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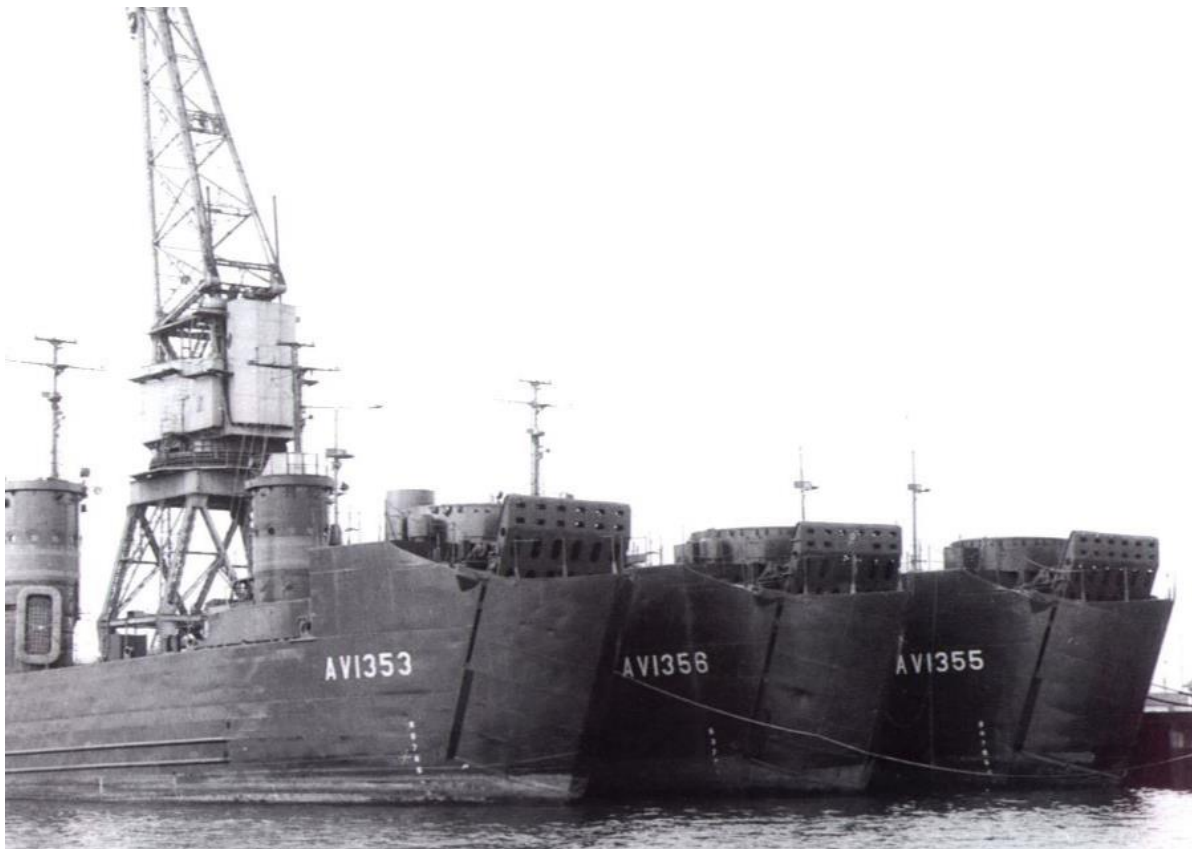
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# The Purple Circle

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## **32 SMALL SHIP SQUADRON**

Landing Ship Medium - AV1353 Harry Chauvel,  
AV1356 Clive Steele, AV1355 Vernon Sturdee



## **Passing Parade**

**Robert John Auer** passed away in September 2019, aged 74 years and 7 months. Bob served in Vietnam from January 1969 to January 1970 with 17 Construction Squadron.

**COL Robert Sanders** passed away on 17 October 2019. Rob was attending the gym when he collapsed and died. At the time he was posted as Director Land in DG Land Branch at HQ JOC.

**Reginald James (Bob) Collinson** passed away in October 2019 at the age of 86 years. Bob served in Vietnam from September 1963 to September 1964 with the AATTV. He spent much of his tour with the US Special Forces Group A & B Teams. Bob was awarded the US Bronze Star with "V" and the BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1965.

**David Robert Donald** passed away in October 2019 at the age of 73 years and 5 months. David served in Vietnam from October 1969 to September 1970 with 1 Field Squadron.

**Colin Micheal Campbell** passed away on 1 November 2019 aged 74 years and 11 months. Colin served in Vietnam from December 1967 to December 1968 with 1 Field Squadron.

**Darby Ivan Munro** passed away on 13 November 2019 aged 73 years and 5 months. Darby served in Vietnam from December 1968 to December 1969 with 55 Engineer Workshops & Park Squadron.

**Christopher (Chris) Ford** passed away on 16 November 2019 at the age of 88 years and 11 months. Chris served in Vietnam from May 1968 to May 1969 with Headquarters Australian Forces Vietnam.

**James Robert Brown** passed away on 14 November 2019 at the age of 88 years. Jimmy served with 32 Small Ships and made 2 trips to Vietnam on the John Monash in August 1966 and on the Clive Steele in October 1966.

**John Graham Green** passed away on 27 November 2019 at the age of 88 years and 2 months. John served in Vietnam from January 1967 to October 1967 with 1 Field Squadron.

Last Notice – **George Stephen Biddlecombe** passed away on 26 August 2018 at the age of 80 years and 9 months. George served in Vietnam from March 1967 to December 1967 with 1 Field Squadron. His granddaughter recently confirmed his passing to the Queensland Association.

**LEST WE FORGET**

## **Names on the Life Members Honour Board**

WX3455 LT **Clive Alfred Paul Boundy** was born in Gawler, SA on 24 September 1913. He enlisted in the Army at Swan Barracks Perth on 18 November 1940 and assigned to the RAE and 2/6<sup>th</sup> Field Park Company, 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

In June 1941 the 8 Inf Div arrived in Malaya and 2/6 Fd Pk Coy was tasked with setting up stores and explosive depots on the Malay Peninsula. As the Japanese advances, the Australians withdrew to Singapore and on 15 February 1942, the Singapore Garrison surrendered.

Sappers of 2/6<sup>th</sup> were split up and some were sent to work on the Thai – Burma railway, others to Sandakan, Japan and some were to remain in Changi prison. The officers were separated from the sappers and sent to Kuching. Of the 197 officers and sappers taken prisoner, 107 survived and returned to Perth.

Clive was discharged from the Army on 5 March 1946 and became an active committee member of the Association attending many functions as a delegate of the Association. He was elected president from 1976 – 78.

Clive was given Life Membership in 1992.

61434 WO1 **Michael John Ryan** was born in Hobart on 6 September 1940. He joined the CMF in 1961 and joined the ARA in January 1962.

Mick served in many Engineer units as well as serving overseas in PNG in 1963, Borneo in 1966 and Vietnam in 1968. The high points of his career was the 10 years as SME as instructor in the NBC Wing, ending up as Wing SSM, and his posting to 6 Engineer Group as RSM.

Mick was SSM of 22 Const Sqn in 1982 and after taking discharge in 1985, joined the ARes as SSM of 13 Fd Sqn, a position he held for 10 years. During his time with 22 Const Sqn, he instigated the conversion of the Lysaght Q store building into a sapper's club, now called the Ryan Club.

He was also involved in the holding of the first Dawn Service at 22 Const Sqn, a tradition that has continued to this to this day with the Dawn Service now held in front of the Ryan Club at the RAE Memorial.

He was very active in reinvigorating the Association and was vice president for 3 years before taking over as president in 1990. He remained president for 23 years before stepping down in 2013.

Mick was given Life Membership in 1996.



## Trevor Williams

Trevor was born in Newcastle in 1963 and grew up in the mining port of Dampier in the Pilbara.

He attended Dampier Primary School and Karratha Senior High School.

Trevor started work at the age of 18 and in 1983 enlisted in the ARes in OCTU Course 18. In 1985, resigned his commission and joined the ARA and undertook Officer Training at Portsea and Duntroon, graduating in 1986.

He served in many positions from Tp Comd to QM, to unit 2IC, HQ 13 Bde, SO2 Trg and Trade Dev DEngrs and SI Trg Ops at SME. In 1999, he went inactive ARes and in 2002 transferred back to the active list. In 2004 he was posted as OC 13 Fd Sqn and at the end of 2004 left the Army.

He met Sophie at Cape Tribulation in Far Nth Qld and they married in Kent England in 1990. They have 3 boys, Jack, Sam and Matt. Sadly Jack passed away last year.

Trevor currently works in Training Management with stints at Westrac, BHP, Rio Tinto and other Registered Training Organisations.

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## Kim (Whitey) White

Kim was born Adelaide in 1955 and grew up there attending Woodville Primary School and Seaton Boys Technical High School. He has six brothers and two sisters.

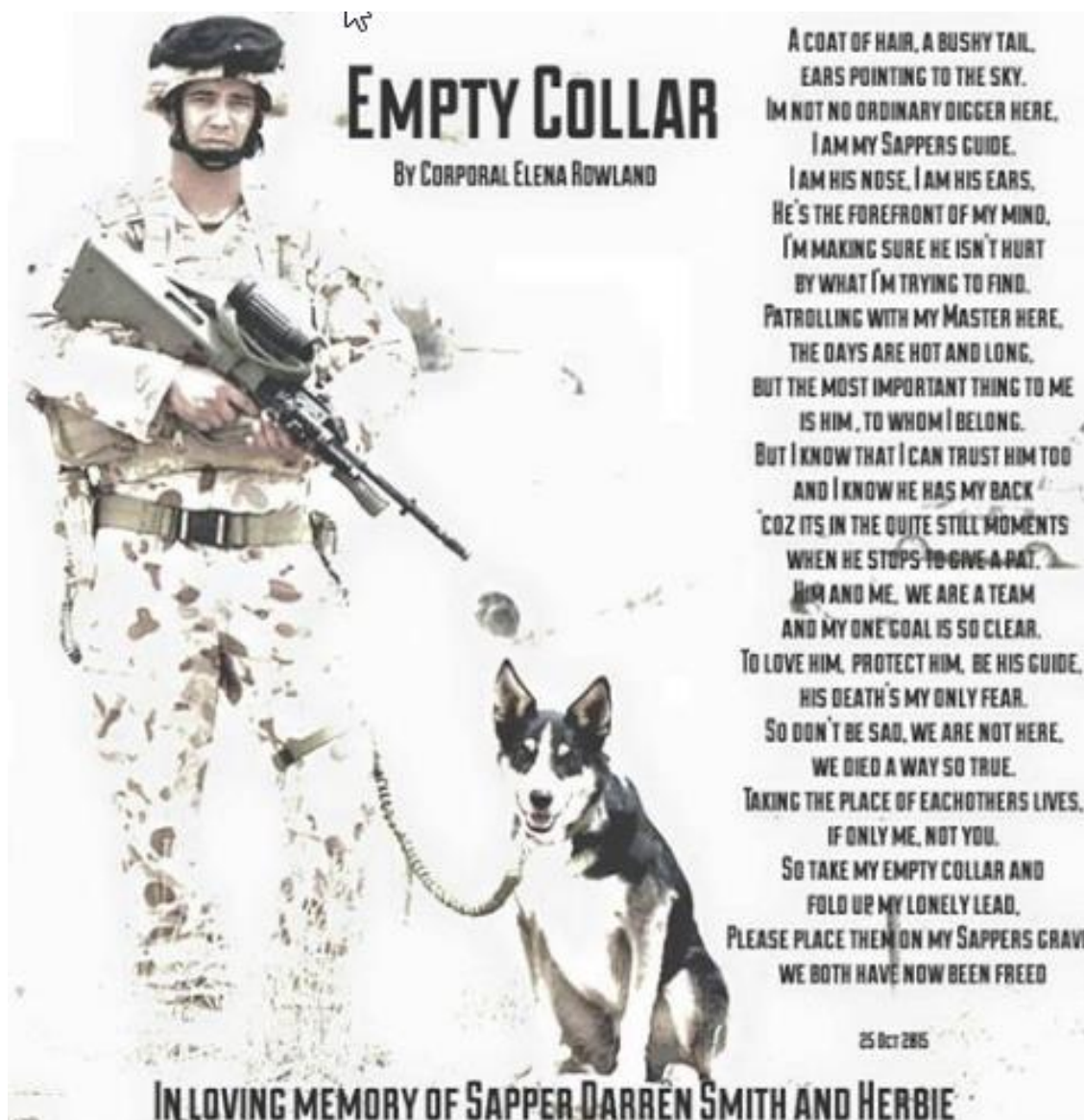
He started work at 15 and half, as an apprentice plumber, drainer and gas fitter.

Whitey joined the Army in 1978 serving with 20 Div Engrs and 22 Const Sqn. He served on a peacetime exercise on Townsend Island, was detached to Mawson and Davis Bases, Antarctica, and spent time in Tasmania and on Rottneest Island. He left the Army in 1987 and started working with SECWA Gas, HomesWest and TAFE WA as Technician and Facility Manager.

Whitey was 16 when he met Lynnette in 1971 and they married in 1973. They have a son, a daughter and 4 grandchildren.

In retirement, he and Lyn caravaned around Australia, visited England, America, Bali, Phuket, as well as taking ocean cruises and a river cruise on the Mekong River.

They lived in Hopetown for 9 years where Whitey was involved in the Men's Shed and in July 2019 relocated back to Perth.



## Cadet Sponsorship Raffle

The Cadet sponsorship raffle was drawn on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November and the winners were –

1<sup>st</sup> prize - Fred Glen

2<sup>nd</sup> prize - Trudy Walker

3<sup>rd</sup> prize – Jason & Jacque Hamling

A big thank you to Peter Billington, he was the instigator behind the raffle, and not only did he do all the planning, organising and banking, he was responsible for the distribution of raffle books and the drawing of the raffle on the Sunday.



## 32 Small Ship Squadron

In July 1959, the Australian government purchased 4 United States Navy World War 2 Class-1 Landing Ship Medium (LSM). 32 Small Ships Squadron was raised later that year to operate and maintain the fleet of LSMs.

The ships were renamed and became – Harry Chauvel (AV1353), Brudenell White (AV1354), Vernon Sturdee (AV1355) and Clive Steele (AV1356).

In 1957, a RAN tender vessel was transferred to the Australian Army and joined 32 Small Ship soon after the formation of the unit., this vessel was renamed Mollymawk (AT2383) but was sold in 1963. Then in 1965, a cargo ship was purchased to support the LSMs and renamed John Monash (AS3051).

The LSMs and the cargo ship served Australia with distinction, running equipment, stores and personnel up and down the east coast and to PNG. In 1964 they were involved in the transporting of plant and vehicles to Sabah, Borneo and then to South Vietnam from 1966 to 1971.

As the LSMs were nearing their use by date, they were decommissioned and sold, and the 32 Small Ship Squadron disbanded on 30 September 1971. The cargo ship John Monash was transferred to 1 Terminal Group in 1972 and eventually sold in 1975.



Memorial Plaque



Final Parade

## Annual Subscriptions

Membership subs were due on 1<sup>st</sup> July and the Treasurer has advised that many subs are still outstanding. If you have not yet paid, payment can be by direct debit/deposit to the Association's Bank of Queensland account, BSB # 126548 Account # 28326462 with Subs and your name as identification or by cheque posted to: - The Treasurer, PO Box 94, Dianella, WA 6059.

Members who have not paid their subs by 31 December will be non-financial and removed from our members list. Members names will also be struck off our contacts files and will not receive any further copies of the Purple Circle or Association correspondence.

### 7 Army Troops Company – a WA Sapper Unit

Whereas field companies in WW2 were the basic engineer units attached to a field formation such as a division, army troops companies were formed to work in the base area. With a high proportion of tradesmen the three construction sections, later platoons, (1/49) could build or maintain roads, bridges and buildings, while the two electrical & mechanical sections (1/46) could operate a workshop or operate and maintain electrical, water supply and refrigeration systems in the field. CoyHQ had 3/28.

Maj George Shaw formed the unit in October 1940 and they were in camp when called up for full time duty in December 1941. Over the next 18 months the sections worked around Fremantle and Perth on a wide variety of construction and maintenance jobs. Projects included field defences on Rottnest, extensions to the Hollywood hospital, the AA position at Buckland Hill, improvements to camps all around the south west, irrigation at the York veterinary hospital, new road bridges at York and Moora and jetties on Garden Island. One ongoing project was the preparation of the demolition plan for Fremantle Port, and in June 1942 a trial run had all charges in place only three hours after they received the order at their camp at Guildford. To demonstrate their versatility they also had field teams undertaking a rush job to map the coastal area north and south of Harvey.

In July 1943 *7 Army Troops Company* left for the convoy route between Alice Springs and Larrimah. CoyHQ, one construction section and the workshop were at Morphett Creek with other sections rotating between Alice Springs, Mt Isa and Elliott. They also operated four water drilling rigs around NT. As well as the main workshop the E & M sections manned the water, power and refrigeration plants at Tennant Creek, Morphett Creek, Banka Banka, Elliott, No 3 Bore, No 6A Bore, Camooweal and Mt Isa. Temperatures reached 54°C at Morphett Creek in January 1944. 4 *Pl* moved north to Noonamah in May 1944 and the other construction platoons joined them in August, working on facilities to support a planned two division attack towards Singapore from the Darwin area. This project was abandoned and with secure sea transport to Darwin the convoy route was closed. *7 Army Troops Company* moved to the *RAE Depot* at Kapooka in December 1944.

They left for Bougainville in April 1945 to work around the Torokina base area. Here 4 *Pl* joined the WA sappers from *2/2 Forestry Company* operating the sawmill, while the rest of the unit maintained the base and operated the power, water and refrigeration systems. After the Japanese surrender they supervised the Japs as they built the POW cages before leaving for home in December.

After several informal get-togethers *7 Army Troops Company (RAE) Association* was formed in 1953 and they held regular reunions each year until 2011. In most years this was a dinner meeting attended by *CE W Comd* along with the *Col Comdt*, but in other years they had field tours, including on to a Bailey Bridge being built by *13 Fd Sqn*. Jack Benari published the unit history '*Sundry Notes & Anecdotes*' which was mainly for members, but a copy is in the *RAE Assoc Archive*.



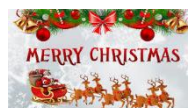
7 Army Troops Company constructing Sulphur Bay Jetty in March 1943.

## Luncheon

On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 18 members and partners gathered at the Rose & Crown hotel in Guildford for lunch. A pleasant lunch was had by all sitting out in the beer garden under clear skies with the odd aeroplane flying over to break up the conversation.



Those present were – Warren Stuber, Peter Moore, Trevor Johnson, Allen Higgins, Neville Clark, Ian & Colleen Johnston, Curly Stark, Bob Horrocks, Ron Gomboc, Bob Brackenbury & partner Marina, David Evans, Tex McPherson & partner Kaye Dallas and Peter & Kathy Billington.





## **Patron**

Our Patron, Geoff Stooke has agreed to a three (3) year extension as the Patron of the RAE Association of WA (Inc). His term as Patron has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## **Bunnings Sausage Sizzle**

On Saturday 19 October, 16 members of the Association and 2 outsiders helped cook and serve sausage hotdogs to the many visitors to the Bunnings store in Malaga. The association made a profit of about \$1,310 which was a very good effort.

A very big thank you to all those who gave up their time to help. It was a team effort but a special thanks to Russell McEntyre who took than RDO on the Friday to organise all the foods and drinks required for the day as well as arranging the shifts for the day.

## **1 CER in Timor-Leste**

For the 6<sup>th</sup> year, sappers from 1CER along with ADF support staff returned to Timor-Leste to partake in Exercise Hari'i Hamutuk at the Metinaro Military Base near the capital Dili.

The sappers, working alongside engineers from Timor-Leste defence force, Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force, US Marine Corps and US Navy personnel, completed 15 section-sized construction and maintenance tasks over the 28 day exercise period.



Lcpl James De La Rue of 1CER with US marine Sgt Caldwell and Timor-Leste Defence Force 2Sgt Leonido.



Cpl Matthew Pfungst of 1CER with Timor-Leste Defence Force soldiers.

Pictures courtesy Army News

## 2CER on Bridging Exercise



Sappers from 2CER carried out ribbon bridge training on the Burnett River at Gayndah, north of Brisbane and constructing the medium girder bridge over a dry creek during Exercise Sapper Span.

Pictures courtesy Army News

## Next Meetings

The general meetings for the first part of next year will be held on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February and Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Meetings will start at the usual time of 11.00am.

There will be no ANZAC meeting as the only date available in April is Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>, 6 days before ANZAC Day.

Members will be advised by email or letter of all timings for our Dawn Service and march through the city when the timings are received from 13 Fd Sqn.

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The Committee would like to wish all our members, family and friends a

*Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2020*

