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The Purple Circle

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**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS
(WHO IS A SAPPER)**

A Sapper is of Private rank equivalent in the Royal Australian Engineers.

A "Sap" is a deep narrow trench constructed in medieval times to approach a besieged enemy position. A "Sap" is often protected by gabions or parapets and is usually "zig zag" in alignment and protected by overhead cover as it nears an enemy position. One who "Saps" is therefore called a Sapper.

The "Sap" eventually undermines the enemy defences (such as a castle wall) using timber supports. A fire is then lit to collapse the wall to allow the Infantry access to the besieged fortification.

Modern day Sappers construct defences for our own military forces and breach the defences of the enemy: this could include landmines, improvised explosive devices, anti-tank obstacles, boobytraps and barbed wire entanglements.

Sappers also provide essential services such as: water, electricity, waste disposal, hospitals, accommodation and buildings along with roads, airfields and bridges.

**The motto of the Royal Australian Engineers is:
"FACIMUS ET FRANGIMUS"**

Which translates from Latin "We Make and We Break!"

**The Royal Australian Engineers have been awarded the Battle Honour:
"UBIQUE"**

PASSING PARADE

Robert Edwin (Bob) Ekberg passed away on 1 January 2024 aged 78 years and 5 months. Bob served with 32 Small Ship Squadron and sailed to Vietnam on AV1355 Vernon Sturdee from January to June 1967.

Peter James Hallam passed away on 4 January 2024 aged 85 years. Peter served in Vietnam from June 1967 to July 1966 with 17 Construction Squadron.

Walter (Wally) Murray passed away on 6 January 2024 aged 84 years. Wally served in Malaya with 2 Tp, 11 Independent Field Squadron RE, a part of 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group in 1960 - 1961.

Anthony Louis (Dusty) Dusting passed away on 14 February 2024 aged 77 years and 7 months. Dusty twice served in Vietnam from January 1968 to January 1969 with 17 Construction Squadron and from May to November 1971 with 21 Engineer Support Troop and then to March 1972 with 55 Engineer Workshops & Parks Squadron. Dusty sailed home from Vietnam on the last HMAS Sydney voyage to leave Vietnam.

Bruce Lambert passed away late February 2024, dates and age are not known. Bruce served in Malaya with 2 Tp, 11 Independent Field Squadron RE, a part of 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group in 1967 - 1969.

Christopher (Pedro) Peterson passed away on 1 March 2024 aged 72 years and 6 months. Pedro was a 22nd intake bricklayer at the Army Apprentice School. He served with 17, 21 and 23 Construction Squadrons, Engineer Works Service and also in PNG.

Imants (Monty) Avotins passed away on 12 March 2024 aged 77 years and 10 months. Monty served in Vietnam from February to December 1967 with 17 Construction Squadron and from October 1969 to April 1970 with 1 Field Squadron. He also served in Sabah Borneo from June to December 1965 with 24 Construction Squadron.

LEST WE FORGET

MEET OUR MEMBERS



Stephen (Steve) O'Neil

Steve was born in Brisbane, Qld in February 1960 and has 6 brothers and 6 sisters. He grew up in Mt Yokine and attended Yokine Primary school and Tuart Hill Senior High school.

Steve left school at the age of 16 and took up an apprenticeship with Bristle Sheet Metal as a sheet metal worker.

He joined the Army Reserve in October 1982 and served with 13 Fd Sqn for 19 years and in 2000 was promoted to the rank of WO2 and Squadron SSM. Steve also served with 5 Trg Gp and WAUR as CSM, Officer Cadet Training Company. In 1999, he was appointed as WA Chief Instructor for Op Gold for the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

After being made redundant by Telecom/Telstra after 14 ½ years, he transferred to full time service in January 2004 and served with IRR (now SOER) Holsworthy as OPS WO and HQ SSM before he was medically discharged in December 2005.

Steve worked for WA Police as a speed camera operator and then as an assessor in the Firearms Licencing Branch until he retired in 2021.

Steve met Vicki in 1978 at the Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club and they married in November 1981. They had 3 daughters before separated in 1989. He later met June Harrison and they married in 2016. Steve has 6 grandchildren.

In retirement, he fills in his time as a volunteer driver for seniors and disabled persons working for the City of Swan Shire. He umpires cricket on weekends for local district cricket games in summer and AFL as a goal umpire for the local senior Football Club over winter. He also attends the gym twice a week.

Steve is currently president of the Ellenbrook RSL Sub-Branch.

Steve and June live in Ellenbrook.

Steve would also like to remind serving personnel, regular and reservists, to report and keep records of any accident or injury, no matter how minor you may think it is, as these issues may affect your health and fitness after you retire or leave the services. If you have already left the services, seek as much information as possible from official records or mates who were present at the time of the incident and record it. These records may help you later in life to seek treatment for a service-related ailment and possible compensation from DVA.



Ray (Brute) Carroll

Brute was born in Busselton in April 1950 and has 2 sisters. He grew up Jarrahwood attending Jarrahwood Primary school and Busselton High School.

He left school at age 15 and started work as a Mill hand at the local timber mill.

Brute joined the Army in October 1967 and after completing recruit training and Corps training was posted to 22 Const Sqn. He was then posted to 1 Fd Sqn in SVN from May 1970 to May 1971. On his return to Australia, he was posted to 25 Spt Sqn, 3FER, Townsville. During his time in the Army, he qualified as a plant operator.

Brute took discharge in November 1973 and started work with the Dept of Housing & Construction in 1974. He spent most of his time doing repairs and resurfacing work on airports around WA, including Perth Airport, Cocos Island and Government airports from Exmouth north to Kununurra and inland. He left DHC in 1986 and started work with Telecom. He spent a lot of his time working in the country and as he put it, 'worked in just about every town in WA'. He worked with Telecom until 1993 when he was forced to retire for health reasons.

Brute met Maree whilst posted to Townsville and when he decided to take discharge, he talked Maree into come West with him and they married in Busselton in February 1974. They have 2 sons and a daughter and 3 grandchildren.

In retirement, Brute and Maree enjoyed caravanning around Australia, especially back to Townsville and Cairns to visit Maree's parents and siblings. They also spent a lot of time at Busselton where they owned a holiday house. Due to his health, he is unable to travel any more.

Brute said he enjoyed his time at 22 Const Sqn as it made him grow up quickly and to appreciate the Army.

Brute and Maree currently live in Hamersley.

I have realised that I am not "Atlas", the world does not rest on my shoulders.

I have learnt not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. The onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.



13 ENGINEER REGIMENT

In the last edition of the Purple Circle, a list of promotions and postings out was published but nothing about new march ins or position changes within the Regiment.

These are the postings in and position changes within the Regiment.

Maj Glen McDermott comes in on 12-month full time duty as the Ops Officer

Maj Adam Hill comes in as Exec Offr from Army Personnel Support Unit

Capt Ildar Kudyakov comes in as Adjutant from the Pilbara Regt

Capt Leroy Cox moves from 22 Sqn to Ops Wing as Ops Admin

WO2 Nathan Kowalski comes in as Ops WO from SOER

WO2 Matt Minton comes in as SSM 22 Sqn

Sgt Glenn Addicott moves to 22 Sqn as Trg Sgt

Sgt Andrew English comes in as RQ/SQ from 1Combat Support Regiment

Cadet Parade

Sunday 14 January saw the President attend the Cadet ‘qualifications course’ parade which was held on the parade ground at Irwin Barracks. The parade, as well as presenting prizes to the course award winners, also saw the change over of Cadet RSM with the handover of the RSM’s pass stick from outgoing CDT RSM Calven Truss to the incoming Cadet RSM Eeshan Ranade.



As the award certificate ready for the parade in January, the certificate was presented to CDT RSM Eeshan Ranade at the Army Cadet HQ on 20th February.

This was Our Enemy

Are there any Ex 22 Const Sqn members who can identify this motley group of pretend enemies, believed to be from about 1983. If you know who they are, contact the Editor on 0409 019 518 or email - raeassoc2016@gmail.com



Do You Know

The unknown sapper in the last edition of the Purple Circle was Trevor Jones. He in with good mate Andrew Montgomery and the photo was taken at a formal dining-in-night in Tasmania circa 1985.

For interest: Andrew is secretary of the Tasmanian RAE Association, and we all know Trevor is secretary of our very own Association.

This Edition's sapper served with 13 Fd Sqn.

Do you recognise the Sapper in the photo!



Congratulations

Congratulations go to two of our own sappers for recognition of their service.

Shaun Goodbody on being awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal in this years Australia Day Awards. Shaun was a long time member at 13 Fd Sqn and was SSM from 2005 – 2006. Shaun transferred to ARA service and served in units on the east coast reaching the dizzy heights of WO1.

Graham McKenzie-Smith on being made a ‘FELLOW’ of the Military Historical Society of Australia for his knowledge, research, writings and efforts in preserving Australian military history, particularly in Western Australia.

NOTICES

Next Meeting

The next general meeting will be held on Sunday 21 April, followed then on Sunday 9 June and the AGM on Sunday 28 July.

Put these dates in your phone or mark your calendar, especially the date for the AGM as it is you, the members, who elect the committee to run the association for the next year.

Guest speakers have been pencilled in for both dates

Contact Details

Have you move house or change contact details recently! Please do the polite thing and let the Secretary know of your new details so we can stay in touch. It saves a lot of hard work and time by committee members to chase up details.

The Secretary, Trevor Jones can be contacted by phone - 0413 376 273 or by email - raeassocwasec2017@gmail.com

Riddle

When is a door not a door?

Answer – Last page

EXERCISE



In August 1989, Ex Kangaroo 89 (K89), an ARA exercise was carried out across the top end of Australia, from Rockhampton to Karratha. 13 Bde Gp travelled to Karratha to carry out their part of the Exercise. 13 Fd Sqn provide engineer support to the Bde.

2 Tp carried out target hardening protection to identified vital asset in the area as well as constructing bunkers and field defences at RAAF Learmonth.







When it's ajar