

The Horse's Mouth

RAEME Association WA - NEWSLETTER - Winter 2014 Edition

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Stubbs Terrace
Karrakatta

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Garry (Snow) Whykes

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“The Role of the RAEME Association (WA) Is to represent the RAEME family by enabling them to connect through a central hub with personal and professional networks both locally and nationally”

What The Prez Sez

Well, ANZAC Day and all of the relevant associated activities have come and gone. The Association turned up the heat regarding our membership drive and the outcome was that ANZAC Day was a resounding success.

The committee is now focusing on our Social Calendar and the organization of forthcoming events, with a focus of giving members “bang for their buck” or benefits of being a financial member.

Work on the Local and National websites has progressed to a stage where

we are now live with our new website. Thanks to Alex Smithers, we have a real communications tool that will assist this association to progress as per our Strategic Plan. Well done and thanks to Alex.

To view our website, go to the following link: www.wa.raeme.org.au

There is an Association function coming up on Sunday 19th October. There is a detailed report later on in this document, but please be aware that we are taking the opportunity to combine this function with our AGM. I would encourage all members to mark this in their diary as we would like to see a big attendance. Come along and support your Association.

Wez.

AGM and Veterans Health Week

NOTICE OF Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the **RAEME Association of WA** will be held on **Sunday 19th October 2014**

It has been decided to hold the Association AGM in unison with Veterans Health Week. The committee felt it was an appropriate occasion to put on a Bar B Q with refreshments and combine our meeting with some organised activity.

The following is an extract from the DVA website.

Veterans' Health Week 2014

Veterans' Health Week (VHW) will be held from 13 to 19 October 2014.

The week is an opportunity for veterans, war widows, widowers, current and ex-Australian Defence Force members and their families to participate, connect and influence the health and wellbeing of themselves and their friends.

DVA will be partnering with ex-service organisations and community groups to develop a programme of fun and interactive events and activities at a local level.

At this point in time, the activities are yet to be defined, but they will be designed with family participation in mind. It will be designed as a fun/get together day with professional advisors giving information on the benefits of healthy living.

Please Note

SUNDAY 19th October 2014 is the date.

1045 Hours is the start time.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Kings Park is the place.

As the Association is providing the Bar B Q and refreshments, we will need to know the numbers attending.

Please contact The Association at : secretary@wa.raeme.org.au or telephone Grant Stinson on 0477 700 828 if you are going to attend.

There is a Committee Nomination Form at the end of this newsletter.

This is the most important of our Association events - your attendance is required and will be appreciated.

The RAEME Vigil

The evening of the 24th April was the first time I have attended the RAEME Vigil at Kings Park and what an amazing event it turned out to be. The ceremony was simple but one of the most solemn that I have had the pleasure to attend and one I will, without doubt, attend in the future.

This event is organised and run by the members of 113 Workshop Company and is a credit to the unit for the professional manner in which it was organised and run. It was a very solemn event and one that really does deserve a bigger attendance in the future.

The Vigil is to remember and pay homage to the Australian Craftsmen who have paid the ultimate sacrifice during war.

The Vigil itself is an easy walk through the avenue of honour where our Craftsmen have a small monument and each soldier has a dedicated tree with a plaque indicating the name of the digger who gave his life for our freedom. A member of the Workshop gave a brief history of each individual serviceman whose name appears on the plaque.

This year, within our ranks, we had Colin Prior, the son of Craftsman Les Prior who was a POW on the Burma Railway and lost his life at Sandakan. Colin and his partner Margaret were caught up in the emotion of the evening. Colin designed the monument where we held our service. At the end of the ceremony, Colin gave a brief history of his father, the design and building of the monument and was quite emotional when he thanked the organisers for their efforts in putting on such a memorable event.

To those unable to attend the Vigil on previous occasions, I would suggest that you mark ANZAC Eve in your diary for next April and attend what is an event quite specific to OUR diggers.

Snow.

ANZAC Day 2014

Our ANZAC Day activities began with a Dawn Service and Gunfire Breakfast at Palmer Barracks. The morning was quite cool but appropriate for the service that was to follow. The service itself was small and memorable compared to the larger event that takes place at Kings Park. The service was immediately followed by the traditional gunfire breakfast complete with rum and a dash of coffee.

The next event on the agenda was the march. The troops formed up in St. Georges Terrace and proudly marched behind the banner through the streets of Perth. Our numbers were really good this year and are increasing as the Association grows stronger. The Association membership drive was very successful and our parade numbers showed our strength.

After the march, the Association members once again adjourned to the Melbourne Hotel where our after march activities and reunion indicated very clearly that RAEME Diggers know how to celebrate and partake in comradeship.

The after march attendance was overwhelming and the collection of fees, fund raising etc. boosted our financials considerably. We are now in a financial situation where we, as an Association, can go forward with considerable confidence.

This year's experience has given us a real wealth of information to make next year even better.

GOLF Day and RAEME Birthday

The ASMs Golf Day will be held on Friday 28th Nov 2014 at Wembley Golf Complex. Registration will be at 1330 with tee off from 1400. We will be holding a BBQ afterwards out on the deck, where there will be a presentation of prizes etc. We will be celebrating the Corps Birthday with a cake.

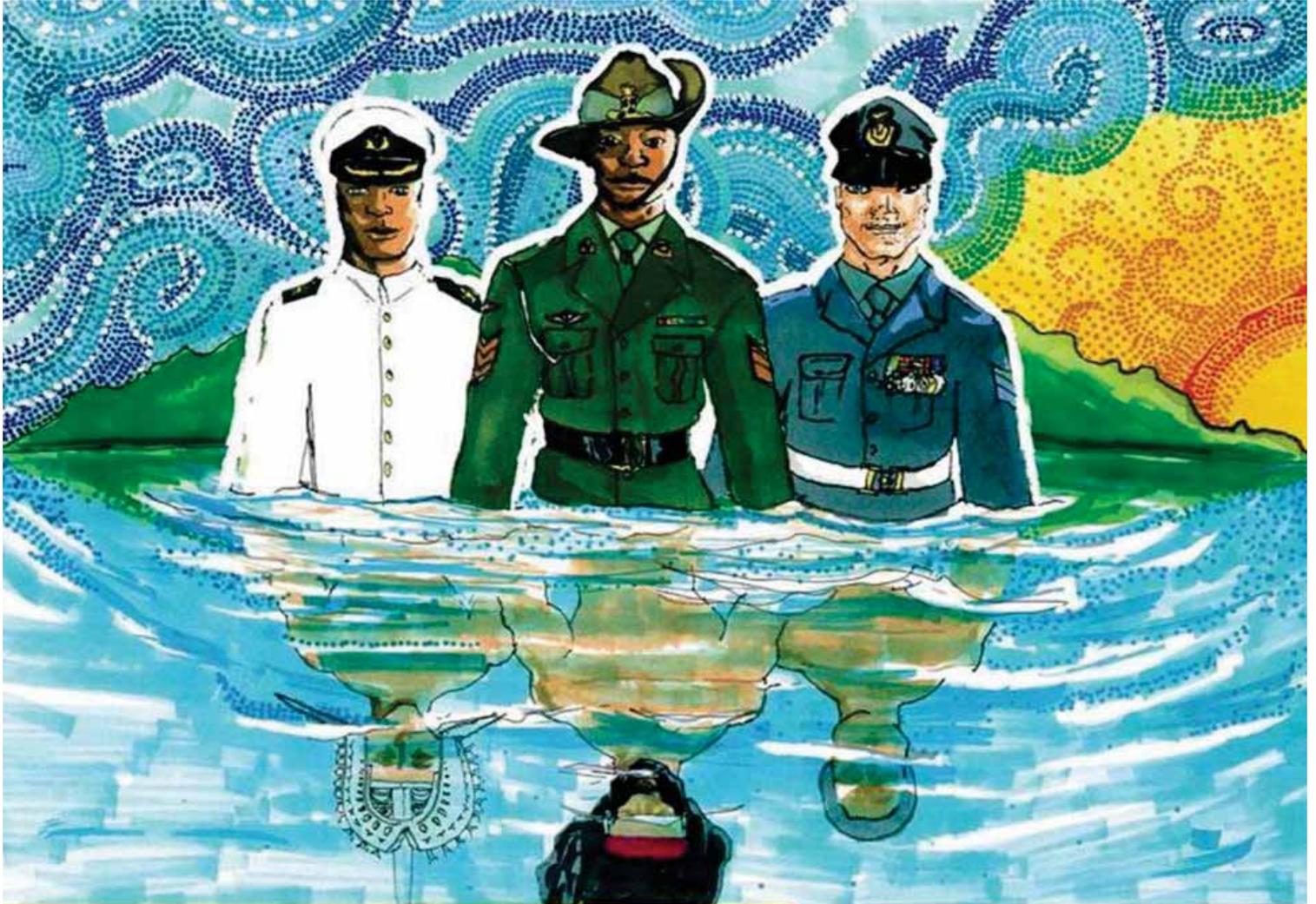
Costings TBA but it is envisaged it being no more than \$30 pp. The format and competition will be the same as last year, 9 hole 4 ball Ambrose with NTP, longest putt and drive etc.

This is a fun day and a great way to celebrate the RAEME Birthday.

Even if you are not a golfer, you are welcome and encouraged to attend the after game celebrations.

For further info and bookings contact Wade on 0416199187 or email secretary@wa.raeme.org.au

Celebrating NAIDOC Week



Artwork: *These who Stand to Defend our Land* Artist: Harry Alfred Pitt

My artwork features three brothers with their land behind them and the horizon before them. Their Elders are reflected in the water, giving the brothers the strength to overcome what lies over the horizon. My work acknowledges the young men and women of today who are across the sea going their very best to protect their home and serve their country, empowered by their ancestors. Our soldiers are embracing their heritage and protecting their homes, just as their ancestors did before them, only now they do this beyond the shores of their homeland.

**CELEBRATING
NAIDOC WEEK**
www.naidoc.org.au



2014

SERVING COUNTRY –
CENTENARY & BEYOND

This year's NAIDOC theme honours all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have fought in defence of Country. From our warriors in the Frontier Wars to our warriors who have served with honour and pride in Australia's military conflicts and engagements across the globe. We proudly highlight and recognise the role they have played in shaping our identity and pause to reflect on their sacrifice. We celebrate and honour their priceless contribution to our nation.

We, the RAEME Association (WA) would like to recognise and pay our respect to the contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait servicemen and women have made to our country and our Corps.

“ARTE et MARTE”

Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day

Sunday 17th August 2014 is the date for the Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day. Activities include a short march to the Vietnam Memorial followed by a service and wreath laying ceremony. The formalities commence at 1100 hours, it is advisable to be there by about 1030 hours.

After the ceremony is completed, we will adjourn to the Melbourne Hotel for lunch and a few refreshments.

Once again we ask that you inform us of your intentions to attend, especially the lunch as we need to give numbers to the Melbourne Hotel.

*Please inform Phil Pitchers on 0403342105 if you wish to come along to the luncheon. This luncheon will be subsidised by the Association. We will need to know of your intentions by **Wednesday 13th August**.*

All members are invited to attend, especially the Vietnam veteran members of the Association.



Above - Part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Walk Seymour Victoria



Right - The Vietnam Memorial Pavilion Kings Park.

D-DAY JUNE 1969 VIETNAM RAEME SETS THE STAGE for THE BATTLE OF BINH BA

On the weekend the world remembers the 1944 June 6th Allied landings in Normandy Australians should recall one of the five major Australian battles of the Vietnam War which brought about battle honours primarily for 5 RAR and other participating units.

This two day major battle action came about due to a decision by "Bluebell" M113 fitters track crew deployed with the Centurion Tanks of 4 Troop B Squadron to the north of NUI NDAT up Route 2 in the Courtney rubber Zone that two of the tanks, one with gunnery problems and another with a recurring engine fault needed to be repaired in the workshop facilities at their Nui Dat Base.

However the curtain was promptly opened on this battle by the actions of RAEME Recovery Sgt Ted Spargo following his involvement in the initial Binh Ba contact.

Route 2 the central regional road which ran North through the Phouc Tuy Province from the Provincial Capital BARIA passed many small hamlets along the way. The 1 ATF Base at Nui Dat was originally astride Route 2, 8km north of Baria before a bypass road was constructed around the encampment in 1967. In June 69 Route 2 north of Nui Dat was classified "amber", this classification on a road considered it to be one which enemy contact was possible but unlikely and as such the route security management had been returned to the local regional forces control.

The Tank SQN HQ then devised a suitable faulty tank change over plan. One replacement tank would be dispatched up route 2 escorting the Sqn RAEME Centurion Armoured Recovery Vehicle (ARV) 28Delta to meet with 4 Tp and then the ARV would tow the faulty engine tank home accompanied by the tank with faulty gunnery control equipment.

The Crew Commander of the ARV West Australian RAEME Sgt Ted Spargo along with his crew were working frantically to ready their newly issued replacement ARV ARN 169113 for duty after "trading in" their previous tired ARV 169112 which had given operational service for some 16 months in country including FSB CORAL, BALMORAL as well as out pulled a CAT D8H in the first pull of a tug of war. All was fit other than an elusive intermittent radio harness fault rendering communication transmission difficult and unreliable.

The former Centurion tank dozer (blade now removed) ARN 169106 was prepared to move as a replacement with the ARV. This tank had fired the first 20pdr shell in action March 68 and also the first to be stopped by an IED in May 68 whilst inbound FSB CORAL. LCPL John Harvey RAAC was to Crew Command the tank on the change-over run. His Radio Operator (alongside him in the turret) was Trooper Peter Chapman RAAC.

The two Centurions were warned to move immediately following stand down clearance next morning 6 June 69. As soon as Task Force HQ stand down clearance was given following their receipt of "all clear" from the 161 Recce Flight first light fly over of the Nui Dat perimeter and a few Km of Route 2 the 2 Centurions moved out with the Battle Tank leading the ARV by a short distance.

Once clear of Nui Dat and the tanks attained cruising speed the 6km to Binh Ba was quickly covered and the neat brick and tile village with its six streets extending westward to the left of Route 2 and the north travelling tanks. The crewmen expected no trouble and continued confidently onward unaware of the presence of a major enemy force in the village.

With the leading Centurion battle tank ARN 169106 mid-way through the village and the ARV some 125mtrs behind yet to enter the village. The tank radio operator was standing on his seat looking out over the turret whilst the crew commander observed head out from his commander's seat. It was 0720hrs.

Radio Operator Peter Chapman then heard the raking noise of machine gun fire hitting his side of the tank. He immediately dived into the loader compartment to prepare the gun for action (removing the pre action safety devices). At that instant an anti - tank Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG 7) penetrated the heavy turret armour directly above him. Temporarily deafened and blinded by the flash he also received a serious upper- chest wound and compound fracture of his right elbow as well as multiple frag' wounds to both arms, his face and neck. The wounded operator then collapsed on the floor of the turret fighting compartment preventing the main armament from being traversed to respond to the enemy fire. The crew commander returned fire best he could with his external swivel

mounted .30cal machine gun.

During this initial engagement the ARV commanded by Sgt Ted Spargo was still slightly outside the village precinct. On viewing the rise of black smoke from the tank turret Spargo halted his vehicle. At that instant a RPG fired from cover in the village exploded about 30mtrs short of his ARV. Observing the scene ahead he gave covering fire from his commander mounted .30cal machine gun.

The tank radio in the damaged tank was out of service and could not transmit the Contact Report nor the urgent need for casualty evacuation. The faulty radio harness in the ARV precluded Spargo from any radio transmissions.

The tank commander ordered his driver to "drive on" at best speed to get clear of the enemy which they did and arrived at the camp of Duc Thanh some 3 km north of Binh Ba and radioed from that location.

Meanwhile Ted Spargo observing the northerly departure of the damaged tank he decided to return to Nui Dat to raise the alarm, ordering a high reverse withdrawal from the engagement before a best speed return to the 1 ATF base north gate where he phoned B SQN Command Post to advise the situation (this message was misinterpreted and not acted on in the Command Post) then he made straight for the HQ 1ATF Ops office.

BRIG Sandy Pearson COMD 1ATF was to later say – " The first thing we knew what had happened was when a RAEME NCO rushed into my OPS OFFICE excitedly informing us of how they had been shot at when taking an ARV up to Colonel Butlers AO. Our staff moved quickly to get the Ready Reaction Force up to Binh Ba.

The Ready Reaction Force included 1 Troop of B Sqn tanks, 1 Troop of B SQN 3 Cav APCs and D Coy 5RAR commanded by "good West Midland Boy" MAJ Murray Blake. Blake's men arrived APC mounted on the outskirts of Binh Ba with a troop of tanks in support before 1000hrs while 105 Fd Bty waited to give dedicated fire mission support from NUI DAT.

The rest is history a major battle continued for two days before the Task Force combat troops withdrew on the morning of 8 June leaving the Civil Affairs Unit to restore the village and resettle the displaced villagers.

The significance of the Battle of Binh Ba is that it was one of the few times the Australian troops had been involved in village combat fighting. This action was the last time that a strong North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces ventured into Phouc Tuy Province.

Casualties resulting from the battle were:

Australian	1 KIA,	11 WIA;
ARVN	4 KIA,	7 WIA ;
Enemy	126 KIA	6 WIA (mainly 1Bn 33NVA Regt)

Footnote:

Ted Spargo served on in RAEME until retirement to metropolitan Perth working in local government until TPI retirement. Later he moved to Yackandandah Vic. for family reasons. Ted was in poor health and passed away a few years ago.

Murray Blake had a distinguished Army career retiring as MAJGEN Australian Army Land Commander settling in Brisbane where he gave good service on the Qld DVA veterans review board for many years before recent retirement.

Acknowledgement:

This article was provided by Norm Wells - Thanks Norm.

Contacts for events

ACTIVITY	NAME	NUMBER
Bowls	Paul	08 9061 1853
Cards	Marg	08 9046 9096
Golf	Peter	0427 211 104
Bingo	Jean	08 9061 1924
Rifle	Collin	0429 150 847

If you are interested in setting up a stall for the Saturday markets please call the Bruce Rock Community Resource Centre on 089061 1897.

Supporting Musicians

Thanks goes to our supporting musicians Pete Robson, Brent Kelly and Mort Hansen who always give their time and talent over the week of events.

10th Light Horse

The Kalbarcott, Pinjarra 10th Light Horse Marmalade group always support the Bruce Rock Back to the Bush week of activities and will do so again this year. So make sure you look out for them.

The Bunker

The bunker will be open for you to browse through so if you haven't had a look as yet please go and have a look.

Accommodation

Camping around the oval from:

Monday 6th October 2014

Camping on the grassed area from:

Tuesday 7th October 2014 till Monday 13th October 2014.

This will incur a fee of \$8 per person per night, booking is not essential for the oval.

Unfortunately the Caravan Park is booked out already, with an extensive cancellation list.

Other accommodation facilities available in Bruce Rock are:

Bruce Rock Hotel: 08 9061 1218

Bruce Rock Roadhouse: 08 9061 1174

Bruce Rock Bed & Breakfast: 089061 1615

2014 BACK TO THE BUSH SPONSORS



HOLLYWOOD PRIVATE HOSPITAL



For more information please contact one of the following

Ashleigh Weight PH: 08 9061 1377

Shire of Bruce Rock exo@brucerock.wa.gov.au

Colin Turner PH: 0429 150 847

Veterans Committee bkvet@bdiappard.com

Paul Hutton PH: 08 9061 1853

Veterans Committee bkvet@bdiappard.com

www.brucerock.wa.gov.au

**2014
Back to the Bush
Veterans Reunion
Bruce Rock WA**

6th October - 12th October 2014



You are invited to the 2014
Back to the Bush Reunion.

Organise your caravan, motor home
or camping gear and head to
BRUCE ROCK
for a great week of fun,
relaxation and camaraderie!!

**A VERY WARM
WELCOME AWAITS YOU.**

MONDAY 6TH OCTOBER

If you are arriving on Monday you can set up camp on the oval **surrounds** and then take the opportunity to have a good look around the Bruce Rock Shire and visit places of interest.

TUESDAY 7TH OCTOBER

Camping on the oval is available from today, for \$8.00 per person per night. Toilets & showers will be available, generators and pets are welcome.

WEDNESDAY 8TH OCTOBER

9.30am Come along and release your creative side with a morning of card making at our local Scrapbooking workshop, Country Paper craft.

12.00pm 12 Hole, 2 person Mixed Ambrose Golf and Novelty Events Day. Light Lunch Provided, Numbers are required.

THURSDAY 9TH OCTOBER

**** Due to the School Holidays there will be **
no School Concert In 2014**

11:00am District Tour - leaving from Recreation Centre Main Gate

1:00pm Sharp pencil, eyes down, bingo is on again and afternoon tea is included. So come along to the Senior Citizens Hall and have some fun and play bingo.

7.30pm Medical Seminar at Bruce Rock Community Recreation Centre, Sports Pavilion.

FRIDAY 10TH OCTOBER

10:00am Rifle Shooting is on again, please contact Colin Turner on 0429 150 847 for more details.

1.00pm Lawn Bowls. Numbers are required, please contact Paul Hutton on 9061 1853.

3:00pm John Schnaars and the Meetheena Station Veterans Retreat are holding their Annual AGM at the Shire Hall Supper Room.

SATURDAY 11TH OCTOBER

8.30am Our BIG day!! Commencing at 8.30am we have Street Markets (stall holders required). The Shire Hall is full of information booths for Veterans, pensioners & the public. These cover everything from Australian Flag memorabilia to Health. The Avon Valley 10th Light Horse group will have their mobile museum on display. If you feel like a bite to eat grab something and head to the Main Street to sit and listen to the Challenge Brass Band and Kalgoorlie Brass Band, they will be playing throughout the morning.

2.30pm It's time to start lining up opposite the cenotaph for the March to the Anglican Church. Veterans and all other interested persons are welcome to join the march wearing your medals. Please don't forget your hats and sunglasses.

3.00pm We step off and march to St Peters Anglican Church for a service and the relighting of the candle at the Vietnam Veteran's Peace Window.

5.00pm At the Bruce Rock Recreation Centre there will be the **2014 Back to the Bush Community Concert** will feature **Fossil Rock, Mort Hansen, Brent Kelly & Pete Robson.**

****Due to limited resources in 2014, there will be NO BBQ provided for dinner, However, takeaway meals will be provided at the Bruce Rock District Club Kitchen****

SUNDAY 12TH OCTOBER

**** PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO COOKED BREAKFAST PROVIDED****

10.00am Come along to the Bruce Rock Community Recreation Centre and enjoy a morning listening to the Brass Bands play for the final time this year.

12.00pm Volunteers Luncheon at the Bruce Rock Community Recreation Centre.

5.00pm We hope you all have enough energy left to join us around the campfire at the Bard Pit. BYO Chairs nibbles and drinks.

REGISTRATION FORM	
<p>For catering purposes and for the number of people attending events, it would help us enormously if you could respond to the information below and return post to:</p> <p>Bruce Rock Veteran's Group C/- Ashleigh Waight Shire of Bruce Rock 54 Johnson Street Bruce Rock WA 6418</p>	
Name:	_____
Address:	_____ _____
Program Attending	Number
Medical Seminar Evening:	_____
Bingo :	_____
Bowls:	_____
Golf:	_____
Card Making Class:	_____
Rifle Shooting:	_____
<p>Thank You We are looking forward to seeing you here!</p>	

ADVERTISE HERE

Do you want your message to reach all serving and ex
RAEME people in WA??

It's EASY - Be Seen HERE

To advertise in this space just contact the association on any of the following contacts:

President: Wes Lynch

Mobile: 0477308475

Email: Wesley.Lynch@kjb.com.au

Assist Secretary/Membership Officer: Grant Stinson

Mobile: 0477 700 828

Email: secretary@wa.raeme.org.au

Secretary: Wade Apps

Mobile: 0416199187

Email: secretary@wa.raeme.org.au

OR

Go to our website: www.wa.raeme.org.au

**The RAEME Association WA
Annual General Meeting 2014
Committee Member Nomination Form**

The Following positions will become vacant and open for election at the Annual General Meeting of the RAEME Association of WA to be held on the **19th October 2014**

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Assistant Secretary/Membership Officer
5. Treasurer
6. Property Manager
7. Social Secretary

If you wish to nominate for any committee position, please fill out the details below and have it to the Secretary no later than **1600 hours** on **Wednesday 15th October 2014**

To print off a copy of this form go to our website. www.wa.raeme.org.au

I _____
(Name in Full)

Do hereby nominate for the position of: _____
(Committee Position)

I declare that I am a financial member of the RAEME Association of WA.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Nominated : _____ Signature: _____
(Print Name)

Seconded : _____ Signature: _____
(Print Name)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Received Date: _____