



# The RAEME Association Tasmania Newsletter

**June 2014**

**Issue 12**

The RAEME Association (Tasmania) Inc.

**President:** Russell Clark  
**Secretary:** Amy Britten  
**Treasurer:** Shane Rollins

**Welfare:** Paul Barrett  
**Webmaster:** Shane Rollins  
**Editor:** Russell Clark

**Editor: Russell Clark**  
*36 Corlacus Drive, Kingston 7050*  
*Mobile; 0419 313 910*  
Email: [russell.clark@stategrowth.tas.gov.au](mailto:russell.clark@stategrowth.tas.gov.au)  
Website: [www.raeme.org.au](http://www.raeme.org.au)

**Sub-Committee**  
**Historian:** John Lennox  
**Veterans:** Vacant  
**Membership:** Vacant  
**Apprentices:** Mick Koerber  
**Social:** Peter Barrett  
**Social:** Wayne Barber

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## Welcome

Greetings to all Tasmanian RATS and welcome to the twelfth edition of the RAT newsletter.

It's hard to believe that we are half way through the year, so much has been happening, it's hard to imagine where the time has gone, rest assured your committee has been busy and planning is well underway for this year annual dinner.

One of our key priorities is to create our part of the RAEME National website. Our plan was to have it established by June, however this has been pushed back and we propose to finalize the website over coming months.

We have a new COLCOMDT, Brigadier Dave McGahey took over from Colonel Buck Jones in December 2013. The COLCOMDT marched with the RATs in Hobart on ANZAC day and will be our official guest at this year's dinner.

Finally a reminder of our dinner in July please make an effort to attend there is more details of the dinner in the newsletter. Hope to see you there?

I'll finish by thanking our committee, in particular, John Lennox, Shane Rollins, Amy Britten and Paul (Pop) Barrett.

Read and enjoy.

ARTE ET MARTE

### **RAEME National Association development and update**

Report by Raymond Norman  
National President



I am very pleased to report that we have achieved great progress in the further development of the RNA's administrative procedures especially with the launching of the RNA website [www.raeme.org.au](http://www.raeme.org.au). Take a look. Additionally most RAEME State and Territory Association sites have been rebuilt and have the same look and feel and all are part of the new RAEME network. Just click on any state or territory on the map and follow the drop down.

It is very important to acknowledge the wonderful work put into the new sites by Dean Ellis, Richard Legge, Alex Smithers, Craig Mahoney, Pat Marley and Peter Mathews Russell Clark, very well done gents, a credit to the Corps.

I would encourage all to check out these sites especially the RNA site and

offer any constructive suggestion on improvements or items you would like to see on your National Corps website. Some of the additions that are in the wing are a Corps Shop, on line sales page and a Corps History page.

The new Corps History Book (CHB) will soon be available for pre ordering using the RNA on line shop at [www.raeme.org.au](http://www.raeme.org.au). Keep an eye on this site, everyone nationally will be advised when the CHB is released for pre ordering electronically. Arrangement will be made available for those without electronic means.

A couple of additional task to be completed in the next short while is the finalisation of the RNA Constitution and the email contact system for all members especially the full time serving members contacts which is vital for the longevity of the RNA.

I might add for your information that all RAEME State and Territory Associations are affiliated with the RNA and also includes the Head of Corps organisation which is very pleasing and brings the RAEME family together.

You are invited to contribute to the RAEME National Association Facebook which can be viewed at the above web site address.

### **Operation Spanner Pack**

The operation continues with a further fifty Spanner packs sent to our troops in Afghanistan and Southern Sudan mid May 14.

The total packs sent 3098 since Operation Spanner pack was initiated. Additionally approx 300 care packs were sent by RANSW prior to Operation Spanner pack and even more were sent by other Associations and individuals, a great combined effort from all concerned.

This operation will continue whilst RAEME troops are on deployment.

Your continued support is welcomed.

We the RAEME family request your support for the RAEME network and I can assure you all that we are working to ensure that all members of this mighty Corps of RAEME is served well especially in the major task of bringing the RAEME family together which includes **you.**

Raymond. G. Norman OAM  
President  
RAEME National Association  
[www.raeme.org.au](http://www.raeme.org.au)  
(07) 54766254

### **RAT website**

We now have a webmaster, thanks to Shane (Rolly) Rollins for volunteering (or shafted) to implement our website. Rolly has been communicating with Dean Ellis and Richard Legge who have been instrumental in setting up the national website. We are in the early stages of getting the site up and running, rest assured we will contact you when this happens. In the meantime please visit the national website and view what other Associations are up to?

### **Corps History Corps History Project (CHP).**

Report by

**Ross L. G. Grant**

**PD CHP**

[raemebookproject@hotmail.com](mailto:raemebookproject@hotmail.com)



The fourth draft of the manuscript is currently being proof read in preparation for printing shortly. The aim is have the book printed by the 1 Oct 14, in time for the RAEME Corps Conference to be held at Bandiana from 29-31 Oct 14. This will allow the first editions to be sold hot-off the press to attendees and allow the project team to start distributing books to those who have pre-ordered and paid for their book soon after the conference.

The RAEME National Association (RNA) and several members of the project team are looking for ways of electronically pre-ordering and selling the book on line through its website, so keep an eye out for this facility. The decision on this will not be made until the cost of printing and distribution is finalised and that work is underway now. Early indications are that the prices previously advised will rise and the cost of postage and mailing will have to be considered. Also, all the printers who have responded to date have advised that a soft cover version is not viable, so we may have to limit the sales to “limited editions” and hard cover versions only – more to follow on this aspect.

To heighten your interest, I have included an abridged excerpt from the book for your enjoyment:

### **“CRUSADER’S GONE DOWN”**

“Rotary Wing aircraft played a major role in Afghanistan, providing mobility and fire support for ground forces. During June 2012 a Downed Aviation Recovery Team (DART) led by WO1 Cameron Kerr was tasked to recover a downed Chinook helicopter, A15-103. The decision to conduct the first battlefield aerial recovery of an Army aircraft since the Vietnam War signaled a fitting farewell for an aircraft affectionately known as ‘Crusader’ and would test the very tenets for which Australian and RAEME soldiers are renown.”

“22 June 2012 started like any other day, but in the early hours of the morning, Rotary Wing Group 7 (RWG 7) was advised that A15-103 had ‘gone down’, sustaining minor damage. Immediate concern was for the crew’s safety and to understand the extent of damage to the aircraft. Dozens of scenarios raced through our minds until the damage reports were received by radio from the Kandahar Airfield (KAF) Tactical Operation Command (TOC).



Crusader’s “Gone Down” A15-103. (Photo by C Kerr)

*There was considerable relief at RWG when word came through that only minor*

*injuries had been suffered by the crew and passengers. Our relief increased when reports indicated that damage to the aircraft seemed surprisingly minor; apparently it was leaning to one side with landing gear damage and a suspected minor rotor strike.*

*Within hours, DART members were flying in two Task Force Hammer Head (TFHH) UH-60 Black Hawks along the Haret Main Supply Route (MSR) to FOB Sarkari Karez. Initially, this DART consisted of eight RAEME Aircraft Technicians and three Aircraft Support personnel*

*The handover from the aircrew of A15-103 was hardly ideal; a muffled enquiry regarding the health of the crew was conducted just beyond the noisy rotor disk of the Black Hawk before the DART members found themselves hastily holding down equipment as the US aircraft hovered for departure. The Black Hawk’s departure was followed by deafening silence and a degree of shock as our assessment of the damage began. Not a word spoken during the initial walk around, just grave looks with raised eyebrows that spoke volumes of the task ahead and the initial assessment!*

*Next, the RAEME crew began the painstaking task of recording all structural damage and hypothesising a possible cause for the hard landing. The initial damage report was akin to delivering bad news of a relative. I explained that the aircraft had sustained significant torsional damage to the main cabin area; severe sudden stoppage of the rotor system, which compromised all transmissions and drive-line components; and major damage to all landing gear components and associated airframe structural areas. Additionally, the ramp area located at the rear of the aircraft had received a significant impact which severely weakened the airframe structure supporting the aft transmission and aft pylon area.*

*Strict time constraints, 50 degree heat, frustrating coalition logistical issues,*

*airframe structural integrity concerns and a numerically limited workforce contributed to what seemed to be an insurmountable task to prepare the aircraft for timely aerial recovery. If we failed to use the contracted aircraft to recover the aircraft, there was a potential delay of up to eight days, which could significantly impact mission outcomes.*



A15-103 in situ, emphasizing failed landing gear (Photo by C Kerr)

*The hidden structural damage proved worse than initially assessed, which immediately placed the recovery mission at risk. The options available were very clear cut at that stage; postpone the mission; cut away or remove the damaged structure; or find a means of supporting the failing structure. After much deliberation and hasty rudimentary calculations, the failing airframe structure was 'tied' back into the solid bulkheads located directly above the fracture line using heavy duty military cargo straps*



A15-103 during last hover (Photo by C Kerr)

*“Tensions were high as the MI-26 rotor disc started to ‘cone’ under the weight and the slings began to stretch and with an unruly lurch skyward, A15-103 was on its way. It was an agonizing 80 minutes before we received notification that A15-103 had returned safely to KAF. The relief was immense and the RAEME guys celebrated with the typical Aussie humility. Despite the bitter sweet result, a sense of satisfaction and achievement reverberated through our team of highly skilled tradesmen. Against the odds, we had accomplished an historic aerial recovery.”*

**Conclusion.** This excerpt clearly illustrates there is much to be proud of in our Corps activities – there are many more stories like this in the book, both in peace and war, from the ground, air and maritime components our Corps supports. So I can assure you the book will be a good read.

We have conducted a survey to seek expressions of interest in the book, and the response has been very positive, with in excess of 800 members of the Corps and public responding positively. So your task now is to look out for the order forms on the RNA Website in the near future. You will be able to place your orders, pay for the book and you will be advised when the books will be distributed. I ask you to be a little patient while the project team sets up arrangements. Our team is an all-volunteer group from serving and retired members of the Corps, who continue to do a great job.

Kind regards

Ross Grant

**Mates 4 Mates**

**“The Power of Mateship”.** Mates4Mates is a not-for-profit organisation

committed to providing holistic welfare and treatment programs that give direct support to current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who have suffered physical or psychological wounds, injuries and illnesses as a result of their service, either in Australia, or overseas. Integral to supporting our brave mates is the provision of support to their families.

Mates4Mates provides a wide range of services including psychological counselling, career coaching programs, wellbeing workshops, family support meetings, physical rehabilitation and conditioning programs including individual recovery plans and physical training sessions for adventure challenges.

For help or to support our wounded, injured and ill ADF mates, visit [www.mates4mates.org](http://www.mates4mates.org) or call **13004 MATES (62837)**.

### **6LSC Jottings**

A report by  
**SGT Neil Brooksbank**

**GE Section**

Due to Army Unit Establishment variation the WKSP no longer has ARA staffing. As the reduction in the full time positions has placed a considerable work load on the ARES personnel and the way we do business, this has resulted in a number of changes within the internal structures of sections within 6LSC, similar to Recovery GE has looked at the duties normally conducted by the ARA staff and now allocated the day to day running of the section to CPL Roy Disher, who has accepted the extra

responsibility well and is coping with the extra workload.

There is a considerable amount of corporate governance requirements that are often challenging to complete within the required time frames and it seems the sections have to commit 90% to corporate governance and 10% to training.

Due to the reduction in ARA equipment management and servicing capability most items are sent directly to trade repair, this results in limited opportunities for ARES trades personnel to undertake repair tasks. The side effect to this is we are becoming an organization that is capable of undertaking non-technical inspections and this in itself has an effect on morale and potential recruiting. On a positive side each respective section has reviewed its sub account and returned items that are surplus to requirements, reducing the need to maintain.

Another positive change that has occurred is the capability of 2 FSB / 6 LSC in the area of running the Theater Gateway on major exercises like Hammel and Talisman Sabre.

The WKSP VM SGT is now SGT Barrett, who has handed over more Recovery Section responsibility to CFN Jordan and CFN Trautwein.

The RPS has now been taken over entirely by the 2 FSB Q Store as there are no longer ARES RPS positions. This has seen a dramatic reduction in RPS holdings, with the emphasis on requesting parts as required. CPL

Johns has moved into 6 LSC OPS and PTE Gergely has moved into the 2 FSB Q Store.

The old RPS Store location is now occupied by the 2 FSB Catering Cell.

Over the years 6LSC has benefited extremely well over the years by having a number of keen committed ARA staff involved in our training and development, this has put in in a good place regarding the ability to undertake the management of a task associated with a workshop of our size.

Regards

*Neil Brooksbank*

*Sergeant*

## **OTHER HAPPENINGS**

### **ANZAC day 2014**

This year saw a record number of current and ex-members march in this year's ANZAC day parade in Hobart which included a visit by the COLCOMDT Brig Dave McGahey. This is a first and was greatly appreciated by our members. Once again as in the past the weather was fine. Flag bearer for the day was Glen Hay who traveled from Victoria to march with the association.

After the march the Association gathered at the Customs House for our annual pilgrimage with the engineers. I have attached photos of the day at the end of the newsletter.

### **Counter lunch at the man of Ross**

This year saw the need to change our venues to include a counter lunch at the Man of Ross on Sunday 15 June 2014. It is pleasing to report that approximately 30 members and partners attended the day which proved a huge success. It was an opportunity for the north meets south members.

Thank you for those who chose to travel that bit further than normal.

Comments made on the day were positive, from this we intend to make this an annual event.

### **Formal dinner 2014**

This year's dinner will be at the Claremont R&SL on Saturday 19 July 2014. This year we will honor current and ex-Army Apprentices, which will include Brig McGahey (27<sup>th</sup> vehicle mechanic) and his wife, who will be our official guests. It promises to be a great night. Invitations will be going out shortly.

A lot of time has been put into the night by your committee and rest assured it will be a great night, not sure what the ex-apprentices are up to but it should be good. Special thanks to John Lennox (Lurch) for arranging the power point presentation which will be shown during the course of the night.

We are also proposing to have Corp merchandise available on the night, all profits go back into our Association, please support it.

### **Vale**

It is regret that we announce the passing of the following:

- Des ARMBRUSTER (27<sup>th</sup> Fitter) Served in postings in Victoria, Tasmania and West Australia. Des passed away after suffered a fatal heart attack on 6 Mar 2014.

- Alexander Graeme BOURNE (16<sup>th</sup> Vehicle Mechanic). Served in Victoria, Sydney and New Guinea. Graeme passed away after battling a short battle with cancer on 20 April 2014.

I'm sure you will join me in passing on our thoughts and commiserations to their families.

## **Calendar of events 2014**

### **July**

19 July- Annual Dinner Claremont  
R&SL

### **September**

21 September –BBQ venue TBA

### **December**

7 December – RAEME Birthday South  
venue TBA

7 December – RAEME Birthday North  
venue TBA

## **Conclusion**

Well that's it bluebells, another newsletter ready to go to press. If you have any photos or reports for the next newsletter please forward them to me NLT 30 November 2014.



**ANZAC day 2014  
Hobart**







