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The Purple Circle

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Mr Neville John Clark OAM receiving his award
from The Honourable Kim Beazley AC, Governor
of Western Australia

Election of Committee for 2020 – 2021

At the Annual General Meeting held on 26 July, a new committee was elected to look after and run the Association for the next financial year.

The Executive members are -

Ian Johnston - President
Russell McEntyre - Vice President
Trevor Jones - Secretary
Peter Billington - Treasurer

Committee members are – Fred Abbott, David Evans, Trevor Johnston, Steve O’Neil, Lynne Reynolds and Paul Talma.

Following the meeting, Brendan Sullivan volunteered his services to be a part of the committee and was elected at the committee meeting on 9 August.

Passing Parade

John Roland (Jack) Benari passed away on 13 July 2020 aged 97 years and 5 months. Jack served with 7 Army Troop Company supporting 2 Aust Corps in Torokina during WW2. Jack was a WW2 honorary member of the Association.

John McEwan-Ferguson passes away on 16 July 2020 aged 84 years and 9 months. John served twice in Vietnam from August 1964 to June 1965 and again from May 1967 to April 1968.

Mark Alan Shephard passed away on 8 August 2020 aged 56 years. John served with 7 Fd Sqn, 21 Const Sqn, 17 Const Sqn as well as overseas in Afghanistan in 2009 and PNG from 2010 to 2016.

Kenneth Charles (Ken) Hawke passed away on 9 August 2020 aged 74 years, Ken was an 18th Intake Army Apprentice Elec Mech. He served in Vietnam from March 1968 to March 1969 with 21 Engineer Support Troop. Ken was a member of the Association.

Noel Tanner passed away on 13 August 2020 aged 76 years and 2 months. Noel served in Vietnam from May 1968 to May 1969 with 17 Const Sqn.

John Malcolm (Hutch) Hutcheson MC passed away 18 August 2020 aged 92 years and 10 months. Hutch served in the Korean War with 3RAR before Corps transferring to RAE. He served in Vietnam from March 1971 to March 1972 with HQ AFV (Army Component).

LEST WE FORGET

IN MEMORY OF

FREDERICK ANDREW (FRED) BANYARD



Fred was born on 26 December 1918 in London, UK. He was the youngest of three children, having a sister Edith and brother Victor. Both now deceased.

Very soon after Fred was born, his father passed away and in 1920 Fred's mother decided to immigrate to Australia with Edith leaving Victor and Fred in an orphanage until she had established a new life in Australia. His first schooling was in the orphanage.

At the age of 11 years, he and Victor came to Australia in 1930 to be with their mother and sister, now living in Gordon Street, West Perth. Fred attended Thomas Street Primary School and then Northbridge Junior Technical School.

Fred was 14 years old when he started work with Cadbury-Fry and Pascal, confectionary manufacturers and remained there until 1942 when he enlisted in the army.

Because of his stature, Fred was allocated to 13 Field Company. After spending some time working around the Mid-West area of Western Australia, the Unit moved to the Northern Territory where they constructed and maintained roads and bridges in the area around Batchelor, south of Darwin and carried out repairs to the wharfs in Darwin.

Whilst at Batchelor, Fred attended a Morse code operators course in Sydney and was his Section's signals operator when they moved to New Britain where the Unit carried out general Field Engineering work including road and piled bridge construction in support of 13 Infantry Brigade.

Fred was discharged in March 1946 and returned to work at Cadbury Fry and Pascal where he remained until he retired in 1977. On retirement, he and his sister lived in Swanbourne for some time before moving into a Retirement complex in Claremont.

Fred played tennis until he was 85 and continued to walk to Cottesloe shops to do his shopping until he moved into Bethanie Aged Care in 2015.

Fred never married and passed away on 31 May 2020 aged 101 years and 5 months.

RIGHTON WALTER (WALLY) CAVANAGH



Wally was born on 15 November 1924 in Perth. He had two sisters and a brother. Wally went to school at CBC and Trinity College. He left school in 1940 and started work as a clerk with Vacuum Oil Company.

Wally's father, Lt Righton Cavanagh served in the 6th and 3rd Aust Tunnelling Companies on the Western Front in WW1. He was awarded the Military Cross for his actions in Belgium.

In November 1942, Wally joined the militia and was assigned to Fortress Engineers serving on Rottnest Island. In October 1943, he joined the AIF and moved over east where he was placed in a Holding Company bases at the Sydney Show grounds. Wally was then assigned to 5th Army Welding Platoon and was sent to a Water Transport Unit on the Barron River, Cairns to do ship repairs. His unit was then posted to Morotai for training until the assault on Balikpapan in July 1945 where they built bulk fuel storage tanks for the 7th Division.

At the end of the war, Wally returned to Perth and was assigned to Pay Corps to assist in the payment of soldiers returning home to be discharged. Wally was discharged in July 1946.

After retraining as an accountant through the Repatriation system, Wally joined the R&I Bank and was sent to Busselton to work. It was here that he met Valma Kell and in June 1952 they married. They had three children, two sons and a daughter. Because he worked in the bank, they moved around a lot, to Geraldton, Corrigan, Katanning, Perth just to name a few of the places where he worked.

In August 1982, Val passed away and he later met and married Jeanette Knox-Peden.

In 1985 Wally retired from the bank and because of his contacts in the corporate world, he worked as a Director for many Perth companies until he fully retired in 2005.

When Janet passed away in 2008, Wally remained in their Wembley Downs house until 2012 when he moved into a home unit in the Ocean Gardens Retirement Village in City Beach where he lived until he passed away on 1 June aged 95 years and 6 months.

JOHN ROLAND (JACK) BENARI



Jack Benari was born on 12th February 1923 in Mooney Ponds, Victoria. His family moved to Perth not long after he was born and lived in Nedlands. He has two sisters who were born in Perth. He attended Nedlands Primary School and Claremont Central High School. His first job after leaving school at aged 14 was as a newspaper office boy.

In January 1940, Jack joined the Militia and remained with the Militia until 1942 when he volunteered to join the RAAF and do his bit in the war. After having his enlistment held up, he joined the Army in June 1942 and was allocated to the RAE.

Jack was posted to the Training Battalion in Northam before joining 7 Army Troops Company in 1943. In July, the Unit moved to Northern Australia carrying out works around Alice Springs, Mt Isa, Elliot, Tennant Creek, Derby and Wyndham.

In December 1944, the Unit moved to the RAE Training Depot at Kapooka before going to Bougainville in April 1945 where they maintained 2 Aust Corps base area at Torokina and operated the water, power and refrigeration systems, as well as general base maintenance and providing assisting the 2/2 Forestry Company.

Jack returned to Australia in late 1945 and was discharged in January 1946. He returned to work at the Newspapers until he resigned a couple of years later and joined the Public Health Department.

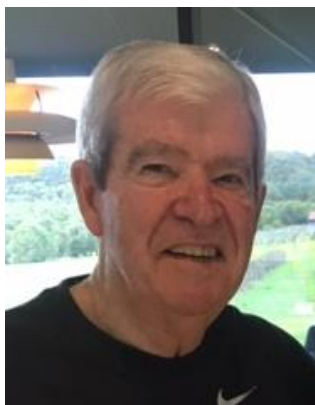
In May 1950, Jack married Dorothy Cooper and they lived in the Hollywood/Nedlands area. They had 4 sons who all live and work in the eastern states with their families.

Jack was a stalwart of the 7 Army Troops Company Association which later merged into the RAE Association of WA due to declining membership.

Jack and Dorothy were living in Nedlands when he retired in 1963. They lived in Bentley until Dorothy died in 2018. Jack then moved in Bethanie Aged Care where he passed away on 13 July aged 97 years and 5 months.

LEST WE FORGET

MEET OUR MEMBERS



Paul Wilmot

Paul was born in Warrnambool, Vic, in 1945 and has 5 older sisters. He attended Warrnambool St Joseph's CBC Primary School and High School. He left school at 16 and worked as an assistant cost clerk at the City Council.

Paul joined the Army in June 1965 in the 1st Intake National Service. He served with 22 Const Sqn, Officer Cadet School Portsea, Army Office Canberra, 5 Engr Group, Sqn Comdr 1FER, DEngrs Canberra and HQ 5MD SO1 Pers/Log.

Paul served overseas in PNG as 2IC PNG Const Sqn 1969-71, United Nations Military Observer in Israel & Egypt 1974-76 and at RSME UK 1983-85.

Paul left the army in 1987 and worked as CEO Anglican Homes (Amana Living) until 2003, then was chairman of the Energy & Water Ombudsman Board until he retired in 2015. He was also our Honorary COL Comd 5MD from 1998 to 2002.

Paul met Barbara O'Sullivan in Perth in 1969 and they married in 1970. They have 2 children, Tony and Belinda and 2 grandchildren.

In retirement, Paul enjoyed playing golf and travelling until he was diagnosed with Parkinsons Disease (MSA) in 2015.

Paul and Barbara currently live in Claremont.



Ian Warren

Ian was born in Dwellingup in 1939 and has 2 brothers and 4 sisters. He attended Dwellingup Primary School and Pinjarra High School. He left school at 14 and started work as a junior in a timber mill.

Lofty joined the Army in April 1957 and was allocated to the RAE. He served with many engineer units on the east coast as well with 22 Const Sqn

He saw overseas service in Borneo with 1 Fd Sqn and 22 Const Sqn, SVN with 17 Const Sqn and with the Royal Fiji Military Forces in Fiji.

Lofty took discharged in 1986 and worked as training manager with the Construction Training Council, training earthmoving and lifting operators.

He met Margaret on the train between Perth and Sydney and they married in 1962. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

In retirement, Lofty had a hobby farm in Lake Clifton before moving to Mandurah. He and Margaret still enjoy touring overseas and caravanning in Australia.

Lofty and Margaret currently live in Falcon.

Names on the Life Members Honour Board

Ron Gomboc Cit.WA was born in 1947 and after immigrating to Australia grew up in Perth. He was called up for National Service in 1968 which was deferred until April 1969. After Puckapunyal and SME, he was posted to 22 Const Sqn, Res Tp where he worked as a carpenter and completed a drivers course. Ron spent a lot of time at Bindoon Training area and has a stay at Shoalwater Bay, Yeppoon, Qld. He was discharged from the army in 1971.

In 1980, Ron established Gomboc Gallery Sculpture Park with his partner Terri Gomboc AOM. It was here that he created the bronze slouch hat for the Memorial Precinct granite plinth and the sculpture to commemorate the 66 RAE units from WA who fought in WW2. Both sculptures were generously donated into the safe keeping and care of the Association.

His works can be found in the Canberra War Memorial collection and has also received world recognition with sculptures in Singapore, Japan, China, South Korea, Austria and Germany to name a few countries.

Ron was given Life Member in 2015.

Graham McKenzie-Smith AM grew up in the Blue Mountains of NSW and studied forestry at ANU Canberra before being called up for National Service in 1971. After Kapooka and Corps training, he joined the staff at SME in ESW and PRA Wings.

On discharge he worked in the pine forests outside Canberra until 1981 when he moved to WA in the developing pine sawmilling industry, where from 1985 he was General Manager of the Softwood Division of Bunnings Forest Products. Graham returned to Canberra in 1991 as CEO of ACT Forests. Back to Perth in 1999 he consulted in forestry until he retired in 2006.

Graham has always been interested in Military History and has written extensively on the Australian Army in WW2, publishing five books and many articles. He joined the RAE Assoc in 2007 and Mick Ryan convinced him to write 'Sappers in the West' which the Association published in in 2015.

Graham was a committee member from 2009 to 2020.

He was honoured with an AM in the 2020 Australia Day Honours List.

Graham was given Life Member in 2019.

Sandakan Day

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Sandakan Day commemoration in King's Park on 16 August was cancelled due to State Government distancing requirements.

13 Fd Sqn

2020 has continued to be an historic and exciting year for 13 Field Squadron. Operations, unique training opportunities, new equipment and expansion being some of the highlights so far.

The unit continues to provide limited numbers of members to support Operation COVID ASSIST and this looks set to continue throughout 2020 at least. Latest tasks have been focussed on airport and quarantine compliance checks. In other operations news a number of unit members are preparing to support border protection operations on OPERATION RESOLUTE later in the year in what will prove to be challenging circumstances.

On July 1 2020 (The corps and unit birthday) the squadron was allocated approximately 40 additional positions. These positions are centred on expanding the squadron's construction capabilities and will result in the raising of a construction troop. This is fantastic news as the unit has been at capacity for some time which has limited opportunities for career development. Additional trades, plant operator, heavy vehicle operator and combat engineer positions are all included. The Chief of Army (CA) MAJGEN Rick Burr visited in late July to be briefed by the OC (MAJ Glen McDermott) on the expansion plans and he seemed very satisfied with what he saw and heard. As the weather was fine the OC took the opportunity to brief the Chief outside at the memorial acknowledging our past and history as our future was discussed.



MAJ Glen McDermott briefing MAJGEN Rick Burr

The unit also recently received two new MAN HX77 dump trucks to eventually replace the Mack fleet. The HX77 is a capability booster in both features and size. New kit means new qualifications to be gained and qualifying of drivers is now a priority. However, there are enough qualified drivers to be able to give them their first serious hit out during works tasks at the Bindoon Direct Fire Support Weapons Range in August.



The Squadron's new MAN HX77 dump truck

Army Cadet Corps News



Due to the Coronavirus, there was no hand-over parade for the incoming Cadet Under Officer. On Tuesday 1st September, Ian Johnston visited the Unit and presented CUO Sara Rowe with her Award and Sponsorship Certificate.

HOC Waterloo Dinner Address

Extract from Waterloo Dinner Address by BRIG John Carey CSC, HOC, RAE

Dear Fellow Sappers,

Normally I would be welcoming you all at our 105th annual Waterloo Dinner. This events allows us collectively as Sappers to come together, honour our proud heritage and reflect on the many achievements of Our Corps – The Royal Australian Engineers. As your Head of Corps, I typically employ this opportunity to reflect on our proud journey and importantly, provide you an insight into the future.

This year is somewhat different. It has been challenging for all of us both as a Corps and personally – a year of uncertainty; one of bushfires, floods, pandemics and a troubled global economy.

A ready and resilient Army and Nation is kept ready and resilient through its Engineers. We exist to provide engineering solutions for our Nation's toughest challenges. In the last twelve months we have led from the front – our Sappers are leaders among their peers; innovators at the front of national security, military engineering, humanitarian response, disaster relief, capacity building, facility management and technical design. Together, as a Corps of over 3,500 men and women, we continue to be a globally-engaged force providing unmatched strength and value to others.

As part of the Federal Government's 'Closing the Gap' initiative, the Corps successfully concluded the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) in Jigalong, Western Australia.

Our Special Operations Engineers continue to develop and prepare task organised specialist technical Counter-Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive forces to enable Special Operations and conduct Counter Weapons Mass Destruction missions. This includes technical specialists in Biometric and Forensic Collection, supporting the ADF Joint Counter Improvised Threat Task Force.

The Corps was wholly involved in Operation Bushfire Assist. Sappers led the way and were reinforced when the Governor General called out the Reserve for the first in its history. We deployed by road and air from across Australia to the badly affected regions – Adelaide Hills, Kangaroo Island, East Gippsland, South Coast of NSW, Queensland border, Norfolk Island Namadgi and the leafy suburbs of Canberra.

Then, a pandemic not seen since the end of WW1, struck our Nation. The Corps pivoted and immediately took charge in support of Joint Task force 629.

In the last few months, our Sappers have been supporting bio-hazard controls, airport arrivals and border check points across the country to stop COVID 19.

I see the following as key objectives for Engineers, aligned with Army and Defence initiatives. These will be our focus for future Corps workshops and conferences.

We must be recognised as the Engineering experts of the Joint Force Team.

We must develop Engineering solutions for multi-domain operations.

We must divest legacy capabilities no longer fit for purpose or irrelevant and sponsor Engineer research and development priorities.

We must achieve the mobility alignment in our Combat Engineer Regiments.

We must achieve 'More together' by 'partnering of impact'. Our future is a partnered one.

We must extend Allied Engineer Force Interoperability.

We must promote Identity, Community and History.

We must promote and enable Sapper Associations.

Sappers are innovative and cunning – but embody the spirit of our Nation.

Sappers are professional and humble – but threatened, will become your worst nightmare.

Sappers are courteous and helpful – but ferocious in battle and will never leave a mate behind.

Sappers have unique technical skills – but care passionately about Family and Friends.

Thank you for what you do. **Follow the Sapper. Ubique.**

RAE Association Membership Fees

There are still a few people who have not paid their membership dues yet. If you have not yet paid, you are asked to make payment as quickly as you can. If payment is not made by the end of this month, your membership will be terminated, and this Purple Circle will be the last correspondence you will receive from the Association.

Watermanship Training at SME

Sappers of the 2 Tp IET Course carrying out Improvised Ribbon Bridging training at the new Engineer Watermanship & Bridging wet gap training area on the St Georges River.



Next Meetings

Our final general meeting for the year will be held on Sunday 29 November 2020. The meeting will be held at the Osborne Park RSL Hall at the corner of Main St and Cape St, Osborne Park commencing at 11.00 am.

Meeting dates and locations will be discussed at the next committee meeting in November and will be published in the December Purple Circle.