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The Purple Circle

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FLAG BEARERS, ANZAC DAY 2015

Association Committee for 2015 - 2016

At the AGM held on Sunday 14th June, the following people were elected to the committee

President	Bob Gianatti
Senior Vice President	Ian Johnston
Junior Vice President	Mick Ryan
Secretary/Treasurer	Neville Clark

General Committee Members - Geoff Hacket, Chris Hannah, Bob Horrocks, Duncan Jordon, Graham McKenzie-Smith, Steve O'Neil, Lyn Reynolds, Mike Robinson, Paul Talma, Mike Tolson, Trevor Johnson and Ross Byron (13 Fd Sqn Rep)

Next Meetings

Meeting dates for July to December are still to be finalised.

Passing Parade

Donald Gordon Gibson passed away on 13 April 2015 aged 95 years. Don served in WW2 with 2/3 Independent Field Squadron building airstrips in northern WA and NT. Don enlisted in NSW on 24 March 1941 and was discharged on 13 November 1945. Don was a member of the Association.

Ian James Hamilton (Lt Col) passed away on 15 May 2015 aged 83 years. Ian served in Malaysia and Vietnam (HQ Aust Force Vietnam 1971-72). Ian suffered a dislocated hip and was in hospital when he developed dementia. He was a civil engineer on the construction of Australia's new Parliament House.

George Stephen (Steve) Sheen passed away on 26 May 2015 aged 70 years. Steve was a National Serviceman (1965-67) and served in Borneo with 22 Construction Squadron in 1966. Steve was a member of the Association.

Lionel John Metcalf passed away on 28 June 2015 aged 94 years. John served in WW2 with 13 Field Company in Northern Territory and on New Britain. John enlisted in 1942 and on discharge in 1945 returned to the family farm in Dowerin. John was a member of the Association.

Lest We Forget

Sick Parade

Mick Ryan was back in hospital in April to have a couple of spots removed from his brain. All went well and Mick is back home again. I visited Mick on Thursday 2nd and he looks good although he says he still has his good days and his bad days

Seamus Doherty was also in hospital for another round of radiotherapy and chemo. At this stage his treatment is keeping his cancer at bay.

Honours & Awards

Congratulations to Brig Wayne Budd, RAE Head of Corps, who was awarded the 'Order of Australia Medal (OAM)' in the Military Division in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Life Membership

At the last committee meeting of the old committee, a unanimous vote was taken to award two new Life Memberships. Life Membership has been bestowed on Peter (Flex) Billington and Ron Gomboc.

Peter received his LM for his efforts and work organising, building, supervising and sourcing materials for the construction of the RAE Memorial Precinct. Peter has also been involved in the care and maintenance for the Memorial.

Ron received his LM for his efforts, time and materials in creating and sculpting the slouch hat and the World War 2 sculpture, both of which are proudly displayed at the RAE Memorial Precinct. Ron kindly donated both works to the RAE Association.



Congratulations to our 2 new Life Members.

Fund Raisers

The association has been granted permission by Bunnings to hold a sausage sizzle at their Balcatta store on Friday 17 July. If you are able to spare a couple of hours to help out on the day, could you give Neville a ring.

We also have sausage sizzles organised at Bunnings, Malaga on Saturday 8 August and on Sunday 20 December. Again if you can help, please let Neville know.

MEMBER PROFILE

HALTON MIDDLETON (HAL) COOK Jnr - (WX8270)



Hal was born on 13 August 1916 in Perth WA, the oldest of three children. His brother and sister are deceased.

Hal's early life centred around his father's work as a lighthouse keeper, managing lighthouses at Rottne Island, Breaksea Island, south of Albany, Point Charles, north west of Darwin and finally to Cape Don lighthouse, north east of Darwin.

The Cook's stayed at Cape Don for many years, the children being taught by their mother and Hal was taught many life skills by the local aboriginals. At nine years of age, Hal was sent to Fremantle where he stayed with an aunt and uncle and their two children so he could continue his studies at Girton College.

On leaving school, Hal worked at the Mt Lawley Post Office as a postman. Becoming bored, he moved to the country and tried his hand as a farm labourer, fence post cutter, wood cutter, mine worker and a delivery driver between Norseman and Kalgoorlie.

On 20 August 1940, Hal joined the Army at Karrakatta and was assigned to the 1st Railway Construction Company, RAE, a part of the 6th Division. The Unit was deployed to Jenin in Palestine, then relocated to El Amiriya in Egypt and then to Syria to building a railway line from Tyre to Tripoli. The unit was moved back to North Africa where they cleared German minefields.

Hal returned to Australia in 1943 and after a short leave, moved to New Guinea to build a road from Labu to Wau. Sickness took its toll and Hal returned to Australia to recuperate. Whilst on course in Melbourne, Hal met Noreen Flynn and they married in Sydney in May 1945.

After the war, Hal worked for the Kalgoorlie Roads Board before moving to Perth and worked for Perth City Council. Hal was the site engineering supervisor on many Perth projects until he retired in 1979.

Hal and Noreen had four children, three daughters and a son, and lived in Scarborough before retiring to Hamersley in 1981. Following the passing of his wife, Hal continued to live in Hamersley until recently when he moved into Aged Care in Embleton.

Remembering ANZAC Day



ANZAC Day at the Australian Embassy, Laos. Bob Keatch, Mick Keen, Peter Gammon & Horse Mansell. Bob Keatch played the bugle for the Last Post and Reveille.



Steve O'Neil, President of the Ellenbrook RSL Sub-Branch addressing the gathering at the Dawn Service to remember sacrifices made 100 years ago.

Picture courtesy of Kevin Hunter

General

Sappers at Work in 1944/45



13 Field Company constructing a timber bridge in New Britain during WW2

Sappers at Training in 2015



Sappers preparing explosive charges on a steel "I" beam

Since the last 'Purple Circle', 13 Field Squadron have participated in 2 training weekends at Bindoon. On the W/E 15-17 May the Unit participated in weapon training exercises with 13 Brigade Group. Then on the W/E 12-14 June the Unit carried out demolitions training.

The Squadron has a busy few months ahead of them with another 4 training weekends between now and Christmas, as well as a 13 Brigade Exercise.

Waterloo Dinner 2015

On Friday 19 June, some 80 plus Sappers, Officers and Other Ranks, gathered at the Burswood on Swan Reception Centre to celebrate the 100th year of the completion of Watson Pier at Gallipoli on 18 June 1915.

From all accounts, a good night was had by all and things became a bit rowdy when the head table departed and Snake Robinson took over the chair for the frivolities that followed.

Lots of stories and yarns were told, some of which seemed to get more unbelievable as the night wore on.

Many thanks to the Ryan Club sub-committee for organising a great night.



Ian Johnston, Frank Mallard, Ron Gomboc and Geoff Simpson getting together after the Dinner

Some more Living in the 50's

Healthy food was anything edible

Indian restaurants were only found in India

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi

Nobody had ever heard of yoghurt

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed

Did You Know

The Victoria Cross was introduced by Queen Victoria on 29 January 1856 to honour acts of valour during the Crimean War in 1855 and was first awarded in 1857. The Australian Victoria Cross was created in 1975.

Up to 1975, 1,358 VC's had been awarded to 1,355 service personal.

Australian service personal have received 96 Imperial VC's and 4 Australian VC's. The VC's were awarded in the following conflicts -

Boer War (1899 - 1902) - 6	World War 1 (1914 - 1918) - 64
North Russia (1919) - 2	World War 2 (1939 - 1945) - 20
Vietnam (1962 - 1972) - 4	Afghanistan (2001- 2014) - 4

37 Sappers, all from the Royal Engineers, have received the VC. The first Sappers to receive the award was during the Crimean War where 8 Sappers won the VC and the last Sapper VC was awarded during World War 2 in 1942.

The most known Engineer winner was Lt John Chard who lead the defence at Rorke's drift during the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879 and made famous in the movie Zulu.

In my time, the movie Zulu was a compulsory part of our recruit/military training as a demonstration on defences and controlled fire.

Luncheon

Our next WW2 Veterans, Wives and Widows luncheon is planned for Tuesday 8th September. The usual invitation and proforma will be sent out during August.

Email Addresses

Many thanks to those members who previously received the 'Purple Circle' by post and are now prepared to receive an electronic copy of the 'Purple Circle' by providing an email address. This has reduced the amount of printing and postage by 20%.

Membership Fees now due

Members are reminded their membership fees are now due. If you haven't already paid up, secretary Neville is waiting to take your \$20.00. Remember if you are not a paid up member on 31 December 2015, your membership will have lapsed and your name will be taken from the mailing list.