



# The RAEME Association Tasmania Newsletter

**June 2006**

**Issue 4**

The RAEME Association (Tasmania) Inc.

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## Welcome

Welcome Bluebells to the fourth edition of the RAT newsletter. Into June already half way to the RAEME birthday it will be here before we know it.

A number of important events have occurred since the last newsletter, the AGM, Anzac day and last weekend the Inaugural Mixed Formal Dining in night, which was an outstanding success, more on that in the newsletter.

Although our numbers are growing it is still disappointing that the same old names seem to crop up when we have our functions, a comment was made at the AGM by Pop

that if members who regularly attend the functions could encourage one other member who normally does not attend functions we could see in excess of 50 members turning up. I challenge you all to make this happen, can we see a double of attendees at our next function in September- over to you.

We are still chasing photos in particular photos from the old CMF days. If you have some could you please contact our historian John Lennox, he will scan them and return them to you.

I hope you enjoy this edition of RAT, and remember RAEME rules – OK...

## Colonel Commandant's Mid Year Report

To say that the last six months have been busy for a number of patriotic members is an understatement. The majority of activities have achieved my stated aim of enhancing mateship, welfare to each other and regaining lost "Corps Ethos" through greater awareness and dissemination of information about Corps activities in the Region. My motto for 2006 has been "***To Establish***", which has already been successfully met in a number of areas.

Firstly, the establishment of an annual Regional RAEME Remembrance Service with the highly successful "Inaugural RAEME Day of Remembrance" simultaneously held in Melbourne, Bandiana and Hobart on Sunday, 29 Jan 06, with over 200 members and their families attending the respective services, despite short notice and high temperatures. The project "***Finding RAEME***" continues to slowly add numbers to the Colonel Commandant's lists, but we still have a long way to go with over 2,000 still MIA. A successful reunion at "The Seymour Club" on 1 Feb 06, stimulated the formation of another motivated steering group to join the one in Bandiana, with both working hard to establish new regional Chapters of the RAV. I am most grateful for the self-sacrifice and support given by Andy Turner and his crew "Up North" and by Dave Maddick and his team in Seymour. Sadly it appears that the formation of a group for RAEME Vietnam Veterans has come to a standstill due to internal differences associated with the previously defunct National Association. Until these issues are resolved, it is not expected that there will be any further movement with this group.

Formal visits to four units over the last six months has established greater liaison and

awareness of the current maintenance situation. Visits to JLU (V) at Puckapunyal (formerly PWC) on 21 Feb 06 and Bandiana (formerly 4BWB) on 24 Feb 06 revealed the extent of CSP impact from the early 90s, when it was advised that only 15 ARA RAEME personnel are now responsible for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> line repairs in Victoria. Moreover, with nine attached to provide technical support for the School of Artillery, this means that only 6 ARA personnel are supervising contractual maintenance throughout Victoria compared to more than 1,000 in 1988. On 22 Feb 06 a Corps History presentation was given to a number of newly graduated RAEME Officers attending their LOBC Course. The opportunity to meet our future leaders was invaluable to hopefully instill "Esprit de Corps" plus reinforce that the Corps' future was in their hands.

I am grateful to COL Jim Phasey for permitting a visit to DTR-A on 17 Mar 06, as well as supporting the drive to increase Corps Ethos by the appointment on LTCOL Mick Buldo as the new Regional RAEME Rep. A downside to the excellent visit to 26 Tpt Sqn Wksp on 30 Mar 06, accompanied by LTCOL Buldo, was the revelation by CAPT Matt Brodie that this last remaining ARA Land Command unit in Victoria was moving north to Brisbane from mid 2007.

On 19 Mar 06 a Burma railway presentation was given as a prelude to the RAEME Widows Luncheon organised by the RAV at Oakleigh Barracks. The ANZAC pilgrimage to Thailand and Burma enabled wreaths to the 84 AEME POWs, who died during or after construction of the Burma railway, to be formally laid at both ends of the line. On a prorata basis, the loss of life by the Corps was therefore equivalent to that for 8<sup>th</sup> Division Infantry Units. Regrettably, these Corps tributes were the first by a senior RAEME officer, in over 63 years. The honour of laying

wreaths was further enhanced by the presence of 84 year old CFN Douglas Brazier (AEME and RAV member) who fought in the Pacific Islands in WW2 and is the last surviving member of his unit.

On 5 May 06 Jeff Bruhn held the annual Mafia Formal Dinner at the Vic Bks SGT's Mess attended by 65 members and guests. Due to my unfortunate absence in Burma, both BRIG David McGahey and LTCOL Mick Buldo confirmed that it had been a very enjoyable night and a rare opportunity to regain past pleasures for former serving members. A "welcome safely home from Burma" function at home on 21 May 06 was attended by 17 members and their wives or companions, who braved the cold to enjoy friendship mixed with the tastes of Asia provide by Sheila and myself. It also provided key members from different RAEME organisations the opportunity to establish new friendships or renew old ones for future activities. A trip to Townsville on 25-29 May 06 permitted a visit to Billabong Sanctuary to check on the well-being of CPL Soult "Snappa" Crock in her 21<sup>st</sup> year of service in RAEME as official mascot to 102 Fd Wksp (Lt). Re-granting of workshop names in CSSBs has guaranteed her ongoing career. Did anyone sign her up for DFRDB in 1985?

Apart from attending the re-vitalised RAT's Corps Birthday celebrations in Hobart on 11 Dec 06, I have just had the honour to attend the RAT's very successful "Inaugural Mixed Formal Dining -In Night" held at the Claremont RSL on 24 Jun 06. An attendance of 41 from less than 80 members spread throughout Tassie, is exceptional in these days of growing apathy. The tables were decked out at the RSL to a high standard equivalent to any Mess due the efforts of "Pop" Barrett and his "backroom" helpers. After hours of hard work, John "Lurch" Lennox provided fascinating entertainment throughout the

night with an impressive lite-pro show of historical RAEME pictures from bygone days in Tasmania.

Ongoing promotion of "**The Craftsman of the Year**" Award over recent months seems to be bearing fruit with indications that a greater number of nominations will be made in 2006 than in the last few years. For example, 2 FSB have already indicated they will be nominating for both ARA and GRES categories.

Yours – "With Skill"

**Colonel Terry Beaton**

### **Fort Direction weekend**

You will recall at last years RAEME birthday that we decided to hold a weekend down at the fort on the same weekend as the AGM was to be held. Eleven members **only** turned up on the Saturday. Although the number was small a good night was had by all, we all feasted on oysters collected by Mr & Mrs Lurch. The only downside was dry mouths and sore heads the following day. We intend to make this an annual event, the weekend away that is.....

### **Annual General Meeting**

The inaugural AGM was held at Fort Direction on Sunday the 24 march 06. It was disappointing that only 17 members attended the AGM, however we went ahead with the AGM. The following was put to the vote and passed:

- All current committee members were re-elected.
- Two new committee positions were promulgated;
  - Veterans member-Fred Ratcliffe, and
  - Social Member –ASM Tony Rich.

## Anzac Day

It was pleasing to see the numbers growing for this years ANZAC day march in Hobart. 21 current and ex RAEME members marched behind the flag. Trump elected to travel by car this year, but once again joined us for lunch at Ye Olde Commodore Inn", and, as per usual kept us all entertained. A few more lies were told with our RAE counterparts.

It was pleasing to note that (Maj) Garry Byard traveled from Launceston this year and kept us all in toe during the march.

Claremont RS&LA once again rocked on well into the night under the steady hand of Pop, Shack and Fred.

We intend to re-assess where we march next year, more on that closer to the event.

## Inaugural Mixed Dining in night

On Saturday night the 24 June 06 we held our Inaugural Mixed Dining in night, which was an outstanding success. 41 members and partners attended the function at the Claremont RS&LA.

The COL COMDT Col Terry Beaton attended the function as our official guest, and was full of praise of the event.

I would like to personally thank the Committee and in particular the sub-committee that arranged the dinner, they were;

- Paul (Pop) Barrett,
- Fred Ratcliffe, and
- Dave (Shack) Millhouse.

I believe now the Association has fulfilled what we initially intended, that being - we as RAEME can regularly meet as a group, enjoy each others company and instill *esprit de corp*.

This will now be an annual event and next year will be bigger and better.

I hope that everyone enjoyed the night.

I have attached a group photo of the dinner on the last page of the newsletter.

## Calling Army Apprentices.



This year has seen the formation of the AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION (AAAA).

The AAAA's first committee meeting is in Canberra in July 06 where all manner of business will be discussed to ensure the proper running of the AAAA.

Some of the proposed objectives of the Association are:

- To provide welfare support to ex-Army Apprentices and their spouses as feasible and deemed necessary.
- To encourage the Army to train it's own tradespersons.
- To support the Ordnance Museum at Bandianna to display memorabilia from the Army Apprentices Schools.
- To ensure the long term existence and maintenance of the Marine Gates.
- To encourage the writing and publishing of the history of the Army Apprentices School
- To ensure recognition of the work and sacrifices of ex-Apprentices by means of memorials, plaques and public awareness.
- To maintain social contacts with ex-Apprentices by encouraging intake

and School reunions and social events.

- To maintain links with organizations of similar aims.
- To provide a web page to disseminate information, both to membership and the wider audience.

The AAAA Committee is represented in each state, the point of contact in Tasmania is Mick Koerber 27<sup>th</sup> Intake VM his contact details can be made available by the RAEME Association Tasmania (RAT) on request by interested persons.

Army Apprentices were not only in RAEME but also RASIG, RAE, and Band Corp so if you know any from those other Corps please tell them of the Australian Army Apprentices Association (AAAA).

So if you are an Army Apprentice from the 1<sup>st</sup> Intake to the 50<sup>th</sup> Intake, from either Balcombe or Bonegilla and interested in being a member of the AAAA, when membership is called for contact your state rep, me Mick Koerber.

## Australian Defence medal



It is estimated that over one million serving and ex-serving ADF members will be eligible for the medal.

Ex-serving personnel who have served for four years (or have completed a lesser initial enlistment period) either as an ADF Regular or Reserve member since the end of World War II (3 September 1945) are eligible for the medal.

Eligibility for the medal has been extended to those personnel who:

- have died in service; or
- have been medically discharged with a compensatory impairment at the time of their discharge, thus rendering them unable to serve the required minimum qualifying period; or
- have honorably served but, due to some Defence workplace enlistment policies of the time (as determined by the Chief of the Defence Force), were unable to serve the required minimum qualifying period.

National servicemen will also be eligible for the ADM, as the completion of their National Service obligation will be considered as completion of an initial enlistment period of service.

Experience with determining eligibility has shown that ex-Regular Army personnel are being processed from information from the defence database and is somewhat automatic. Eligibility for Ex-Reserve personnel must be proven by the individual as computer records only go back to 1986. Personnel with a combination of both Regular and Reserve service are a bit hit and miss and essentially, unless you have received advice that the medal is to be issued, submit your application together with documentary evidence. If you are unsure send me (in my official capacity as SO2 (SCM) at APA-H), any details about yourself, service number and approximate dates is normally all I need to go on. Send

your requests in writing so I remember,  
telephone calls I forget.

Full contact details  
MAJ Peter McDonough  
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Additional information is available at –  
[http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe\\_site/honours\\_awards/adm/adm.htm](http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/honours_awards/adm/adm.htm)

### **Membership.**

Phantom advises us that membership stands

## **Summary**

Well that completes the fourth edition of the RAT. After the inaugural mixed dining in night I believe we have reached an important milestone in the formation of our association, and like fellow bluebells we are here to stay.

See you all in September.

*Arte et Marte*



**Inaugural Mixed Dining in Night Clarmont RS&LA Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

