted after the dinner, no monies were forthcoming to cover that cost. Currently there is \$1.27 in this account.

FIF & BAD Taxes have been paid out through out the year and can be seen on the tabled Treasurer's Report. There may be some small problems when the GST is introduced. This association does not have a large enough turnover to be recognised as needing an Australian Business Number, nor can it be registered as a charity, although we do a lot of welfare work. Closer to the introduction of the GST, we may have our problems made more clear to us.

While the funds belonging to the association are not a great amount the association has kept its head above water. I can see the association improving more in the next 12 months than it has in the last.

John Curtis  
Secretary/ Treasurer



*What might  
have been*

reader who wants to know what the soldier on the ground went through in the fetid jungle, in battle. Anyone who wants to understand what service in South Vietnam meant to those who were there, should read this book.

LIEUTENANT GARY McKAY was 'medevaced' from Niu Le on the 22nd September 1971, severely wounded by machine-gun fire. Early the next month he was returned to Australia. In July 1972 he was awarded the Military Cross for his service in South Vietnam. After a convalescence which included three operations and lasted more than a year, he resumed his duties. Lieutenant Colonel McKay is still serving, as a staff officer in HQ 1st Division.

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### **From The President**

Sitting at my desk, I reflect back on our Annual General Meeting held on 6 April 2000. The members have put the reins in my hands for another 12 months, and I am pleased to get on with the job and keep the spirit of the Corps alive.

We now have some new faces on our Committee, hoping that one day some of the younger and maybe still serving members will take on the task of leading our Association into the future. Our constitution has been given the thumbs up by the members, and is now ready for the legal people to guide us into incorporation.

We still keep pushing the members to attend our meetings, and become involved, it cannot be done by a few only. We need members to assist with several functions we have planned, ie. the RAEME Birthday dinner later this year.

Our meetings are held every first Thursday of the month (except January) at

Anzac House starting at 7.30 pm. So let's have few more members (and maybe others interested becoming a member) grace our meetings, and maybe talk over old times.

If you cannot make any of our meetings please make your apology by phoning any member mentioned on page 2 of the "Horses Mouth".

Our duty as Ex Service Officers (Welfare Officers) at the Department of Veteran's Affairs, John Curtis and myself have been kept very busy, and it seems the RAEME Association has begun to get quite a reputation amongst the veterans, and that reputation is all good. If any member feels that he can help in any way, we would like to hear from you. Remember, also that, if you have a problem with DVA or MCRS, give us a call. That's what we are there for.

Well that's it from me again, hoping to see more of you at our regular meetings.

John Klein

### **Arte et Marte**

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#### **Snow in the Desert**

The year – 1941/2. Who would have believed that there was snow in the desert. The following is part of a report by MAJ L Jones of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Army Field Workshop.

"Seasonal snow began falling on Christmas Eve and continued through to 2 January 1942 when, at 1800 hours, a blizzard struck. By 2200 hours, the temperature was down to 17 degrees F below zero when all but one sentry post was withdrawn and reliefs were reduced from two hours to one hour. An Arab boy was found sheltering in a shed opposite the barracks in a badly frozen condition and put in the guardroom for the night after treatment by the RMO."

### Book Review

Two books have been bought to our attention that we feel would be well and truly worth reading. They are poles apart in their content. But have everything to do with service to our country.

The first is a new release from the Hesperian Press here in Western Australia. It is a biography of our very own Vivian Statham (nee Bullwinkel. Vivian is an associate member of the RAEME Association of WA. Hence the recognition of her being our very own. The book is called *Bullwinkel* and is a biography of Vivian and her service to Australia.

The Vivian Bullwinkel story takes the reader through her early years in Broken Hill and her struggle to become a certified nurse. Joining the A.A.N.S. at the outbreak of war in Europe she enjoys the balmy days of pre-war Malacca and Singapore until the surprise attack by the Japanese in December 1941.

In 70 days the victorious Japanese capture Malaya and land on Singapore Island where the Australian Military Hospitals overflow with wounded and staff work around the clock under shell and mortar fire.

Ordered to evacuate, to escape a looting, raping, and murderous enemy, their ship is bombed and sunk off Bangka Island. Vivian and other survivors are lined up and shot by a Japanese patrol. Only Vivian survives by playing dead after receiving a bullet wound to her side.

After existing in the jungle for several weeks, where she cared for a badly wounded British soldier, they finally surrender. For the next three and a half years Vivian and the surviving Australian Sisters constantly moved, starved, worked unmercifully and tortured. Although some were to die, their will to

live and to see loved ones and Australia again, brought them through a living hell.

Their comradeship and togetherness, linked with their unstinting compassion for their fellow prisoners was an example to all who saw them and embodied the finest traits to be found in Australians.

**BULLWINKEL (ISBN 085905265 6) by Norman G. Manners can be purchased from Hesperian Press.**

The second book is **IN GOOD COMPANY by Gary McKay (ISBN 1 86448 904 9) published by Allen & Unwin.**

On Friday 8th March 1968, 20-year-old Gary McKay lost the lottery. He was conscripted.

From a comfortable and carefree life of surfing and rugby football, he was drafted into the deadly serious preparation for war in the jungles of South Vietnam.

*In Good Company* is his story told in his own words. It begins with induction and selection for the officer academy for national servicemen at Scheyville, a six-month 'pressure cooker' course which produced second lieutenants ready to lead troops into action against the Viet Cong. It ends three and a half years later with a burst of NVA machine-gun fire during a battle among enemy-held bunkers in the hills of Nui Le.

Here is a grass-roots account of the blood, sweat and tears shared by a rifle platoon in jungle warfare, a straightforward story of the fears and the camaraderie which soldiers experience in combat.

Gary McKay fashioned this account from his experience in action, leading his platoon. The detail is provided from the 80 letters he wrote to his wife while he served. He wrote his story for the

### The Appie Page

Email from Craig Cranston

John,

I have finally gotten around to writing a quick piece on how the page is going to jog people's memories. Please feel free to embellish or edit this as you think required. Thanks for putting this in, and remember, if I can do anything to promote The Horses Mouth on my site, just let me know.

The Appy Page has taken off beyond my expectations. I am currently entering around 15 names a week, and with Anzac Day just passed, it has increased to around 30 names a week. The main thing is that people are back in contact with friends they haven't seen for many a year, and the Appy Network has started coming back to life. It is also great to be able to announce to a wide audience, things like the Appy Reunion on May 27th at Bulimba Barracks in Queensland. My hope is that the page will continue to grow, and the Appy Friendships will remain as strong as ever and new ones will be formed. Check it out regularly at:  
<http://www.bit.net.au/~crashman/>

Thanks again John

Regards

Craig 'Crash' Cranston

**Eds Note:** To all those who did time at Balcombe and Bonagilla here is your chance to renew old friendships. I think that Crash is doing a fantastic job getting the Appie Page off the ground. Spread the word and get as many ex-Appies onto Crash's list. His effort deserves everybody's assistance, whether ex-Appie or not. (Dare I say It! My apprenticeship was with the RAAF)

### RESTORING AUSTRALIA'S MILITARY HERITAGE

Visitors to Irwin Barracks may be puzzled by the collection of WW2 vintage Army vehicles and artillery pieces in varying stages of disrepair adjacent to the nine bay corrugated iron garage complex next to the Clothing Store. The complex is "Home" to the restoration teams associated with the Army Museum Foundation and the RAA Historical Society.

The Army Museum Team is primarily interested in the restoration of wheeled vehicles, whilst the Gunners are obviously involved in the restoration of all artillery ordnance. It is rather ironical that the principal members of the Gun Restoration Team are ex members of R.A.E.M.E! (in fact the Gunners are rather concerned that they are outnumbered!)

The R.A.E.M.E boys include Harvey Everett, Kevin Hamilton, Stacy Hume and Jim Sinclair.

The RAA Historical Society was formed in 1988 from an amalgam of the Ex-Service Gunner Associations, its principal Aim being the maintenance of Artillery Heritage in Western Australia, including the maintenance of artillery ordnance, forts and significant places. In pursuance of the Aim, the Society undertook the restoration of the Coast Defence Facilities at Buckland Hill, the venue for a recent AGM of the R.A.E.M.E Officers' Association.

Also in 1988, 7 Field Battery 3 Field Regiment RAA was celebrating the 40th Anniversary of its post war re-establishment, one feature of which was a Gun Drill Competition between past and serving members of the Regiment. The "Old Brigade" manned a 25pr Gun How-

itzer and the Serving Members an L5 Pack Howitzer. The 25pr Gun had been faithfully restored to working condition by Kevin Hamilton assisted by an enthusiastic bunch of Gunners. This, was the genesis of the Restoration Team that now meets regularly every Wednesday at the well-equipped workshop.

Current work includes restoration of no less than 4 x 25pr Guns, a 77mm Krupps Field Gun, a 2pr Anti-Tank Gun and a 25pr Ammunition Limber. Future work entails the complete rebuilding of a 9pr SBML Field Gun (1 874 vintage) and the extensive major restoration of a 105mm Krupps Field Gun. The latter was a trophy of war awarded to the 10 Light Horse Regiment who captured it from the Turks at HUJ in the Sinai in 1917.

The workload facing the Team is daunting! There is a pressing need to attract people with trade skills who would be prepared to donate a few hours each week on a regular basis to help overcome the problem.

Perhaps you may be interested! A visit to the Workshop any Wednesday between 8.30am and 3.00pm will provide an opportunity to see for yourself what is being undertaken in the interests of preserving the Military Heritage of Western Australia.

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### Pass a message.

**Eds Note:** Here is an email message I received . If Anyone knows the whereabouts of these people please let me know so that I can contact Taff or, if you could pass on his email address

[GJones8971@aol.com](mailto:GJones8971@aol.com)

I am an ex-REME bod on the wrong side of the pond.

My request is just to simply pass a message on to a person.

The person in question is a (or was at the time) **ASM Geoff Abbot** who came on an exchange tour to 12 Armoured Workshop REME in Osnabruck in Germany in 1990.

I was a SGT in the Families Office at the time and remember how he hit the mess in big style; completely building a B-B-Q that ran on gas within weeks of his arrival.

The Officer Commanding at the time is now living down your way, a **Major Geoff Crittenden and his good wife Helena**. If you are aware of their whereabouts a message would be great also.

I fully realise the size of your place compared to my little pad here in Wales, but I thought I would try.

My name and number was 24307453 Taff Jones (SGT REME) A Mech.

Your magazine is a brilliant read.

Yours sincerely

Graeme (Taff) Jones.

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### RAEME's Patron Saint

In 1990, St Eligius was adopted as the Patron Saint of RAEME. St Eligius is universally recognised as the protector and supporter of craftsmen, tradesmen, artisans, and artificers; and of the old world "smiths", "farriers", "armourers", "wrights", "saddlers", "coach makers", and "kindred tradesmen".

St Eligius is recognised as the spiritual guardian and mentor of the officers and men of the Corps of RAEME.

The festival of St Eligius is December 1<sup>st</sup>, which is also the birthday of the Corps.

### Answering Service at the Mental Health Institute-

"Hello, and welcome to the mental health hotline."

If you are obsessive-compulsive, press 1 repeatedly.

If you are co-dependent, please ask someone to press 2 for you now.

If you have multiple personalities, press 3, 4, 5 and 6.

If you are paranoid, we know who you are and what you want. Stay on the line so we can trace your call.

If you are delusional, press 7 and your call will be transferred to the mother ship.

If you are schizophrenic, listen carefully and a small voice will tell you which number to press.

If you are a manic-depressive, it doesn't matter which number you press - no one will answer anyway.

If you are dyslexic, press 9696969696969.

If you have a nervous disorder, please fidget with the star and pound keys until a representative comes on the line.

If you have amnesia press 8 and state your name, address, phone number, date of birth, social security number, and your mother's maiden name.

If you have bipolar disorder, please leave a message after the beep or before the beep. Or after the beep. Please wait for the beep.

If you have short-term memory loss, press 9.

If you have short-term memory loss, press 9.

If you have short-term memory loss, press 9.

If you have low self esteem. Please hang up. All our operators are too busy to talk to you.



RAEME Workshop in the Paddock - what we'd like to see!

J HEPPELL  
Como  
W.A. 6152

Dear John  
Ref Phone conversation Thurs 6Apr00

I am a Life member of the Regular Defence Force Welfare Association, (\$200), where ordinary membership is also available by annual subscription. I believe there is a case for a Life membership category in our associations.

I also believe a substantial percentage of a Life membership subscription, if approved, should be earmarked to consolidate the finances of the RAEME association, to ensure the publication of the newsletter, which is the essential lifeline of all groups.

The approval of the membership, of all groups would be required of course with appropriate constitutional amendments.

As requested, I shall submit a couple of motions.

Motion one. Moved J Heppell  
That a category of membership to be known as Life Membership which would be available to eligible subscribers upon a once only subscription of \$100.

Motion two Moved J Heppell  
That fifty percent of Life Membership subscriptions of eligible members of the RAEME Officers, WO's and SNCO's and Vietnam Veterans Associations, be donated to the RAEME Association in state of origin.

For the record, I am currently a financial member of the WO's and SNCO's Association. Well John, I hope that is enough to get the ball rolling. I shall list a few of the advantages that I can think of, and I am sure with your operational

knowledge you will come up with a lot more.

1. Painless continuity of membership for members. (initial cheque excepted)

2. Less work for secretaries and treasurers.

3 A shot in the arm for RAEME association revenue. etc, etc.

Regards and best wishes,  
Yours Sincerely,

J. Heppell

**Secretary's Note:** This idea has been placed on the agenda for our monthly meetings. The committee has definite views about this idea. We would like to hear from other members of the Association to get the widest spread of opinions that we can.

### Lucky to live

In 1976 a twenty-two-year-old Irishman, Bob Finnegan, was crossing the busy Falls Road in Belfast, when he was struck by a taxi and flung over its roof. The taxi drove away and, as Finnegan lay stunned in the road, another car ran into him, rolling him into the gutter. It too drove on. As a knot of gawkers gathered to examine the magnetic Irishman, a delivery van plowed through the crowd, leaving in its wake three injured bystanders and an even more battered Bob Finnegan. When a fourth vehicle came along, the crowd wisely scattered and only one person was hit – Bob Finnegan. In the space of two minutes Finnegan suffered a fractured skull, broken pelvis, broken leg, and other assorted injuries. Hospital officials said he would recover.

### ANZAC Day in Gallipoli or What has Norm been up to ?

JUST as they were on the first ANZAC Day, West Australians were part of the new force of antipodean invaders on the shores Gallipoli this April 25.

The crowds at Gallipoli each Anzac Day have swelled to almost unmanageable numbers.

A thriving tourist industry has sprung up in the base town of Canakkle and Eceabat, which now host establishments such as the Boomerang Cafe and the Vegemite Bar.

Many of the Sandgroppers ventured to Anzac Cove to pay their respects to those who seem to have given Australia its fighting spirit.

Army Museum of WA volunteer and former serviceman Norm Wells traced the steps of young soldiers from WA, including the 10th Light Horse, made famous in the film, Gallipoli.

The film's main characters were based on the three Harper brothers from Perth, sons of the then-owner of *The West Australian*.

Two of the brothers fought and died side-by-side at the battle of the Nek.

"Bear in mind that our men landed here some 15 years after Federation and, being an ex-professional soldier, I see it as a place where the nation came of age," Mr Wells said, his voice breaking.

Alicia Debowski - who won a trip to Gallipoli in the Year 9 section of the Simpson essay competition - said she had been touched by the epitaphs on the gravestones.

"There was one boy who died at 14 and nine months," she said.

"That's two months older than I am. That's terrible"

Vietnam veteran Rob Asquith, from Maylands, said he felt a strong bond with the West Australians who fought at Gallipoli, particularly his military ancestors, the Light Horse

And for Barry Thompson. it. was a pilgrimage.

"I suppose it's like Muslims going to Mecca, Australians going to Gallipoli," he said.



*Naughty Norm Wells*

Norm is a member of the committee of management for the RAEME Association of WA. He has had an important input into getting the Association going.

From our reports, Norm had a great time on his tour of Gallipoli and the World War I battlefields of Europe. We may be able to con him into writing an article of his impressions of the places he visited.

## A Letter from Pemberton

PEMBERTON  
W.A.

Dear John,

I write these few lines you may wish to publish.

The Pemberton R.S.L., the whole 7 of us, with fund raising and support of the townspeople built a War Memorial that was dedicated on ANZAC DAY 2000. Prior to this there was a memorial only at Manjimup 30 kms away.

Our memorial is made of solid black granite and is in the form of a winged wall. The memorial is flood-lit from 1900hrs to 2300hrs and takes pride of place in the main street. Our Dawn Service and march was quite successful as we had support from the SASR association, the Diggers Club of Bunbury and A.RES personnel.

Fred Wellbum looks after the gardens around the memorial and keeps it looking great. I do not get out much these days but am keeping well. I live 14 kms out of town, visitors are always welcome, call in the garage and they will give directions. I always look forward to the HORSES MOUTH as it keeps me in touch, I like the poetry that you have been putting on the back page. 101 FD WKSP have a reunion this year at Wodonga/ Albury, I intend To be there.

Regards to all  
Bert Gough

I enclose a photograph of the memorial.

**Ed:** Bert, you will appreciate the poem on the back page this issue.



*The new memorial at Pemberton*

Anybody who goes through Pemberton, have a look at the memorial, it does the community proud. Don't forget to visit Bert, one of our country members, I'm sure his kettle would always be hot.

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## Early Artificers

The earliest mention of "Artificers" in Australia came in 1800 when The NSW Governor John Hunter requested the appointment of an officer as Chief Gunner and Ordnance Storekeeper. In September of 1800 Captain Edward Abbot of the NSW Corps was appointed to the position of Engineer and Artillery Officer Superintendent of Defences. Abbot found that, even though the guns were serviceable, most of the Artillery pieces in the colony " had carriages that fell to pieces when fired". Not a very good form of defence.

Abbot hunted through the full time soldiers of that time and appointed his own Artificers from the ranks of those with technical trade training. These artificers received additional pay for their efforts. Interestingly, the money did not come from the Defence budget of the day, but from the Civil List. It is not known how many artificers were employed in those very early days.

## New State Governor

The new Governor of Western Australia is reputed to be **LT GEN John Sanderson AC**. General Sanderson has an unenviable reputation as an Army leader. We welcome him into this State as our leader. He is a fitting replacement for our previous and very popular Governor, MAJ GEN Michael Jefferys.

General Sanderson is a member of the Royal Australian Engineers and is therefore recognised, with pride, by their Corps as a Sapper. The General served with 21 Construction Squadron in Borneo 1965/66 and was the OC 17 Construction Squadron in Vietnam. Many of the members of RAEME will remember him from these units. He was the Commander of the UN Forces in Cambodia in 1992 and Chief of the Army from 1997.

We look forward to the official announcement soon

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## Recovery with a difference

Recovery occurs anywhere. Here is a part of a report from the Recovery Crews in Ceylon. This surely is a new experience for the Recovery Mechs.

"A major difficulty was soon discovered when recovery crews attempted to pull heavy vehicles out of rice paddies, owing to the softness of the ground. The normal holdfasts would not hold and the only trees available were usually rubber trees that have surface roots. Any pulled out of the ground were the subject of compensation claims by the owners.

When I mentioned this problem to a local plantation manager, it was suggested that elephants were the answer and that they could be hired cheaply from the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board that had an elephant pool close by."

After some hesitation HQ 6 Aust Div agreed to this action, two elephants with a suitable trailer and attendants were taken on strength, and the problem was solved. The troops also found that the afternoon bathing of the animals provided a new novelty, one they adopted with enthusiasm.

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## Times have changed

Times have changed since the inception of the AEME Association. In their minutes of the meeting 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1947, they looked at the social aspect of the Association. A dance was organised for the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1947 at the 16 Bn Drill Hall. This Drill Hall was at Bazaar Terrace Perth. Both the Drill Hall and the Street have now disappeared.

Circulars to all members and potential members advertised the dance. The following costs were discussed at the meeting. £5/10/0 (\$11.00) to be paid for the Orchestra; 14/0 (\$1.40) for the hire of the Hall; £5/0/0 (\$10.00) for advertising, circulars and postage; £5/0/0 (\$10.00) for supper and £2/0/0 (\$4.00) for the hire of the piano. The charge for admission was going to be 2/0 (0.20¢). The total cost of the function was £18/4/0 (\$36.40)

Last year's Corps Birthday Dinner cost \$3000.00, a far cry from the costs of yesteryear.

When you consider the times, people had to make their own fun and dances were quite common place. Nowadays the cost of a dance such as they had, with a Orchestra and supper, not to mention the hall, would be far beyond the means of any Service and Ex-Service organisation.

## Commandos get specialised weapon

THE army's full-time commando capability moved a step closer to complete operational readiness with the recent approval to purchase the unit a specialised modular weapon system.

Soldiers from 4RAR(Cdo) are soon to replace their standard Steyrs with the US-manufactured M4 carbine and ancillary systems under Project LAND 132.

Maj Martin Skin, Land Development Branch, said the M4 was the latest version of the M16 family of rifles that had been in service with Australian Special Forces for more than 30 years.

"Special forces are procuring the weapon system to improve operational effectiveness in a series of unique demanding mission profiles," Maj Skin said.

"These profiles include combat, hostage recovery, swimming in maritime environments, high-altitude parachuting, and roping and rappelling."

He said a basic M4 carbine equipped with a picatinny rail interface system in place of the standard foregrip had been designated as the Special Forces Modular Weapon System.

The modular aspect of the new weapon allows Special Forces soldiers to mount a range of very specialist sighting and ancillary systems to their personal weapon.

"Some of these attachments include rapid-aiming sights, night-vision sights, thermal sights, visible and infra-red invisible lasers, white-light torches, sound suppressors, sling and forward handgrip and 40mm grenade launchers."

He said the introduction of the modular weapon system would also allow Special Forces to rationalise their current weapon holdings by reducing several fleets of submachine guns, M16 rifles, M79 grenade launchers and some Steyrs.

"This will lead to very significant savings in training and maintenance at unit level as well as throughout Support Command."

Thanks to Sgt Jason Logue and the Army News for this article.



M4 Carbine, Silencer & Grenade Launcher

## Vale Sir William Keys AC OBE MC

Sir William passed away on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May aged 77 years. His service career commenced in WW2. He was commissioned in 1943, serving with the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Aust Pnr Bn He was badly wounded at Tarakan.

Following discharge he was a grazier at Lidcombe NSW. He re engaged in 1950 for service in Korea where he served as a platoon and company commanded with 3RAR. In April he was given leave to contest the Eden-Monaro seat as the endorsed Liberal candidate, but was narrowly defeated by the sitting Labor member. He returned to 3RAR on 14th June 1951. He resigned his commission in 1952.

On his return to civilian life he was the recipient of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship and later in life, the Churchill Scholarship. He was National Secretary of the RSL from 1961 to 1978, becoming National President in 1978 until 1988.

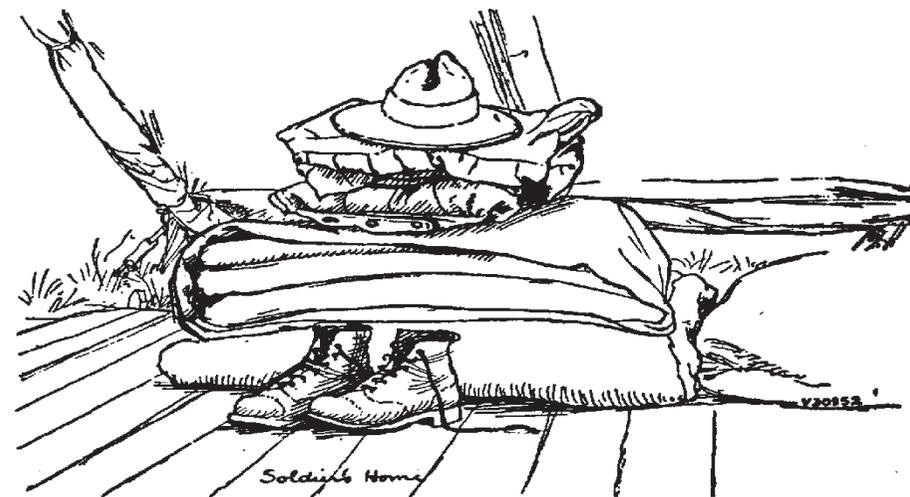
Sir William was President of the International Federation of Korean War Veterans from 1978 until shortly before his death.

In the private sector he was a director with the Advance Bank, FAI Insurance, Pembroke Financial Planners and Australian Overseas Mining Ltd. Sir William was a Councillor of both the Australian War Memorial and the Defence Forces Academy. His honours and awards included MC - 1951, OBE - 1970, Knighted - 1980, Order of Korea National Security Merit 1981, AC - 1988. Sir William is survived by Lady Dulcie and three daughters.

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## Long Distance

Largely due to RAEME elements keeping their vehicles serviceable, A Squadron, 1 Armoured Regiment Centurions covered 54,000 miles in 12 months in Vietnam. Troop mileage was 1000 miles per month with a vehicle serviceability rate of 75%. Glowing reports were submitted on the actions of the RAEME elements.



A Soldier's Home - World War II Style

## Memorial Day here in USA

Here is a note from our American Brother who is a regular correspondent to the Horse's Mouth. Memorial Day has the same status as our ANZAC Day.

Well, my brothers, it is now Saturday, May 27, 2000, the 1st Memorial Day weekend of the new century. At times, Vietnam seems soooooo far away in the past, and yet at other times, it seems like only yesterday!!

Here in America (THIS is ALSO going to my Australian Brothers—I remember them ALSO!!) This is the holiday weekend (Monday being “Memorial Day”) that America stops to remember just what in the hell the REAL cost of our freedom, From Concord New Hampshire, to Kuwait, WE REMEMBER!! I just wanted to take a brief moment in this weekend to remember MY BROTHERS and say how PROUD and much better off I am to have known you, and that I do miss you ALL. Be Careful (holiday weekend ya know) and enjoy!

May God bless all of our brothers who can no longer stand here with us today. I shall remember them as well!!! I just wanted to share these thoughts with you all!

As Red Skelton would say, “ ‘till we meet again, good bye and God bless!!!”

Jim

We thank Jim for sharing his thoughts with us. Our thoughts go out to our American brothers who worked along side us in years gone by; to those who have left us and those still suffering the after effects of Vietnam.

## Missing Person

Hi my name is Carol Eldridge, my husband is Dave Eldridge, and he was in the 20th intake “D” coy as an appy. We are having a reunion in June for the fitters and turners and blacksmiths and only have one more fellow to find. We have been lead to believe he is in WA but we can't find any trace of him. He may have only just come back from U.K. to live in Perth where his children are with his ex wife. We were trying to have a look at your WA site and couldn't get it to come up, is there a problem with it or is it this end. If you could ask around for us to see if anyone knows Anthony Noel Clarke (Tony) from this intake now about 50 years old it would be appreciated for any info. It is a shame we can't find him the only one out of 48.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Regards

Dave and Carol Eldridge  
elsmore@globalfreeway.com.au

**Eds Note:** We did try to find Tony, but not much luck. If anyone out there knows Tony, or if they know where he has been recently, lets see if we can find him. It might be a bit late now, but, if we can find him he won't miss the next reunion. You can contact Dave & Carol or send a message to the Secretary of the Association.

If you are looking for someone, let us know we might find them and we might not. However, with our connections we will have a damn good try.

## Green plastic tank

EUROPE's first plastic tank began evaluation trials recently at the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA) facility in England.

The Advanced Composite Armoured Vehicle Platform (ACAVP) features a plastic/glass-fibre composite known as F-glass in the hull manufacture. Compared with normal AFV hulls, the ACAVP is claimed to provide a higher level of protection for lower weight.

According to DERA, composite materials offer the AFV designer several advantages including weight reduction by eliminating the spall liner and offers integral stealth protection leading to signature reductions.

During the past few years the cost and weight of composite materials has fallen and while there is more emphasis on lightweight vehicles suitable for air transport, DERA believes that composites now have a key role to play in future AFV designs.

The ACAVP is configured as a reconnaissance/scout vehicle with the two-person crew compartment at the front, mission module in the centre and the power pack at the rear.

It uses the complete running gear of

the Warrior IFV with the power pack of the Desert Warrior, the latter consisting of a Perkins CV8 Condor, developing 550hp and giving the 24t vehicle a power-to-weight ratio of about 23hp/tonne.

While the basic hull structure of the ACAVP is of composite materials, an applique layer of passive armour has been added to the front and sides for more battlefield protection. This can be quickly removed for air transport. *Jane's*

This article was printed in the latest Army Magazine. It shows the advancement of Armoured Vehicles in the world today. One wonders what sort of kitchen utensils the crew use for their cooking!

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## Ingenuity And The Manual

US Starlight scopes were used as intensifiers for night vision. These sights were so secret that the Americans would not allow our technicians to have manuals or spares. This made for quite a headache until WO1 George Swann, 101 FD WKSP ASM, saw an article about the sight in Time Magazine (with diagrams). There was enough information on the sight to allow the workshop to actually repair them, despite the alleged secrecy.

### Can We Help You

The RAEME Association is concerned about the welfare of RAEME members in Western Australia, Particularly if they have a disability or getting a bit on the elderly side. We would like to set up a practical help and support group who can provide a voluntary service such as gardening, home help, transport, or assistance with shopping, etc.

So, if you are fit and healthy and are willing to give a little of your time to help other members of the Corps, contact the Secretary and let him know. We will maintain a database of helpers and expertise.

If you need assistance because of age or infirmity, let us know. We will be only too glad to make sure that you have the help you need. And the best part of it is that it is all part of the service.

Wife: "Oh, Harry. You were going 80."  
(The man gives his wife a dirty look.)

Officer: "I'm also going to give you a ticket for your broken tail light."

Man: "Broken tail light? I didn't know about a broken tail light!"

Wife: "Oh Harry, you've known about that tail light for weeks."

(The man gives his wife another dirty look.)

Officer: "I'm also going to give you a citation for not wearing your seatbelt."

Man: "Oh I just took it off when you were walking up to the car."

Wife: "Oh Harry, you never wear your seatbelt."

The man turns to his wife and yells, "SHUT YOUR MOUTH!"

The Officer turns to the woman and asks, "Ma'am, does your husband talk to you this way all the time?"

The wife says, "No, only when he's drunk."

### Hmmmmm!

A married couple went to the hospital to have their baby delivered. Upon their arrival, the doctor said he had invented a new machine that would transfer a portion of mother's labour pain to the father. He asked if they were willing to try it out. They were both very much in favour or it. The doctor set the pain transfer dial to 10 % for starters, explaining that even 10% was probably more pain than the father had ever experienced before, but as the labour progressed the husband felt fine and asked the doctor to go ahead and bump it up a notch. The doctor then adjusted the machine to 20% pain transfer. The husband was still feeling fine. The doctor checked the husband's blood pressure and was amazed at how well he was doing. At this point they decided to try for 50%. The husband continued to feel

quite well. Since it was obviously helping out his wife considerably, The husband encouraged the doctor to transfer ALL the pain to him. The wife delivered a healthy baby with virtually no pain. She and her husband were ecstatic. When they got home, the mailman was dead on their porch.

### Legal Matters

A defense attorney was cross-examining a police officer during a felony trial. It went like this:

Q: Officer, did you see my client fleeing the scene?

A: No sir, but I subsequently observed a person matching the description of the suspect running several blocks away.

Q: Officer, who provided this description?

A: The officer who responded to the scene.

Q: A fellow officer provided the description of this so-called suspect. Do you trust your fellow officers?

A: Yes sir, with my life.

Q: **WITH YOUR LIFE?** Let me ask you this then officer - do you have a locker room in the police station-a room where you change your clothes in preparation for your daily duties?

A: Yes sir, we do.

Q: And do you have a locker in that room?

A: Yes sir, I do.

Q: And do you have a lock on your locker?A: Yes sir.

Q: Now why is it, officer, **IF YOU TRUST YOUR FELLOW OFFICERS WITH YOUR LIFE**, that you find it necessary to lock your locker in a room you share with those officers?

A: Well sir, we share the building with several courtrooms, and sometimes lawyers have been known to walk through our locker room.

### What is a Non Commissioned Officer?

Non-Commissioned Officers are the backbone of every fighting force. Here is what makes them tick.

1. Can curse for ten minutes without ever repeating a word.
2. Has a spine.
3. Can play a cherry Lieutenant like a finely tuned instrument.
4. Can see in the Dark.
5. Have eyes in the back of their heads.
6. Still doesn't trust the Russians.
7. Still hates the French.
8. Doesn't know how to be politically correct.
9. Doesn't give a damn about being politically correct.
10. Thinks that "politically correct" should fall under "sodomy" in the JSP.
11. Loves deployments because there is less paperwork and more "real" work.
12. Can run a 5 kilometres with a hang-over, but can't pass a fitness test.
13. Does not fear women in the military.
14. Would actually like to date G.I. Jane.
15. Still knows how to fit a buffer spring in a .30 cal.
16. Can tell you anything you want to know about a .303 SMLE even though they are no longer in the inventory.
17. Believes that they do have a rendezvous with destiny.
18. Believes that "Nuts" wasn't all that Brigadier General McAuliffe said to the Germans at Bastogne.
19. Doesn't know how (and refuses to learn) to use a "stress card".
20. Idolises John Wayne.
21. Doesn't believe that FRG really needs a "commander".
22. Would have paid money to see

Custer getting his clock cleaned.

23. Really doesn't like taking crap from those who haven't "been there".

24. Knows how to properly construct a field latrine.

25. Knows how to do a daisy chain.

26. Knows that a daisy chain is not a sex act.

28. Might admire the Germans, but still realises they got their butts kicked.

29. Aren't afraid of the Chinese, who probably don't have enough rowboats to invade Taiwan.

30. Doesn't believe a damn thing the Iraqis say.

31. Doesn't need a GPS to find themselves.

32. Has enough DPCU's in their closet to start a surplus store.

33. Thinks that Ration Pack's taste good. (With a little hot sauce)

34. Are convinced that "wall-to-wall" counselling really works.

35. Has more time on the frontline than most others have in the Mess queue.

36. Knows how to make tea or coffee when the measuring scoop goes missing.

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### Desert Storm

We all know that the Royal Australian Navy was involved in the Gulf War. But what is not widely known is that two RAEME Corporals were attached to the Navy at that time were. Both served in the Gulf.

At the same time there was three RAEME officers attached to REME units who were posted to the Gulf.

So we have five RAEME members who wear the Gulf War medals.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

Food for thought - True then, true today

“One of the inevitable problems with the Marine Corps or any other military service is that staff officers take over the minute a war is ended. The combat people run things when the chips are down and the country’s life is at stake - but when the guns stop, nobody’s got use for a combat man.”

(1946 Colonel), LtGen Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller, USMC (Ret.)

**Eds Note:** This may reflect the feelings in the American Forces, but it is just as true for the Australian’s.

**Spaghetti**

A doctor was having an affair with his nurse. Shortly afterward, she told him she was pregnant. Not wanting his wife to know, he gave the nurse a sum of money and asked her to go to Italy and have the baby there.

“But how will I let you know the baby is born?” she asked.

He replied, “Just send me a postcard and write “spaghetti” on the back. I’ll take care of expenses.”

“Not knowing what else to do, the nurse took the money and flew to Italy.

Six months went by and then one day the doctor’s wife called him at the office and explained “Dear, you received a very strange postcard in the mail today from Europe, and I don’t understand what it means.”

The doctor said “Just wait until I get home and I will explain it to you”.

Later that evening the doctor came

home, read the postcard; fell to the floor with a heart attack. Paramedics rushed him to the ER.

The lead medic stayed back to comfort the wife. He asked what trauma had precipitated the cardiac arrest. So the wife picked up the card and read

“Spaghetti, Spaghetti, Spaghetti, Spaghetti. Two with sausage and meatballs, two without.”

From Chris Jones, NSW RAEME Assoc.

**A Very Special Thank You**

We would like to acknowledge the very special work that is being done for the Association. **Ron MacKenzie** is our Web Master and, now, the Association Publicity Officer. His dedication to making the RAEME Association of WA work for its members is well above and beyond the call of duty. Judging from the favourable comments we receive from all over the world, the Web Site is fast becoming a favourite stopping place for people with EME like minds.

Ron was also instrumental with getting RAEME onto the Webring with RCEME and REME. His interest in helping us spread the word all over the world has certainly put us on the map. For those on the web make a note of <http://www.redbackweb.com.au/raemewa/index.html> and put it on your bookmark list.

**Thanks Ron. We really appreciate what you have done for us.**

**Life According to Perry**

Here is the latest offering from our own home spun Philosopher Perry.

**Conferences**

At the 1999 World Women’s Conference the first speaker from Canada stood up: “At last year’s conference we spoke about being more assertive with our husbands. Well, after the conference I went home and told my husband that I would no longer cook for him and that he would have to do it himself. After the first day I saw nothing. After the second day I saw nothing. But after the third day I saw that he had cooked a wonderful roast lamb.” The crowd cheered.

The second speaker from France stood up: “After last year’s Conference I went home and told my husband that I would no longer do his laundry and that he would have to do it himself. After the first day I saw nothing. After the second day I saw nothing. But after the third day I saw that he had done not only his own washing but my washing as well.” The crowd cheered.

The third speaker from Glasgow stood up: “Efter last year’s Conference ah went hame and tellt ma man that I widnae dae his cookin’, cleanin’ or shoppin’ and that he wid hiftae dae it himsel. Efter the first day ah saw nuhin’. Efter the second day ah saw nuhin’. But efter the third day I could see a wee bit ooto ma left eye. “

**Dilbert’s Words of Wisdom**

1. I can only please one person per day. Today is not your day. Tomorrow is not looking good either.
2. I love deadlines. I especially like the whooshing sound they make as they go flying by.
3. Tell me what you need, and I’ll

tell you how to get along without it.

4. Accept that some days you are the pigeon and some days the statue.

5. Needing someone is like needing a parachute. If he isn’t there the first time, chances are you won’t be needing him again.

6. I don’t have an attitude problem, you have a perception problem.

7. Last night I lay in bed looking up at the stars in the sky and I thought to myself, where the heck is the ceiling?

8. My reality check bounced.

9. On the keyboard of life, always keep one finger on the escape key.

10. I don’t suffer from stress. I am a carrier.

11. You are slower than a herd of turtles stampeding through peanut butter.

12. Do not meddle in the affairs of dragons, because you are crunchy and taste good with ketchup.

13. Everybody is somebody else’s weirdo.

14. Never argue with an idiot. They drag you down to their level then beat you with experience

**Backseat Driver**

A man who is driving a car is stopped by a police officer. The following exchange takes place....

The man says, “What’s the problem officer?”

Officer: “You were going at least 75 in a 55 zone.”

Man: “No sir, I was going 65.”

different; "It was hard coming back, everyone was excited about returning. Over there was your life for six months, you got comfortable. When I first came back, I had no one there at the time, my parents were [in WA] and I had no close family or relatives in Townsville, that made it hard." Being away so long also put a lot of strain on personal relationships, Graeme said.

So it was fine the first time around, I asked him if he would mind going back again. "There is a possibility of going back, because there isn't enough people to rotate through and there's still a big commitment over there for us. I'm waiting to hear word about it. There may be another six-month rotation over there which is way too long I think. Two months would be excellent, too catch up with all the kids and see how things are progressing over there."

Graeme didn't march with the other returned troops from Timor in the recent ANZAC parade here in Perth, instead he marched beside his Grandfather who served in World War Two flying Catalina's. "Pop was a bit upset that I went in the army but I think he's pretty proud now."

"Overall it was a pretty enjoyable experience. I think everyone that went over had an enjoyable time. When it was hard it was hard, when it was good it was excellent," he concludes with a smile.

### **Don't Forget**

The HORSE'S MOUTH welcomes any correspondence, letters to the Editor, moans or groans. If you have a point of view, let us know. You can send contributions to the Editor at the address on page 2. Remember that you are responsible for what you write. The journal has a disclaimer, also on page 2. So let's have the articles and points of view that are just busting to get out.

### **LONG TAN DAY**

Here is a message from Merv Flanders that, I think, should be acted upon by all members of the RAEME Associations. We should all get behind our veterans and show them that there is still an *Espirit De Corps* out there. Support the Vietnam Veterans on their special day. They deserve it.

Hi there John,

As discussed please put following in next newsletter. I am not sure what day the ceremony will be as Long Tan Day is actually on a Friday. Perhaps you may be able to qualify this in your coverage of the event.

### **17 Const Sqn Wksp Vietnam Association**

The association will be parading the unit banner at the Long Tan Day ceremony in Kings Park. All members who served with the workshop are invited to attend and observe this occasion. It is intended that we join with RAEME Vietnam Veterans and enjoy the day.

**REMEMBER  
# BE LIKE THE BEAR #  
BE SQUARE, BE THERE !!!!**

Thanks for the help  
Regards  
Merv Flanders  
flanders@nw.com.au

Here is an article written about our own which appeared in the Curtin Independent recently. This is an article that tells it as it is. We thank Pam Medlen for writing the story and her permission to use it. We also thank Rick Barrett and the School of Media and Information, Curtin University for telling people what Australians can do. Graeme talks of the good times in East Timor, but they worked very hard under extremely difficult conditions. Our East Timor veterans have well and truly upheld the traditions of the ANZACs.

### **In East Timor**

They have been deemed our newest ANZACs, a title that demands the highest respect in Australia. They are the service men and women who have been serving in East Timor.

When Graeme Peirce joined the army five years ago and trained to be a mechanic, he didn't expect to be sent overseas on a peacekeeping mission. Over coffee, he told me about his experience in Timor; his first trip overseas.

Graeme hadn't followed the turmoil in the country until he was told Ten Force Support Battalion was to be sent to East Timor in early October last year.

"I had different emotions at first, I didn't want to go but also sort of wanted to go to experience it and see how I'd react under different circumstances," he said. A true ANZAC, he pictured it as an adventure.

When the news came that his battalion was going over, he called home to WA to tell his parents, who were both upset by the news. Graeme's sister and relatives surprised his Mum with a last minute ticket to fly across to Townsville to visit him before he sailed out.

"When we first got there it was like whoa, this is a bit of a mess. Everything was just destroyed," he said about



*Graeme and Friends*

his first impression of Dili. The first task was to clean up areas to use as workshops. Like the majority of buildings theirs was burnt to the ground, only its walls were still standing.

“The first couple of weeks there were pretty unbearable, stinking hot. I think we just got used to it after a couple of weeks. It used to rain fairly often and when it rained it came down for a couple of hours. The first area we went to we just got it set up and this big rain came and washed everything out, the whole lot got wet. It was no big deal, you dried out the next day,” he laughs.

“When we got into Timor most of the militia men and the people that were causing the trouble within Dili were actually out of Dili so we weren’t too troubled. It was really on the outskirts they were trying to get rid of those people. The Indonesian army were still there and there was a bit of animosity between them and the Australians. There were a few incidences when we clashed together, no shots fired or anything, but it was a bit tense.”

Friends and family were very supportive; they were allowed to send parcels to Timor of up to 20 kilograms free. Graeme said he received food, magazines, books and letters regularly. They were allowed mobile phones, though the lines were always busy, and e-mail access was provided as well as one five-minute phone call per week.

Graeme found himself doing various duties in East Timor, “We looked after all the vehicles around the place, did guard pickets, we also followed the convoys to the border delivering food and supplies. We travelled to different places to fix up vehicles there.”

As we talk, I get the impression everyone had a genuinely fun time there. “I met heaps of people, most spare moments we took the time to talk to the little local kids, showing them photos and interacting with them. They’re pretty special people, they had some good stories to tell... when you could understand them.”

He shows me a home video made over there with a group of the local children playing with a home-made ‘hacky sack’ bound by grasses. They hand it over to Graeme to try his skill. In uniform with a gun strapped across his back he unsuccessfully gives the toy a go, then hands it back to a local girl who kicks it around like an expert.

Some of the funniest stories are about the inventions they came up with to make life easier. “It was pretty funny, being with RAEME, the mechanics, you just knock up things you really need like a washing machine. We didn’t have one at the start; you’d just wear the same clothes for weeks and weeks and weeks. So we found this old cement mixer machine and we got an electric motor and knocked one up, it worked really well... your clothes didn’t last that long though! We made our own shower blocks out of some tin. We tried to make it as comfortable as possible. In the end we ran out of things to make, we had everything we needed, so it was pretty good.”

Graeme received a medal ‘Chief of Defence Force Commendations for East Timor Operational Service’ for his actions there. When I asked him about it he modestly said; “Anyone would have done it.” The story sounds quite simple in print; “We came across a bit of trouble at one place there and I had to save a young local fellow’s life, my

mates got medals too for dispersing the crowd while I patched him up. He’d got hacked up with machetes by one of the local people, there was a bit of a clash between them. I thought he’d died at one stage and I was a bit emotional, then I found out he was alive a few days later.”

The only other sober story he tells me from East Timor is that of one of his mates contracting malaria and dying, despite having the needles for it before they left. A service was held in remembrance in East Timor.

I asked him what the best part of going to Timor and living there for a while was. The reply was fast and specific; “The kids, definitely the kids.” He goes on and tells me stories about them; “We used to have an absolute ball with them, they were pretty cool. It was the little things we used to do to each other. Like they always wanted food so sometimes you’d throw a bit of Tabasco sauce in one of the biscuits. We put some Tabasco in the water and they figured it went red so we started drinking red cordial, so they’d pass around the water and sauce and they’d all have a big swig and finally work out it was starting to get a bit hot, we just used to muck around.”

“They were pretty good times, you made your own fun. We spent the last couple of weeks going out to other places and spent time at their workshops, got to see your mates you haven’t seen for a few years. The country side was pretty amazing too.” In their spare time they got to travel around and look at the scenery, he shows me a bunch of photos he’d taken while in the mountains.

I guess one of the most memorable

things about East Timor watching from Australia would have to be the big concert in Dili that was televised here. Many families sat around the television that night to see if they could get a glimpse of anyone they knew that was over there. Remember that blow-up doll that made regular appearances down the bottom of the television screen? “Yeah, that was us,” Graeme admits. The concert was an excellent surprise he said.

Life for the troops doesn’t sound too bad over there; “We used to go to the gym, play volley ball, play touch footy with the locals and the Kiwi’s, listen to music.”

The transition from East Timor to Australia seems harder than it was the other way around. Going over was a job and an adventure, returning was a bit



Graeme and Pet Pig