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# MERRY CHRISTMAS!



WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR  
MEMBERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A  
HAPPY NEW YEAR. MAY 2021 BRING YOU  
HAPPINESS, EXCITEMENT, AND JOY!



## Passing Parade

**Donal Mary (Paddy) Healy** passed away on 5 September 2020 aged 82 years and 10 months. Paddy served in Vietnam from May 1970 to November 1971 with 1 Field Squadron.

**Raymond Thomas (Pappy) Gaske** passed away on 7 September 2020 aged 73 years and 10 months. Pappy served in Vietnam from March 1970 to January 1971 with 17 Construction Squadron. Pappy was a member of the Association.

**William Alfred Clifford** passed away on 18 September 2020 aged 73 years and 10 months. Bill served in Vietnam from April 1968 to March 1969 with 21 Engineer Support Troop.

**Michael James (Mick) Moon** passed away on 8 October 2020 aged 86 years and 10 months. Mick served in Borneo from June to December 1965 with 24 Construction Squadron and in Vietnam from July 1969 to June 1970 with 1 Field Squadron. He was awarded the SVN Gallantry Cross with Palm (GC/P) and was wounded in action (WIA) in April 1970.

**Francis Thomas (Bill) Hanley** passed away on 8 October 2020 aged 98 years and 1 month. Bill served with 12 Australian Army Troops Company in WW2 from January 1942 to May 1946. He served overseas in New Britain from November 1945 to May 1946.

**Colin George (Smithy) Smith** passed away on 23 October 2020 aged 75 years and 9 months. Smithy served in Vietnam from August 1967 to March 1968 with 21 Engineer Support Troop.

**LTCOL Patrick Thomas (Pat or Crash) Crowley** passed away on 29 October 2020 aged 79 years and 6 months. Pat served in Borneo from July to December 1965 with 24 Construction Squadron.

**Ian Martin Ward** passed away on 31 October 2020 aged 74 years. Ian was an 18<sup>th</sup> Intake Army Apprentice carpenter & joiner.

**LTCOL William Edward (Ted) Harrison** passed away on 5 November 2020 aged 75 years and 11 months. Ted served in Vietnam from May 1968 to May 1969 with 1 Field Squadron.

**Colin Lindsay Fulford** passed away on 6 November 2020 aged 103 years and 11 months. Colin served with 2/5 Fd Coy in WW2 from April 1943 to March 1946 in New Guinea, Morotai and Borneo.

**Frank John Holland Stabback** passed away on 15 Nov 2020 aged 102 years and 3 months. Frank served with 2/10 Fd Coy in WW2 from June 1940 until February 1946. When Singapore surrendered to the Japanese in 1942, the Allied forces including the 2/10 Fd Coy, became Prisoners of War. Frank returned to Australia in 1946 and was discharged in August of that year.

**BRIG David Lindsay Howard Buring** passed away on 20 November 2020 aged 78 years and 5 months. David served in Vietnam from September 1966 to September 1967 with 1 Field Squadron

**Graham Leslie Denning** passed away on 21 November 2020 aged 74 years and 4 months. Graham served in Vietnam from January 1969 to January 1970 with 17 Construction Squadron.

## **LEST WE FORGET**

### **Artwork in Canada**



CAPT Laura Cook presented the “100 Years of Engineering” artwork to SGT Park, PMC of the Combined Mess in the JP Fell Armoury, North Vancouver. Laura, a member of the ARes, was working in Vancouver in her civilian capacity and was granted an overseas transfer to 6 Field Squadron, 39 Combat Engineer Regiment where she was the Unit 2IC.

This is the second piece of our artwork in Canada. A copy of the artwork was sent privately to LTCOL Bryan Mialkowski (RCE) who is currently posted to Army Headquarters, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

## MEET OUR MEMBERS



### Michael Tolson

Mike was born in Donnybrook in 1952 and has 1 sister and one brother (deceased). He attended Donnybrook Primary School and Junior High School. He left school at 16 and started work as a labourer in an apple packing shed in Donnybrook.

Mike joined the Army in May 1969 and was allocated to the RAE. He served with many engineer units on the east coast including SME PRA Wing, 30 Terminal Sqn, 17, 22 & 24 Const Sqns, 7 & 17 Fd Sqns, 2 Combat Regt and 19 CE Works, as well as WA Cadet Battalion ARes.

He saw overseas service in SVN with 17 Const Sqn and in Solomon Islands, Republic of Kiribati, 53 Const Sqn UK, Germany, UNTAG Namibia and PNG Defence Force Engineer Battalion.

Mike took discharge from the ARA in 1998 and the ARes in 2018. After discharge from the ARA he worked as a Supervisor Road Construction, Workplace Trainer and Assessor Construction sites, Operations Manager Tamala Park and is currently employed as a High Risk Trainer and Assessor Mine sites.

He met Jane at Tin Can Bay in 1973 and they married in Brisbane in 1975 and have no children.

Mike and Jane currently live in Mullaloo.



### Paul Talma

Paul was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1950 and he has 1 sister and 1 brother. He attended St Georges Primary School and Duke of York High School in Nairobi. He started work at the age of 20 working as a storeman for Schwarzkopf. Paul migrated to Australia in 1970 and started work in Sydney.

He joined the Army in 1972 and was allocated to the RAE. He served with 22 Const Sqn, 1 Fd Sqn & 23 Spt Sqn (1CER), 17 Const Sqn (6 ESR), JLUN Darwin, 19 CE Works, 7 Trg Gp and 13 Fd Sqn.

Whilst with 22 Const Sqn, Paul took part in Operation Capelin carrying out clean-up work on Montebello Island.

Paul took discharge in 1998 and formed Telecom Computers, his own computer company which he managed and operated until he retired in 2016.

He met Margaret in 1970 and they married in 1974 but are now separated. They have 1 child. He then entered a de Facto relationship with Tracey, and they had 4 children.

Paul currently lives in Joondalup.

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

**Lynne Reynolds** was born in Sydney where she lived until 1967 when the family moved to Perth to be with her dad, WO2 Tom Mills who had been posted to Perth the year before as the plant supervisor at 22 Construction Squadron.

After Tom died in 2007, Lynne joined the Association as an honorary member which at the time, she was allowed to do as a direct descendant of a member of the RAE. The honorary membership category was deleted during a re-write of the Constitution in 2017 and honorary members were granted full members.

Lynne was elected to the committee in 2008 and has worked tirelessly at fund raising events, running raffles at general meetings, making up and sending 'Care Parcels' for Sappers in Afghanistan as well as bogging in, without being asked, wherever an extra pair of hands were required.

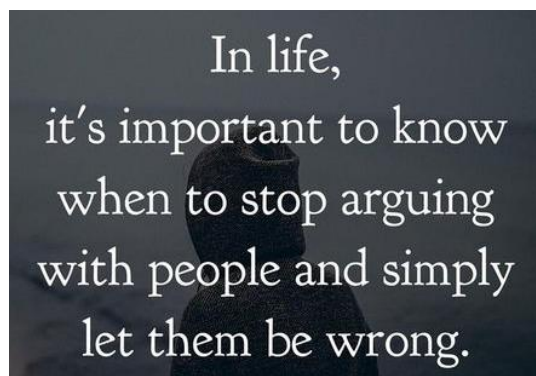
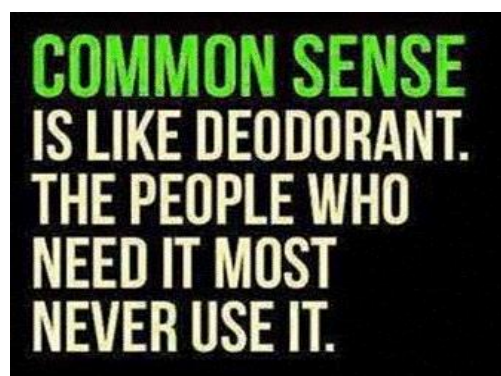
For this unselfish attitude and work ethic, Lynne was given Life Membership in 2019.

## **Picnic in the Park**

The Association organised 'Picnic in the Park' at the Gosnells Council Offices grassed park was held on Sunday 8 November. Although only a dozen people turned up for a picnic/BBQ lunch, it was a pleasant way to spend 2 or 3 hours sitting in the shade and talking to mates and partners.

Ian and Helen Byrd came up from Busselton to visit family in perth called in for lunch and Owen Christmas, a member for many years before getting involved with the RSL, and his partner attended.

Thanks to Russell McEntyre for his work behind the scenes getting everything organised and booking the area of park we had our lunch in.



## **13 Field Squadron News**

13 field Squadron has continued to be a hive of activity in the later stages of 2020. Support to operations COVID ASSIST and RESOLUTE have continued and will see members tasked on these duties into 2021.

In August, the unit conducted a scope of works to support the DFSW range re-construction. This task involved a 9 day deployment of combined troop deploy to Bindoon training Area. Plant Operations were the main effort completing track intersection upgrades, track maintenance and improvement clearing and grubbing of several hectares of bush to allow for the range extension. The task was supported by combat engineers who provide labour and assistance to the plant tasks, chainsaw teams for tree felling and cross cutting and preparation of targets for a demolitions practice. The final weekend saw the entire squadron on task where 3 buildings demolished on the range and several trees felled, both tasks completed with explosives. The assigned scope of works were achieved to a high standard and the squadron gained valuable training opportunities.

The squadron also conducted courses in intermediate tree felling and timber milling in recent months. The tree felling course was completed in the south west region of WA and saw 10 students qualify to be able to fell larger diameter trees and more difficult trees with more complex techniques. Accommodation was provided at the Legacy Camp site in Busselton, and in return for the accommodation and support from Legacy the course was able to conduct some chainsaw and track maintenance tasks for the Legacy camp. This was a great win-win arrangement and all members enjoyed supporting such an important charity group.

Planning for the expansion of the squadron is well under way and the VIP visits to provide guidance for this have continued. In September, the 2nd Division COMD MAJ GEN Kath Campbell visited the squadron in the field at Northam training area while conducting search training. In addition, the Honorary Colonel MAJ GEN Craig Williams has visited unit training at Irwin barracks and Bindoon.

The Holdfast reunion event on 8 November was a very successful and enjoyable afternoon. Sappers past and present of all ranks were able to get together and connect for the first time as a large group in 2020 at the Ryan Club. It was great to keep the mateship and networks alive and be able to have a few laughs with old and new Sappers. Thanks for all that attended.

I would like to mention the following recent awards received by Squadron members – SPR Tom Ellis and LCPL Simon Capozzi receiving soldier's medallions, and CPL Will Rickard receiving an Army Bronze Commendation for exceptional service and being recognised as the most outstanding RAE ARES NCO for 2020. Congratulations to those members on their achievements.

Lastly on behalf of the officers and soldiers of 13 Field Squadron we pass on our season's greetings and best wishes for 2021 to all RAE Association of WA members and their families. We look forward to strengthening our relationship next year.

Glen Donaldson

SSM

## Unit Postings

13 Fd Sqn will have some changes to their staff in the new year with the Trg WO, WO2 Stephen Wilson (ARA) being posted out and his replacement will be WO2 Keith Williamson (ARA).

The current 2IC, Capt Paul Sanders (ARes) is moving sideways within the unit and Capt Kane Bell (ARA) will be the new 2IC.

Also coming into the unit will be Sgt Glenn Addicoat (ARA) as Ops Sgt.

## Guest Speakers at General Meeting



Cadet Under Officer Sara Rowe and Cadet RSM Zac Leask were the guest speakers at the Association general meeting on Sunday 29 November. Both were excellent in their professionalism and knowledge of their subject matter. It was a pleasure to sit and listen to them both.

Zac is joining the ADF and going to Duntroon but would not commit to joining the RAE. He will make a fine officer whatever Corps he selects for his career.

## eBay

Thanks to our secretary, the Association now has an eBay account with our artworks, book and cap displayed for sale.

## A Piece of History

### S/Sgt John Hickman (13 Field Company)

John Crane Hickman enlisted in the army on 21 July 1942 and served with 13 Field Company RAE during World War II until he was discharged on 15 March 1946.

During the war, 13 Fd Coy did a lot of work in the Northern Territory and in Darwin itself after the bombing of the town. After the war, John returned to Darwin and became a respected member of the Darwin Community.

**OPINION** Northern Territory News, Friday, January 31, 1992

# Proud sergeant made his mark

**I**N August, 1942, Sapper Sergeant John Hickman, who was with the Special Mobile Force in Perth, WA, was posted to Darwin.

He had trained in the school of military engineering as a mine and demolition expert with the 13th Infantry Brigade.

Their distinctive purple color patch was worn with great pride by John when he finally completed his training and travelled to Darwin.

He was immediately employed fortifying the Darwin peninsula and led a team to lay mines around Fannie Bay, Nightcliff, and Casuarina to intercept enemy landings.

His unit, the 13th Field Company, was camped in bushland at Stuart Park, better known to the troops as "bomb alley" because it was in direct line between the RAAF base and the harbor, both continuous targets for Japanese bombers and fighters.

While stationed in "bomb alley" the men were camped in bush where Westralia St is now.

Nearby there was a large water hole.

Each morning the soldiers noticed large tracks of something that had invaded their camp.

S/S Hickman finally got fed up when he discovered his tin hat missing because it was an essential item and there were

no more in supply. He and a few mates decided to deal with the culprit and set up an ambush armed with explosives.

Sure enough, a few nights later a huge crocodile was blown up.

Inside, intact, was the tin hat, swallowed whole by the reptile.

John was later posted to New Guinea and saw action in several hard-fought campaigns, including a landing assault from the American troop ship *Jane Adams*, against the Japanese.

Despite being wounded in action and suffering from malaria, John joined the Australian occupation forces at Rabaul in 1945.

He returned to Darwin as

soon as possible after that and, along with a team of military engineers, systematically detonated all mines laid for the defence of the Darwin peninsula in 1942.

Some of the mines had been devoured by white ants so the job was extremely dangerous (as only a sapper would know) and it took months.

An incident occurred at this time which remained in John's memory for the rest of his life and led to an enduring friendship with a man who was also to become a pillar of the community, Pat Delaney.

A Beaufighter crash-landed at Bagot on its return from a reconnaissance flight.

The navigator was flying officer Pat Delaney, something of a sparring partner

and a bit of a rival for John who did not know Pat was on the crashed plane.

Bagot was an extensive minefield and John volunteered to go in and get any survivors out of the Beaufighter.

He crawled on his stomach stabbing gently ahead with a bayonet and dragging a white tape behind until he reached the plane. The rescue was successful but, according to John, the first words Pat said were "of all the people in Darwin, it had to be you rescuing me".

It is not known whether John offered to leave his ungrateful mate where he was.

The two certainly went on to make their mark in Darwin where Pat established the Delaney's store at the entrance of the RAAF Base.

Their friendship never waned.

□ □ □ □

**J**OHN was the driving force behind the Territory's fledgling fishing industry and founded Hickman's Distributors in the late 1950s.

The company became a major frozen food and wholesale food distributor in the Territory with 1985 sales exceeding \$30 million.

The business was sold in 1988 but the Darwin Cold Stores, which services the meat, fish and frozen food industry in the Territory, was retained.

John also operated his own barramundi and prawn trawler, *Tarooma*, and set up a purchasing group to handle the catch of other boats.

He was president of the Northern Territory Fishing Industry Council from 1971 to 1985.

In that year, he helped establish Seannorth, a joint fishing venture between Thailand and Australia.

John was the founder and chairman of Offshore Fisheries in Darwin in 1987, a joint venture fish processing, packing and marketing operation, both local and overseas, with Angelakis Brothers of Adelaide.

He served a term with the Darwin Port Authority from 1973 to 1975 and was the founding deputy chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation.



The late John Hickman



Pat Delaney



## Lunch at Rose Hotel, Bunbury

Fred Abbott was tasked with organising a luncheon in Bunbury with the idea of getting country members involved in Association events. A total of 20 members and partners made the trip to attend, coming from as far away as Dunsborough, Collie, York and places in-between.



Attending the lunch were Fred & Ann Abbott, Jeanette Barankewitsch, Trevor Button, Ian Byrd, Peter Gulvin, Alf Hernandez, Keith Hutchings, Ian & Colleen Johnston, Trevor Jones, Vic Kisler, Peter Lewis, Jeff & Jennifer Parker, Peter Perry, Ron & Cathie Stark and Phil & Beryl Thorp.



# 13th Field Squadron

## RETIRES AN OLD SOLDIER

When a serving member of the military retires after a long and distinguished career they leave their unit environs returning only every now and then to attend reunions or an occasional parade as a distinguished guest.

However, some soldiers never leave.

Tractor, Full Tracked with Blade and Ripper, International Harvester, TD-15C, Army Registered Number 31-608 is one of the latter.

31-608 was manufactured by International Harvester Company Australia Pty Ltd at their factory in Melbourne in 1980 specifically for the Australian Army. It was delivered to 32nd Supply Battalion in Kensington, Victoria on 11 November 1980 along with other TD-15Cs the Army had purchased. Her time in Victoria was short and she and her sisters were soon on their way to New South Wales where they were delivered to 21st Supply Battalion at Moorebank, arriving there in December 1980. There she stayed for some months before she was allocated to the Regular Army's 22nd Construction Squadron and made her way westward to Perth. She was taken on unit strength in March of 1981 at her new home in Irwin Barracks at Karrakatta.

It was at 22nd Construction Squadron that she toiled faithfully and diligently for the next nine years, amassing nearly 3,600 operating hours. She served in all corners of the State with the occasional trip interstate to training areas in Victoria and New South Wales for regimental exercises as a part of 1st Construction Regiment, of which 22nd Construction Squadron was a sub-unit. She also made a long and memorable trip to the Northern Territory for Exercise Kangaroo '89.

Whilst she did a lot of travelling, her main use by 22nd Construction Squadron was in the construction of the roads and facilities at Bindoon Military Training area. So, for those who use these roads and facilities in the training area, spare a thought for 31-608 who made it all possible.

Following 22nd Construction Squadron's disbandment in early 1990, 31-608 was transferred to 13th Field Squadron, an Army Reserve unit located at Irwin Barracks.

For the next 15 years, 31-608 continued her faithful service with 13th Field Squadron, serving in all corners of the state and participating in many construction tasks undertaken by the Squadron and amassing a further 1,500 hours.

Whilst only a sprightly 28 years old and with a very low total operating hours (in plant equipment terms) of 5,132 hours, time was catching up with 31-608. The TD-15C model was no longer being manufactured and by the late 1980s International Harvester Company ceased manufacturing earthmoving equipment, which meant that replacement and repair parts were becoming very scarce. Time had finally caught up with 31-308 and it was time to retire her from service.

With an eye on unit heritage, the Squadron's then Training Warrant Officer, Warrant Officer Class Two Michael 'Mick' Durnin started the process of having 31-608 retained by the Squadron as an

historical artefact. A submission to retain the dozer was raised and despatched eastward where it lay dormant for what seemed a long, long time. A flurry of chase-up phone calls and e-mails followed and after an even longer delay approval was finally received for the Squadron to retain 31-608.

Once approval had been granted the Squadron called on its serving and ex-serving members for ideas on how 31-608 should be displayed. Consensus was reached that she should be displayed on a plinth in front of the Squadron's Devil's Inn and so the Squadron set about the task. Whilst the plinth was being constructed, 31-608 was restored to her former glory with a repaint and a replacement of all of the original manufacturer's logos and stencilling which had long ago been abraded from her flanks during her operation in the red gravel of the Bindoon Military Training Area.

With the restoration and construction tasks completed in early December 2007,

31-608 was walked to her new home and positioned on her plinth. Her engine was then shut down for the final time.

31-608 now sits, resplendent in her retired in her unit lines, surrounded by those who operated her and worked beside her whilst she was serving. She will be admired by one and all and serves as a reminder of how it was way back when.

**WO2 RODGER KELLY**

Unit Recruiting Liaison Officer, 13th Field Squadron

*SPRs John 'Snow' Snowden and James 'Spinko' Spink visit an old friend at her new home. SPR Snowden spent many hours operating 31-608 whilst he was a member of 22nd Construction Squadron and 13th Field Squadron whilst SPR Spink operated 31-608 at 13th Field Squadron for more than 15 years.*



### Donations

A special thank you to Bunnings and Coles Supermarket for their donation of prizes for some of our raffles next year.

## **Related Story**

In the August Edition of the Purple Circle there was a story on Gordon Temby and then in the latest issue of the Tunnel Rats newsletter, there was a picture of the man himself on Vietnam.

### **Checking for enemy explosives**



Tunnel Rats "Swampy" Smith (left) and Gordon Temby check under a bridge for any demolition charges placed there by enemy forces. Located on Route 23, the bridge spanned a tributary of the Song Rai River.

## **Time Capsules**

There has been some confusion for a couple of years about where the time capsules which were sealed back on ANZAC Day 1990. The confusion is no more, the two capsules have been located in the HQ building of 13 Fd Sqn and the plaque on the flag stand casing shows the two capsules are to be opened on ANZAC Day 2040.

## **Next Meetings**

The first general meeting for the New year will be held on Sunday 7 February 2021. Dates for the following 2 meetings are 11 April and 30 May. The AGM is scheduled for 18 July.

All 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 unless otherwise notified.

