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# The Purple Circle

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**SME HOLSWORTHY  
A NEW HOME FOR AUSTRALIA'S SAPPERS**

Picture courtesy of Sapper Summit

RAE Assoc (Vic) Inc

# IN MEMORY OF

61434 WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1

MICHAEL JOHN RYAN OAM



6TH SEPTEMBER 1940 - 25TH OCTOBER 2015

## **Michael John (Mick) Ryan OAM**



A young Sapper in New Guinea



President of RAE Assoc

Mick Ryan was born on 6th September 1940 in Hobart and had one sister, Julie. Mick grew up in Hobart and went to primary and high school in Hobart.

In 1959, Mick joined the Citizens Military Forces and in 1961 was employed on full time service with 25 Construction Squadron in Hobart. In January 1962, Mick joined the Regular Army and completed his Recruit Training at Kapooka and Basic Field Engineer (IET) Course at SME in the same year.

Mick served with many Engineer Units throughout his 23 year career in the Regular Army, most notably his 10 years at SME as an instructor in the NBC Wing and being made SSM of the wing. He was extremely proud of his posting as RSM of 6 Engineer Group in Melbourne.

In 1982, Mick was posted to 22 Construction Squadron as SSM and in 1985 took discharge. He joined the ARes as SSM of 13 Field Squadron. When the Sqn moved back into the old 22 Const Sqn area at Karrakatta, Mick instigated the conversion of a Lysaght Q store building into a Sappers Club, now called the Ryan Club.

He served overseas in New Guinea in 1963, Borneo in 1966 and Vietnam in 1968.

Mick married Christine in 1970 and had 2 children, Seamus and Kate, and 3 grand children.

Mick was President of the RAE Association of WA for 23 years

Mick passed away on 25 October 2015, aged 75 years.

## **Next Meetings**

General meetings for this year have been earmarked for the following dates - 21 February (El Cantara), 17 April (pre ANZAC Day), 17 July (AGM), 18 September and 20 November (final year meeting).

Although dates have to be confirmed with 13 Fd Sqn, the dates above are listed training weekends.

As shown, our first meeting is listed for Sunday 21 February.

## **Passing Parade**

**Michael John (Mick) Ryan** - See 'IN MEMORY OF' on pages 2 & 3

**George O'Callaghan** passes away on 4 December 2015. George was aged 64 years and six months. He joined the Army in October 1976 and served with 3 FER, 2/3 FER, 14 Fd Sqn, SME, 1 CER and 7 Trg Gp as well as serving in Afghanistan with the UN. George was a member of the Association.

## **Sick Parade**

The following members have reported sick and are on light duties -

Fred Abbott, Noel Beckingham, Peter Billington, Seamus Doherty and Peter Wells

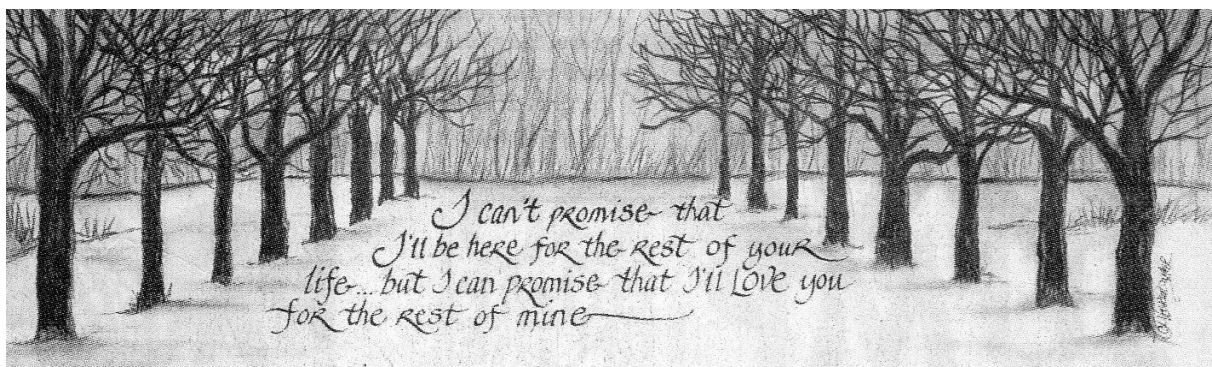
## **New Members**

Trevor McGrath (WO2) served in the ARA 1978 - 1998. Trevor served with 22 Const Sqn, 21 Const Sqn, 5FER, 18 Fd Sqn, 20 Div ESS, 17 Const Sqn Untag Namibia, 3 CER (18 Fd Sqn) as well as 3 non-corps postings.

## **RAE CORPS SHOP**

If you wish to purchase items from the Corps Shop, the Shop can be contacted by -- email - corpsshop@gmail.com or -- phone - 02 8782 8820

## **Making Promises**



## **MEMBER PROFILE**

### **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 still walks to Cottesloe shops to do his shopping.

Fred never married and still lives in his unit in Claremont.

## **Remembering - Ronald Leslie "Blue" Thompson**

2/1/1946 - 22/8/2015



Blue passed away on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2015 after a short battle with Cancer.

Blue is survived by Maria, his wife of 46 years, and daughters Deanne, Lesley, Cherie and Kelly. A son, Lindsay predeceased Ron.

Blue was a 17<sup>th</sup> Intake Army Apprentice Carpenter and Joiner and served two tours of Vietnam with 21 Support Troop, RAE. He was the driving force behind the Pemberton RSL Sub-branch and was the Sub-branch President for nine years.

The Pemberton War Memorial will forever be Ron's legacy. He designed the Memorial; achieved funding for the Memorial; acquired the materials and supervised the construction of the Memorial.

On Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup>, on a perfect sunny day, Blue was laid to rest in a beautiful coffin painted as the Australian National Flag. An estimated 400 – 500 mourners from the town of Pemberton where Blue was born; went to school; played football and after his Army service raised his family of five children and seven grand children, attended the graveside service.

Mourners included local and visiting RSL members; the Pemberton Volunteer Fire Service; the local football team; former work mates; fishing mates; extended family; a wide range of friends and even a couple of Ex-Army Apprentices.

The eulogy was given by close friend, Paul Omodei, former Member for the Electorate of Warren-Blackwood who recalled "Butch", as he was known to the town of Pemberton, as a tireless worker for the community, an accomplished carpenter and builder; and definitely his own man.

Blue was in my hut at the Army Apprentices School, Balcombe, Victoria, 1962. A true character; I was honoured to be able to pay my respect and lay a Poppy at his feet.

Written and submitted by Fred Abbott, 16th Intake C&J

## **Association Meeting**

Sunday 29th November was our last General Meeting day for the 2015 year. It started out as a dry argument as 13 Fd Sqn had been stood down from their training week on Saturday and so there was no-one available to open the bar in the Ryan Club for us.

However the meeting continued in good Sapper fashion with much chatter and laughter. At 1155hrs when lunch arrived so did some much needed liquid refreshments.

All those who attended hoed into three Subway platters and a cold amber stubby.



Bob Horrocks, Ron Gomboc, Irene &  
Tony Bodham



Rita & Brian Cooper & Neville Clark



Pat Heatly & Don Gunn



Trevor Johnson, David Evans & John Amm

## **Special Thanks**

To Paul Talma and his small band of flag carriers who give up there time to carry the Australian, RAE and unit flags at the funeral of our deceased members. During 2015, there were 6 requests from Next of Kin for the flags to be carried at a loved one's funeral.

To Neville Clark and all the members who assisted with the cooking and serving at the 3 sausage sizzles held during 2015. Neville puts in a lot of effort in organising the venue and sausages, buns, onions, drinks etc

The next sausage sizzle will be held on 14th Febuary at Bunnings, Malaga.

## New EDD Memorial at AWM Canberra

October 22, 2015

www.defence.gov.au

News 7



Soldiers and their explosive detection dogs honour Spr Darren Smith and his dog Herbie, who were killed in Afghanistan in 2010, at the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on October 8.



Explosive detection dog Matilda and her handler Sgt Dave Houghton of 1CER at the EDD sculpture dedication.



## **13 Field Squadron Happenings**

### **Promotions & Postings**

Squadron SSM, WO2 Mick McGrath has been promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 and has been posted as RSM at the Head Quarters WA Army Cadets.

### **End of Year Awards**

At the Unit end of year parade, awards were given for the Sapper of the Year and Outstanding JNCO of the year. Sapper of the Year was won by Spr Jason Aleknavicius and Outstanding JNCO of the Year was won by Cpl Matt Wiltshire.



Spr Jason Aleknavicius

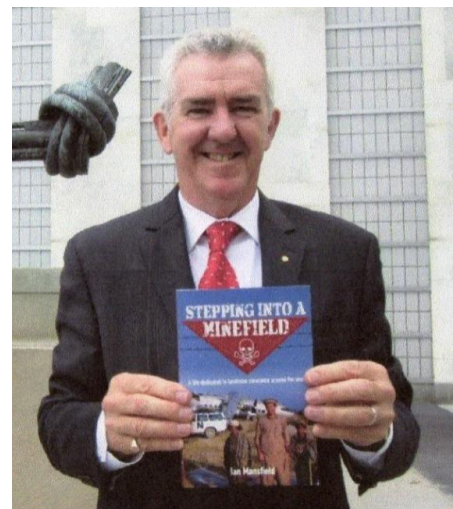


Cpl Matt Wiltshire

### **Another New Book about Engineers**

Ian Mansfield, ex 22 Const Sqn plant troop officer (mid 1970's) has written a book on his time working with the UN doing landmine clearance in Afghanistan, Laos and Bosnia. Reference is made to the various RAE teams that were sent to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the late 1980's and early 1990's, including such people as Carl Chirgwin, Alan Mansell, Mick Durnin and others.

The book is available in hard copy at book stores or in e-book form



### **Veteran's Luncheon**

The next Veteran's luncheon will be held on Monday 7th March. A pro forma will be posted out to Veterans and widows in February.

## **Army History**

April 2016 marks 21 years since the closing of the Army Apprentices trade training scheme which enlisted boys aged 15 and 16 years old from all over Australia and trained them to be tradesmen in the Australian Army.

The Army Apprentices School at Balcombe, located on the Mornington Peninsula south of Melbourne, opened on the 20th August, 1948. In December 1982, Balcombe closed and the Apprentices School was moved to Latchford Barracks, Bonegilla, not far from Albury/Wodonga.

Then in January 1991, the School was renamed the Army College of Technical and Further Education and finally closed in April 1995.

Since opening at Balcombe 1948, over 6,000 apprentices graduated as tradesmen during the 47 year life of the Apprentices Scheme. Some 400 graduates went on to gain commissioned ranks.

After graduation, the Apprentices completed their training in Sydney and after their IET (FE3) course were posted to ARA Units, mostly to the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers, Royal Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers and Royal Australian Signals.

There are 19 Association members who are former Army Apprentices.



The photo of the 16th Intake Apprentices who joined the RAE was taken at SME Casula in 1964.

Current Association members are -

Back row - 2nd left Fred Abbott, 4th left Brian Griffiths, right end Ian Johnston

Front row - 2nd right Bill Culbertson, right end Peter Gulvin