

MAINTENANCE MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

EDITION 02 – MARCH 2026



RIP LTCOL Claude Palmer retd, 1934- 2026

Maintenance Matters

Web: <https://raeme.org.au>

Editors: Newsletter@raeme.org.au

Submissions

Submissions for inclusion in future editions of the Newsletter may be entered online at:

<https://raeme.org.au/index.php/publications/newsletter/article-submission>

Submissions from serving members may also be sent through your Regional Corps Representative for review, collation and on-forwarding.

Disclaimer

This Newsletter is published monthly by the RAEME Association National Network (RNN) for RAEME members, be they serving or otherwise. The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this Newsletter belong solely to the author of each article. They do not reflect those of the RNN, ADF or any part of the ADO, the author's employer, the editorial team, any association, committee, or other group or individual.

Introduction by Representative Colonel Commandant, Brigadier Ed Smeaton

It's my great privilege to provide the forward for this the second edition of Maintenance Matters. I've received very positive feedback from the inaugural release of the newsletter and I trust everyone enjoyed reading it as much as I did. Well done to the editorial team for their vision and the tenacity in bringing together this truly national publication, showcasing the Corps, Associations, Defence, veteran community events, and articles of interest.

I'm fortunate to be appointed in an honorary role in supporting the Head of Corps, providing a nexus between our Corps' past and the present and a connection between serving members, veterans and the wider RAEME family. I'm supported by a small team of Regional Colonel Commandants; Including Colonel Piers Cambridge in QLD, Colonel Andrew Adams in ACT/NSW and Colonel Mark Sweetman in WA. They'll each have the opportunity to introduce themselves in future editions, however, I encourage you to engage with them within your regions.

I'm always impressed by the breadth of contribution our Corps personnel, both serving and retired, make on a daily basis. This is epitomised in the Australia Day Honours list of Corps personnel published in the last edition. These awards recognise the deep talent, skill and dedication our personnel bring to Defence and their community. Qualities developed through RAEME are reflected in their application across leadership, international engagement, project management, community engagement and maintenance expertise and innovation. Our personnel are represented and excel in a staggering array of areas across Defence and society.



This newsletter provides a great connection between serving and retired members and a common thread across our state-based associations. It's pleasing to see the number of events and activities occurring across the country. Such gatherings provide a wonderful avenue to connect, socialise, remember, network, and support each other. One such event highlighted in this edition is the annual RAEME get together over a weekend in February at the Bjelke-Petersen Dam in South-East Queensland. A social gathering that has continued to grow year-on-year, with people travelling from across the country to camp out together. Next year will be its 10th year – perhaps one for the diaries.

Our associations are doing a great job of maintaining the RAEME Esprit de Corps and providing community and connection. They're always looking for new members, and I encourage to join them where you can and spread the word. Likewise, you may be inspired to start a chapter in your local area or plan a new event.

Enjoy reading this edition, and happy soldiering in whatever form that takes for you.

Arte Marte

Ed Smeaton

Brigadier

Representative Colonel Commandant



Cover Image Description

The cover image is of LTCOL Claude Palmer, ret'd, being the man after whom the 106 Field Workshop facility was named in 2018.

The cover photo was extracted from a larger photo taken on the day of the Workshop's naming ceremony (pictured).

In this photo are: Then OC 106 Fd Wksp 7 CSSB (MAJ Troy Hollis), His excellency General, The Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Ret'd), Her Excellency Lady Cosgrove, LTCOL C V L Palmer (Ret'd) and CSM 106 Fd Wksp 7 CSSB (WO2 Mark Williams)

ANZAC Day Planning

Whilst the plans for ANZAC Day are still being locked in nation-wide, the following is provided for initial planning purposes

Overseas

Register for attendance at services at Gallipoli, Türkiye or Villers-Bretonneux, France by [clicking here](#).

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra

- 0530h Dawn Service at the Australian War Memorial
- 0730h Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans and Services Association Commemorative Ceremony
- 0900h Form up on ANZAC Parade for the [National March](#)
- ~1100h Reconvene at Olim's Hotel (the Mecure), Braddon

Queensland

Brisbane

- 0428h Dawn Service at Anzac Square
- 0945h Form up in George St near Charlotte St. Group 5, Serial 64.
- 1030h [March](#) stepping off
- ~1100h [Gathering Port Office Hotel](#) entry, buffet lunch and two drinks. Everyone is welcome. Bookings essential with discounted ticket prices for RAQ members, serving soldiers and guests available before 21 Apr.

Townsville

- 0520h Dawn Service at the Anzac Park Cenotaph
- 0830h Form up at the Strand Park
- 0900h [March](#) stepping off
- ~ 1100h Gathering at Flynn's Irish Bar (actually open from 0630h). Must bring some form of RAEME insignia for entry

New South Wales

Sydney

- 0930-1000h March form up in O'Connell Street, Sydney
- 1000h March stepping off. We encourage all RAEME Personnel past and present to attend. There was a great turnout in 2025 and it is hoping this year could be bigger, displaying the pride and camaraderie we have in our Corps
- Reunion at The Castlereagh Club, 199 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Cost is \$30 per head. Entry is by ticket only. Closing date for tickets is 10 Apr 2026. Tickets can be purchased by paying direct deposit to BSB: 062-196; A/C No: 0091-6051; Reference: Your Name & Postcode. Please email your details of attendees to: treasurer@nsw.raeme.org.au

Wagga Wagga

- 0530h Dawn Service at the Cenotaph, Victory Memorial Gardens
- 0630h ANZAC War Cemetery Service, Wagga Wagga
- 0930h Form up for march in Morgan Street
- 1000h March steps off
- Post-march ceremony in Victory Park

Northern Territory

Darwin

- 0600h Dawn Service at the Cenotaph
- 0845h Form up on the Esplanade for the March.
- Post-march gathering at Mayberry's Darwin

Western Australia

Perth

- 24 Apr – [RAEME Vigil](#) at Kings Park Sandakan Memorial from 1900h
- 0550h Dawn Service at the State War Memorial
- 0900h March stepping off from St Georges Terrace
- 1000h [Post-march gathering](#) at the Ibis Hotel

South Australia

Adelaide

- 18 Apr – [RAEME-SA ANZAC Day function](#) at West Adelaide Football Club from 1130 for 1200h
- 0600h Dawn Service at the SA National War Memorial
- 0900h Vietnam Group Form up in North Terrace adjacent to Pultney St. (Group 5)
- 0900h Association/OJT Group Form up adjacent to the RAA. (Group 12)
- 0930h March stepping off in North Terrace

Victoria

Melbourne

- 0530h Dawn Service at the Shrine of Remembrance.
- 0900h March stepping off 0900h from Flinders St

Albury

- 0530h Dawn Service and Monument Hill Shuttle Buses from SS&A Club from 0500h. Bookings essential.
- 0900h March steps off from Macauley Street
- 1000h Monument Hill Service

Wodonga

- 0545h Dawn Service in Woodland Grove on High Street
- 1000h March stepping off from in top carpark of Wodonga RSL

Tasmania

Hobart

- 0600h Dawn Service at the Cenotaph, Queens Domain
- 0930h Preassemble at Customs House Hotel for the March

Launceston

- 0600h Dawn Service at the Cenotaph
- 0915h Assemble in Charles St for the March

From Nui Dat to Enoggera: The Legacy of LTCOL Claude Palmer, ret'd

Claude Vivian Loftus Palmer was born in Brisbane in 1934, beginning a life that would become deeply interwoven with the evolution, professionalism, and esprit de corps of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME). His career spanning soldiering, engineering, command, public service, academia, and veteran advocacy—reflects a rare combination of technical mastery, leadership, and enduring commitment to the welfare of those who serve.

Early Life, Education, and Entry into Service

Claude's formative years were marked by early exposure to military discipline and leadership. Between 1949 and 1952, he served in the School Cadets, an experience that laid the foundation for his lifelong association with the Australian Army. In 1953, he enlisted in the 2nd/14th Queensland Mounted Infantry (CMF) at Bulimba before completing National Service at the 11th National Service Battalion, Wacol, later that same year.



Cadet Palmer receiving weapon training

His potential was quickly recognised. In Claude's own words, after his OC advised then-CPL Palmer that he would be sent to Officer Cadet School at Portsea, he responded: "No thanks, Sir, but Duntroon would be good." His OC advised: "Mmm, but you'd have 4 years there—they'll probably get sick of you in that time!" Claude entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon, graduating in 1957 as a RAEME officer.

Determined to strengthen his technical grounding, Claude undertook further study at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, completing a Mechanical Engineering qualification in 1959. This blend of military leadership and engineering expertise would become the hallmark of his career.

Early RAEME Appointments

Claude's first posting in the Australian Regular Army, from 1959 to 1961, was as the Commander of Recovery Platoon, 101 Infantry Workshop. As the only RAEME subaltern in 1 Division, he also commanded six Victoria Barracks Sydney Guards—remarkably, the first all-RAEME/RAAOC guards mounted both at the Barracks and at the Martin Place Cenotaph.

Promoted to Captain in 1962, he assumed command of the 1 Signal Regiment Light Aid Detachment (LAD) RAEME. The

following year, he became the inaugural Officer Commanding the combined Corps workshop supporting 17 Construction Squadron in Wewak and Passam, Papua New Guinea, during the Indonesian Confrontation. This role required adaptability, innovation, and the ability to integrate diverse trades and capabilities—qualities that would define his later commands.

Advanced Study and Senior Staff Roles

In 1964–65, Claude attended the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, in the United Kingdom, further deepening his technical and strategic expertise. Promoted to Major, he served as Deputy Assistant Master General of Ordnance from 1967 to 1968, contributing to the Army's broader logistics and materiel planning during a period of rapid technological change.

Command in Vietnam: OC 106 Field Workshop

Claude's most defining operational appointment came in 1969, when he deployed to South Vietnam as Officer Commanding of the 106th Field Workshop in Nui Dat. The unit was one of the few Australian formations raised in theatre, established in 1968 to support the 1st Australian Task Force's increasingly complex equipment needs.

As OC 106, Claude led the largest RAEME unit in Vietnam, responsible for maintaining and recovering a vast array of vehicles, weapons, and specialist equipment essential to operations in Phuoc Tuy Province. Photographs from the period show him working closely with his officers and tradesmen, including overseeing repairs to critical assets such as Massey Ferguson tractors used in civil-military operations.



Nui Dat, South Vietnam. 1969-12. MAJ Claude Palmer (standing) discusses the repairs necessary on this Massey Ferguson tractor with the vehicle repair platoon lead.

Claude understood that technical excellence alone was not enough. He emphasised the importance of supporting local communities, recognising that "winning hearts and minds" was an essential complement to combat operations. His leadership helped cement the workshop's reputation for professionalism, adaptability, and unwavering service under demanding conditions.

Post-Vietnam Service and International Appointments

After returning to Australia, Claude was posted as the British Equipment Maintenance Engineer (BEME) for the 28th Commonwealth Brigade in Singapore, contributing to planning for the emerging ANZUK Force. He later became the first Officer Commanding of the ANZUK Workshop, a unique multinational unit comprising Australia, British, Kiwi and Singaporean military and civilian tradesmen. The workshop's performance during brigade exercises earned commendation from the British Commander of 28 Brigade.

Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1972, Claude assumed command of the Technical Services Unit (TSU) RAEME, a position he held until 1974. He then served as Staff Officer Grade 1 (Mobility/Engineering/USMC Liaison) at the Australian Embassy in Washington, D.C., during 1975–76, strengthening Australia's technical and defence cooperation with the United States. His final ARA appointment was as SO1 (A Vehicles) in the Materiel Branch, Canberra, during 1977–78.

Transition to Civilian Leadership and Continued Military Service

Claude resigned from the Regular Army in 1978 to become a Supervising Engineer with the Department of Defence. In this role, he played a key part in accelerating Australian manufacture of defence materiel and advancing the computerisation of Royal Australian Navy dockyards—an early step toward the digital transformation of defence logistics.

He remained active in the Army Reserve, including as the Commanding Officer of 1 EME Services at Bulimba, with the 104th Field Workshop and the 1st Communication Zone Recovery Company under command, until his retirement from military service in 1991.



Claude taking the opportunity to sit in the OC's office during a visit to 106 Fd Wksp. Looking comfortable in the seat, he was politely reminded that this was no longer his gig!

Engineering, Academia, and Advocacy

In 1981, Claude joined Ampol Petroleum in Brisbane, eventually becoming the company's Chief Engineer prior to its acquisition by Caltex. His engineering leadership extended into academia: from 1995 to 2008, he served as a Sessional Lecturer at Griffith University's School of Engineering and was a Foundation Lecturer in Engineering Leadership, earning a Dean's Award for his contributions.

Perhaps most enduringly, Claude dedicated decades to supporting veterans. From 1994 onward, he served as a Veterans' Advocate for Review Board Appeals at the Southport RSL, where he also became a director. His advocacy was recognised with three community awards and the United Nations Volunteer Medal.

Recognition and Legacy

Claude's legacy was formally enshrined on 20 November 2018, when the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), officiated at the opening of the new 106th Field Workshop facilities at Enoggera Barracks. The facility was officially named the MAJ Claude Palmer Workshop, honouring his command of 106 Field Workshop in Vietnam and his lifelong service to RAEME and the nation.

Claude and his wife Jan were present for the announcement—a fitting tribute to a man whose leadership, technical excellence, and dedication shaped generations of RAEME soldiers and engineers.



Claude being congratulated by His Excellency General, The Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, on the naming and official opening of the Major Claude Palmer Workshop of 106 Fd Wksp 7 CSSB Gallipoli Barracks Enoggera

Farewell to a legend

LTCOL Claude Vivian Loftus Palmer (Retd) passed away on 23 Feb 2026. He leaves behind not only an extraordinary record of service but a legacy that continues to shape the Corps he loved. Claude's memorial service may be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Claude's influence endures in every RAEME soldier who upholds the standards he exemplified—technical mastery, integrity, humility, and unwavering commitment to others.

The workshop has carried his name since 2018, the generations he mentored, and the veterans he tirelessly supported all stand as living reminders of a life spent in service to country and community. Claude's example remains a guiding light for all who follow.

Lest we forget.

Corps RSM Update

The following report was extracted from an email provided by the Corps RSM on 17 Mar 2026. Additional information for serving Corps members may be found on the RSM's page on the Defence Protected Network (Objective number: fBQ17265966)

2026 and beyond

It has been my absolute privilege to remain the Corps RSM for the fourth year; I will be continuing with the monthly email updates and providing as much information to the Corps on changes. I hope each of you had a chance to get a well-deserved break, spent time with family and friends, an relaxed as we head into another busy (the new normal). As a Corps, we need to continue to again to strengthen our professional bonds, reflect on our achievements, and chart the course for the years ahead.

Not often do we witness the transition of the Corps RSM, the Head of Corps, and both Deputy Heads of Corps in the same cycle. Such a moment reminds us that renewal is not just inevitable—it is essential. It is through this renewal that we maintain our relevance, adapt to the Army's evolving needs, and uphold the standards that define us as the technical heart of Army.

Before we look forward, it is right that we acknowledge the leaders who have carried the Corps through recent years—leaders who guided us through complex modernisation programs, through the expansion of our heavy and aviation capabilities, and through a period where technical mastery has never been more vital. Their contributions will remain embedded in our doctrine, our workforce, and our culture. We thank them for leaving the Corps in a stronger position than they found it.

The Army we serve is changing. The character of conflict is changing. And therefore, RAEME must continue to change.

The Corps faces a future defined by:

- Increasingly complex land combat systems
- Transition to heavy, integrated, and autonomous platforms
- Deep maintenance demands in both conventional and hybrid environments
- A workforce that must remain skilled, adaptable, and certified

“Heavy” is not just a descriptor of weight—it is a descriptor of responsibility.

As new armoured and mechanised platforms enter service, as aviation and ISR fleets grow in sophistication, and as the Army modernises at pace, RAEME will shoulder an expanded role across sustainment, diagnostics, battle damage repair, and technical command and control. Our technicians, recovery teams, and maintenance leaders must not only fix equipment—they must understand the systems that enable our combat formations to fight and win.

This future demands:

- Higher levels of technical accreditation
- Greater integration with industry and OEM partners
- More robust training pipelines

- Forward maintenance teams capable of operating in contested environments

We are no longer simply turning spanners. We are enabling Army's most complex capabilities to remain lethal, reliable, and ready. As always, our greatest asset is our people. No matter how advanced our platforms become, they will still rely on the ingenuity, resilience, and professionalism of RAEME technicians—from apprentices to warrant officers, from workshops to deployed operations.

We must continue to:

Attract and retain technically minded soldiers

- Invest in supervisors and senior trades
- Strengthen partnerships with TAFE, industry, and Defence contractors
- Maintain a culture that values excellence, integrity, and mateship

The Corps has always adapted. But adaptation must now be constant, deliberate, and strategically aligned with the Army we are supporting.

With three senior Corps appointments transitioning simultaneously, some may call this a period of disruption.

I call it a period of **renewal**.

A chance to harness new ideas.

A chance to reinvigorate leadership.

A chance to reaffirm our identity.

To every RAEME soldier, NCO, officer, and APS professional—your work matters. You keep the Army moving, shooting, communicating, and surviving. You are the quiet backbone of operational capability.

As we look to 2026 and beyond, let us commit to a Corps that remains:

- Technically superior.
- Professionally trusted.
- Operationally indispensable.

Honours and Awards

Massive congratulations to the below members for their Australia Day 2026 honours or awards:

- **LTCOL Robert Cramp (Retd) OAM.** Medal of the Order of Australia – For service to the sport of shooting and the community, continuing his contribution well beyond Army service.

- **COL Lauren Wright CSC.** Conspicuous Service Cross – For outstanding devotion to duty as the Project Director of the LAND 1508 Greyfin Program and across Land systems Division.
- **LTCOL Christopher Dent CSM.** For Meritorious achievement as an Army Liaison Officer to the Japan Ground Self-Defence Force.
- **LTCOL Julian Fleming CSM.** For Meritorious devotion to duty as the Commanding Officer, 9th Force Support Battalion.
- **LTCOL Shandelle Welbourne CSM.** For Meritorious achievement delivering rapid capability through the Army Minors Program.
- **WO1 Corey Rocca CSM.** For developing equipment viability and maintenance processes supporting the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Europe.

Associations

We (RAEME) have been privileged have serving and ex-serving members take in the challenge of retaining a connection to the Corps through the respective state associations. These associations work tirelessly for their members, through the distribution of welfare packs, coordination of social functions & a professional network. I ask that all members do their best to support the associations back in return, do something as simple as attend a function, engage with Corps members young and old.

Colonel-in-Chief Update

I have again written to Army Ceremonial requesting an update on the formal recognition of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh, Princess Sophie.

For those not aware, this is so the Corps may remain aligned with REME, who have Her Royal Highness as their Colonel-in-Chief.

The SO1 Army Ceremonial has replied and has actioned the request through ADFHQ, before submission to the Governor Generals Office.

I will keep the Corps posted as we move forward.

*Note – I included a request within the request for an update on the acquisition of a new Corps Banner, once we gain some fidelity I will pass on to you all.

Corps Conference – Heavy 2026

We have received two nominations to date (Melbourne (4 BDE) & Sydney), nominations will close 27 Feb 26. The HOC Cell will vote the on the location within the first week of March, with the outcome announced immediately after. The Conference is planned to be conducted last week of Sep first week Oct, this will allow us to avoid the end of year shuffle and rush.

Corps Shop

RAEME Clothing: <https://shop.hunterpp.com.au/raeme/>

Corps Shop: <https://raeme.org.au/>

We continue to build the shop with items as requested by yourselves. If you have suggestions, please let me know and we can do our best to make it available.

Course Information

The RSM's full report which is available on the Defence network only includes course details for the following courses:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| • Subject 1 CPL | Subject 2 CPL RAEME |
| • Subject 4 CPL RAEME | Subject 1 SGT Army |
| • Subject 2 SGT CSS | Subject 4 SGT RAEME |
| • Subject 1 WO Army | Subject 2 WO CSS |

ASEME

20 May 2026: Save the date!

ASEME has commenced planning for a Ruby celebration of the consecration of the RAEME Prince Phillip Banner to be held on 20 May. The lead planner for the activity will be RSM ASEME, supported by our Corps RSM. Please rest assured that the planning will consult widely including personnel who were on the parade back in 1986!! I have been provided videos, photos and personal experiences of the day, which has been fascinating. More to follow with greater detail by the end of February. Whilst we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of our banner, I am also seeking to create a contemporary photo as close as possible to our Corps portrait. Participation will include key positions in the Corps, and representation from both ground and aviation personnel please wait out for the scheme of manoeuvre, when it is endorsed, invites will follow.

Workforce & Training Group

In 2025 WTG completed a transfer of the old two part Employment Specifications to a new single document template. This work has been completed for all RAEME ground trades less ECN 222 and are now located on the MAE website. WTG will continue to work with AHQ G1 Cell and the L8710 Project to update the current ECN 222 ES to closer align to the current training taking place as HMAS Cerberus and the intended career path of a Marine Technician. This will be completed in two parts with an initial update to the ES released in Q1 26 and a subsequent update once the workforce review is conducted as part of the Littoral Manoeuvre Workforce Review.

Work continues on the Draft Land Engineering Officer (LEO) Employment Specification which aims to separate LEOs who hold appropriate Engineering Degrees from the Logistics Officer ES and provide them with a more tailored ES and career continuum.

The following POC can be used to raise any RAEME ground Employment Category issues or ideas:

- Employment Category Manager – MAJ Penelope Neilson
- Employment Category Advisor – WO1 Terry Jones
- wtg.raeme.ecm@resources.defence.gov.au

Stay safe ,Arte et Marte

WO1 Jon Tynan

RAEME Corps RSM

75th Anniversary of National Service

On 14 February 2026, we paused to mark a significant milestone — the 75th anniversary of Australia's National Service scheme. The commemorative service was a moment to reflect on the young men whose lives were reshaped by conscription, including the many who went on to serve in RAEME. It offered a chance to honour not only their technical skill and discipline, but also the personal sacrifices made by those who put civilian ambitions on hold to answer the nation's call.

Introduction

Between 1965 and 1972, Australia's National Service scheme reshaped the lives of thousands of young men. Introduced during the Cold War and escalating Vietnam conflict, the scheme aimed to bolster Australia's military capacity by conscripting 20-year-old males through a birthdate ballot. Those selected faced two years of full-time Army service (reduced to 18 months in 1971) and three years in the Reserve. Refusal to comply could result in fines or imprisonment. Of the 804,286 who registered, 63,735 were selected to serve.

Deployment and Pay

PAY AND ALLOWANCES — NATIONAL SERVICEMEN DAILY RATES OF PAY (as at 7 Jul, 1967)							
Rank	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7
	\$ c	\$ c	\$ c	\$ c	\$ c	\$ c	\$ c
Private	4.98	5.26	5.52	5.77	5.98	6.23	6.48
L/corporal	5.27	5.57	5.84	6.06	6.31	6.55	6.78
Corporal	5.79	6.06	6.33	6.55	6.77	7.02	7.24
Sergeant	6.42	6.70	6.93	7.16	7.37	7.62	7.84

Should you be selected for officer training, and successfully complete the course, you are commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and receive a rate of pay of (\$7.99) a day.

In addition to the above rates:

- each member receives a clothing maintenance allowance of 28c a day.
- a married member receives a marriage allowance of \$1.75 a day.

Amdt No 1/Dec 67

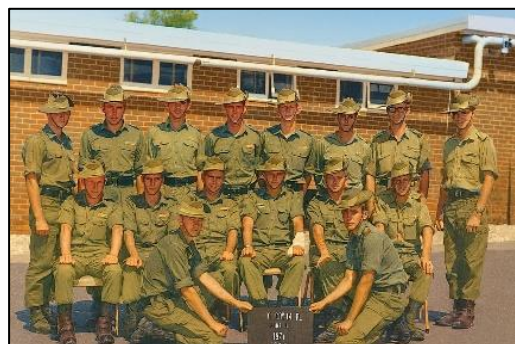
A 1965 amendment allowed National Servicemen to be deployed overseas, and from 1966, Nashos were sent to Vietnam alongside Regular Army soldiers. Of the approximately 60,000 Australian Defence Force personnel who served in Vietnam, 42,700 were Army — and Nashos made up around 50% of frontline soldiers during peak years.

Pay was modest. During training, Nasho Craftsmen earned about \$35 per week (or \$560 in today's dollars), with slight increases for rank or trade qualifications. Many found the transition from civilian life abrupt and challenging, especially those pulled from apprenticeships, higher-paying jobs, or university. The disruption to careers and relationships was profound, and for some, the effects lingered long after discharge.

Reception and Reintegration

Despite their contributions, National Servicemen were sometimes viewed as outsiders by Regular Army personnel, especially early on. Over time, many earned respect through competence and commitment. Community reception was mixed. While some Australians supported the war and honoured returning soldiers, others — especially during the later years of the Vietnam conflict — were critical or indifferent. Nashos returning from Vietnam often faced a lack of recognition, and in some cases, hostility. Reintegration into civilian life could be difficult, with limited support and little public understanding of their service. Many struggled to resume interrupted careers or reconnect with civilian life.

RAEME Nashos: The Technical Backbone



RAEME Nashos played a vital role in maintaining and repairing the Army's vehicles, weapons, and equipment. Their technical skills were often drawn from civilian trades, making them indispensable in both field and base workshops. Some served in Vietnam, while many were stationed in Australia supporting logistics and operations. RAEME units were known for their ingenuity, discipline, and ability to keep the Army moving.

Some RAEME Nashos included: Peter Midson who served as a vehicle mechanic with 7RAR from 1972; George Fulton who in 1969 was a fitter armourer at fire support bases with 105 and 101 Batteries; Peter Walford who served from 1969-1971 in 18 Field Squadron and 22 Construction Regiment Workshops; and Ian Dixon who was a

4/70 intake. Ian did recruit training in Puckapunyal, then 4 months in Bandiana where he trained in small arms and field artillery before posting to the Light Aid Detachment (LAD) in Woodside.

Peter Harley was a Nasho who was allocated to RAEME in Sept 1970. He went to RAEME Training Centre (RTC) but was detached straight back to the 3rd Base Workshop Battalion before heading back to RTC for 6 weeks of training as a Fitter Armament for A Vehicles. Posted to 1AR in mid Dec 1970, Peter served in HQ Sqn and B Sqn before being posted to the 1ATFHQLAD at Nui Dat in Jul 71 as a small arms fitter. He returned to Australia in Oct on the Sydney and was attached to 3 RAR to look after the vehicles on board. His final posting was to the Tasmanian Comd Workshops Nov 71 before discharging in Jan 72.





Barry Hansen's journey into National Service began with reluctance and no small amount of frustration. Called up in 1969 while still completing his apprenticeship, he was—like many young Australians of the era—deeply opposed to the war and the conscription system that fed it. Yet his sense of responsibility, shaped partly by watching his father serve as an Army instructor throughout his childhood, ultimately led him to accept the call rather than face prison. His familiarity with Army life ran deep, but it had never inspired a desire to join. If anything, witnessing the dangers firsthand—his father was once seriously injured in a training accident—left him wary of weapons and military culture. Still, when the system assigned him to RAEME, he found himself among a corps whose technical focus and camaraderie would shape his service in unexpected ways.

As a Craftsman with 2nd Cavalry Regiment's Light Aid Detachment, Barry discovered a world that was equal parts demanding, chaotic, and exhilarating. Wartime conditions meant discipline was relaxed, and the workshop operated more like a civilian garage—albeit one surrounded by armoured vehicles and punctuated by the roar of Centurions and APCs heading out for testing. He recalls the thrill of driving tanks, the challenge of field repairs deep in the bush, and the easy bonds formed between Nashos and Regulars alike. But he also remembers the shift that came after Australia's withdrawal from Vietnam: the fun drained away, regimentation returned, and the countdown to discharge became his focus. In retrospect, Barry acknowledges that the experience—though unwelcome at the time—gave him skills, resilience, and confidence that stayed with him long after he hung up his uniform. Yet he also carries the regret of lost connections and the sting of public hostility toward servicemen during that era. Today, he remains proud to have worn the RAEME badge and believes younger Australians should remember that Nashos, whatever their views on the war were, “still did our duty and did it well.”

Ray Somerville's experience as a Nasho reflects a mix of discipline, opportunity, and personal growth. He arrived in the Army straight from a completed apprenticeship, unhappy about being drafted and knowing nothing about military life. As a third intake Nasho in 1967, he commenced his National Service recruit training at Puckapunyal. He started Ordnance Corps training in Wodonga before being posted to Enoggera and transferred to RAEME. He spent the rest of his term at the Base Workshop in Bulimba.

Once in RAEME, Ray found himself coordinating workshop tasks, working alongside apprentices, Regulars, and civilians, and even taking on quirky (and possibly unsanctioned) jobs like building a merry-go-round for the Officers' Mess. His time at Bulimba brought unexpected highlights — including riding in British hovercraft on the Brisbane River — and although he was keen to finish his service, he recognises how much those two years shaped his work ethic and leadership style.

Ray did not serve in Vietnam, despite many requests to go. He still carries a balanced view of National Service: not all memories were good, but the discipline, respect, and maintenance mindset he learned stayed with him throughout a long civilian career in management and maintenance roles. For younger soldiers today, Ray's experience offers a quiet message — that even when service isn't something you choose, the skills, habits, and sense of responsibility you build can stay with you for life.



Another RAEME Nasho was Terry Bodle who had completed a five-year civilian apprenticeship as a vehicle mechanic before being drafted in 1969. Terry completed his 10-week basic training at the 3rd Training Battalion in Singleton before a brief stint at Bandiana, where his qualifications were reviewed. He was then posted to 1 Base Workshop at Bulimba, Brisbane, where he spent the remainder of his 22-month service maintaining A-vehicles. Like many Nashos, Terry gave up a promising civilian career. He had been earning a strong income as an entertainer—performing as “talent show, and appearing on Australia's New Faces. His call-up meant a 70% pay cut, dropping from around \$140 a week to \$40. With a young family, a block of land and a car to pay off, the financial sacrifice was significant. Yet he served proudly, doing his part for his adopted country.

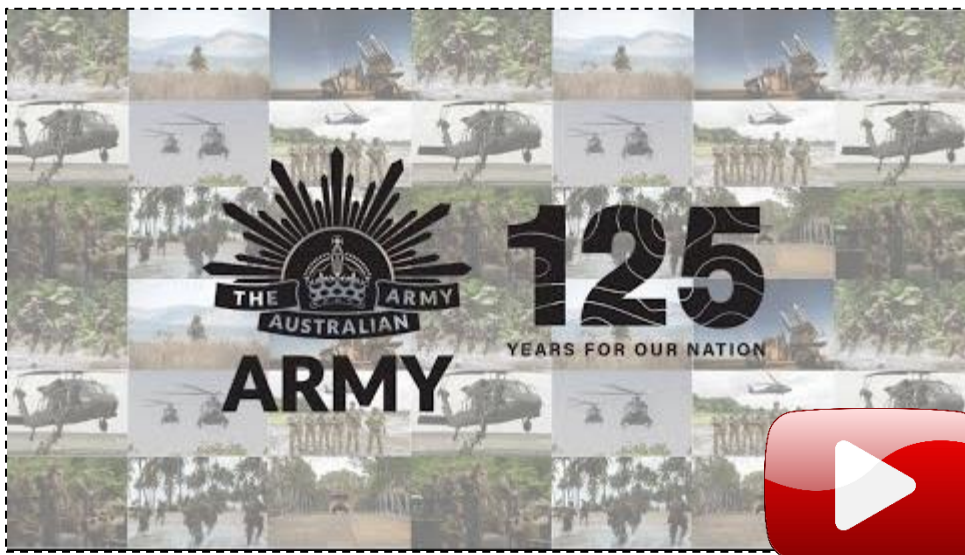
The Bodle family's service continues today: Terry's son Ty is a former Army Apprentice Motor Mechanic and now volunteers as Secretary of the RAEME Association Queensland.

In closing

National Service disrupted lives in ways often overlooked. While many Nashos had apprenticeships, careers, and relationships interrupted, with long-term consequences, the underlying themes of mateship and duty remain. To all National Servicemen who strengthened the standing of our Corps under trying circumstances, we all say: Thank You.

125 Years of the Australian Army

On 1 March 2026, the Australian Army proudly marked its **125th anniversary**, celebrating a legacy of service that began in 1901. Over more than a century, the Army has evolved into a modern, highly capable force while remaining grounded in the values of courage, initiative, respect and teamwork. This milestone is an opportunity to reflect on the generations of soldiers—past and present—who have served Australia at home and abroad. It also highlights the enduring contribution of our Corps as we apply the skills, professionalism and dedication required to strengthen the Army today.



Recognition of Outstanding Service

Congratulations to WO2 Phil King who was presented with his Gold Commendation on 10 March 2026 for his superior performance and devotion to duty whilst deployed to the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine command on [Operation KUDU](#)-EUROPE from January to July 2025.

His citation read: “Warrant Officer Class Two King, through his technical skills as the Artillery and Precision Fires Maintenance Officer, provided a significant and long-term impact on the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and directly reinforced the operational outcomes of the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine command. His extraordinary contribution directly improved the rate of serviceable platforms available for the Armed Forces of Ukraine as well as the speed at which they can repair damaged items.”



WO2 King was presented with his Gold Commendation on 10 Mar 26 at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera by BRIG Richard Peace.

82 Years Ago

So much has changed since 1901, but likewise, our Corps has continued to evolve since its formation in 1942.

This image (courtesy of the Army History Museum) was taken in Bandiana on 26 May, 1944. It depicts a truck being repaired and another being steam cleaned at one of the workshops of the 1st Ordnance Vehicle Park.

Beyond the machinery and the steam, the photo captures the spirit of the Corps in its earliest years—soldiers and tradesmen working side-by-side, solving problems with the resourcefulness and determination that would become hallmarks of RAEME culture. Even in 1944, the foundations of our modern maintenance philosophy are visible: teamwork, technical mastery, and an unwavering commitment to keeping the Army moving. It's a reminder that while our tools and technology have changed dramatically, the professionalism and pride of our people remain constant.



How are we doing?

The Editorial Team are keen to make *Maintenance Matters* succeed. We want it to be relevant and interesting for all RAEME readers, regardless of whether they are still serving or not, regardless of where they are in the world.

How would you classify our progress?

Click on the relevant classification to let us know.



1

Across

[1] What software was the pictured (bottom left) legend the master of?

[3] RAEME trade title that may also apply to an Army Chef

[5] Fill in the missing word....."Light _____ Repairs"

[7] What operators should do

[9] Where we get parts from

[10] LCPLs have one of these

[13] What we try to do to stuff

[15] People who design stuff are _____

[17] Pulling crocks from mud is _____

[20] Our new trade titles are _____

[21] Who in the Wksp **must** be obeyed

5 6

3

7 8

2

13 14

17

19

21

20

4

9

10 11

12

15

16

18

Down

[1] Equipment with a mod plate has been _____

[2] Short version for best rank in the Army

[4] Only worries about three wires

[6] Who is the pictured Corps legend (4,6)

[8] Who tells us when things need repair

[11] The type of availability we try to improve

[12] What we need to do to learn new things

[14] Also known as Crabs

[16] Tradesmen who chase electrons

[18] Engineers try to _____ things

[19] When things are really broken, we do this



RAEME Crossword

Solution on Page 28

9th Annual RAEME Get-together

..... or RAEME in the Field, but not as you know it!

The weekend of 20-22 Feb 2026 saw the Annual *RAEME Get Together* take place at Bjelke-Petersen Dam at Moffatdale, South-East Qld. Starting with a small group in 2018, this year saw 144 past and present Corps members along with their partners gather at the Bjelke-Petersen Dam Caravan and Recreation Park. Thanks yet again to Heath & Rowena for looking after us with discounted accommodation over the weekend.

Friday afternoon's "Happy Hour" saw Greg Riley welcome everyone to the weekend, followed by Karen Cairns & Helen Neeson, this year's "Mistresses of Ceremony" (MCs) who briefed everyone on the planned activities over the weekend.

Friday night's entertainer, John Lindsay, who apart from keeping everyone entertained until "Bedtime", brought everyone to an absolute standstill at sunset, as he played a stirring rendition of the "Last Post" on his guitar followed by the Ode recited by Greg Riley. The "A Team" fed the masses via a snag sizzle, ably led by Karen & Helen with a great support team of, Lynette, Julie, Easy & Shane. As the crowd dwindled, most saving themselves for a 'Big One' the next night, some of the more adventurous participants stayed on to relive past recoveries, convoy trips, exercises, and assorted shenanigans into the small hours of Saturday morning.



Friday Night's entertainer, John Lindsay.

The auction is run to raise a few dollars that are then gifted to the Murgon Hospital Auxiliary in appreciation of the support we get from the local community each year. This includes the loan of a cold room from Murgon APEX, discounted accommodation from the van park for the weekend & Friday night's entertainment from the South Burnett Council. The hospital auxiliary was chosen as it aids the entire local community.



The last flag to fly over RTC, an auction record price paid

Our master auctioneer is Micheal 'Wilko' Wilkinson, assisted by 'spotter' Karl Kuzmenko with 'super model' Clarrie Sanders in support. This is held in conjunction with yet another "Happy Hour", considering how long these last, they are the worst named event of the entire weekend. However, a few refreshing beverages seemed to relax the grip everyone had on their purse strings, and some phenomenal prices were realised for some of the rarer auction items.

It was then up to Cheryl Clegg & Perry Belford to host "Saturday Night Live" AKA "Karaoke night" AKA the "RAEME Rock Show". This is well-supported by Wilko as stand-in sound engineer.



Karen & Helen, our Mistresses of Ceremony for the weekend

Saturday afternoon saw Jaquie Gillam give a brief on the planned DVA changes to the VEA, DRCA & MRCA, to those who were interested or may be affected by the changes. It was an informative session that had a lot of people a lot less stressed after the briefing. This was followed by the MCs hosting an hilarious and entertaining trivia competition with the questions delivered in a manner that only a qualified Recruit Instructor could. The trivia comp then rolled on into the Charity Auction.

The 'A' Team feeding the masses



There was plenty of talent and thankfully only the rare case of no talent on display. From ABBA through to ZZ Top, the crowd was kept singing along till we hit the park's noise curfew. Unable to attend this year's event, Terry 'Sandals' Johnson delivered his stirring version of 'The Band Played Waltzing Matilda' in the best of RAEME 'Just make it work' traditions. He sung on the Sunny Coast, which was delivered by data link to BP Dam, played over a phone into a mic through the sound system and enjoyed by all.



Karaoke night

A special thanks to Graham 'Ernie' Earnshaw and the Bray Park Strathpine RSL for the use of their professional sound system for the night. Again, some people played harder than others and were keeping the fire pit stoked whilst telling yarns, some of which I suspect were even true, well into Sunday morning.



The Craft Markets

Sunday kicked off with a sausage sizzle for breakfast, held in conjunction with the "Crafty Markets" with all manner of goodies made by the crafty ladies and some of the crafty crafties on offer.



Presenting \$5223.23 to the President of the Murgon Hospital Auxiliary

We then gathered on the 'Grassy Knoll' to draw the raffle, the major prize being a RAEME themed rug hand made by Pam Beal, a brief on next year's gathering, the group photo and the

presentation of the funds raised over the weekend to Murial Shultz, the President of the Murgon Hospital Auxiliary. Shane 'Easy' Rider won the raffle but since it was his sister that made the rug, taking it home wasn't an option, so it was gifted to Wendy Dowling.

This year, the event raised \$5,223.25, this was a surprising amount, firstly because it is easily the highest amount we have ever raised since we started fund raising and secondly, everything was sold in whole dollar amounts, but we still ended up with \$0.25. This brought the cumulative amount donated to close to \$20K



The planning for next year's event is well underway, and thanks to an extremely generous donation by Darren 'Monty' Moncrieff through his company Pacific Direct, it is already shaping up to be a huge gathering surpassing everything that has gone before.

If you would like more info or to get involved, head to RAEME 10th Annual Get Together 26/2- 28/2 2027 Bjelke-Petersen Dam on Facebook. You will need to answer the membership questions and then simply follow along.

Arte et Marte, Clarrie Sanders

Upcoming Events

Planned RAEME gatherings across Australia for the next few months are summarised below. For further details on any events, either click on the link within the listing below or contact the relevant State or Territory Association as required.

To provide an update to this list, including any new events or events that have changed, please pass details to the Newsletter editors as follows:

- **Serving members** – Send details through your Senior Regional Representative who will be able to inform the Newsletter Editors to confirm details and on-base access requirements as applicable
- **Former-serving members** – Send details through your State or Territory Association Representative for on-forwarding to the Newsletter Editors.
- **Other members** – Please send details directly to Newsletter@raeme.org.au or upload them to the submission portal at: <https://raeme.org.au/index.php/publications/newsletter/article-submission>

Note: Significant Events that require considerable advanced planning, including reunions, may be highlighted below

March

20-22 nd	Wodonga	26th Intake Apprentices – 55th Year Reunion	RSVPs are required to Michael Thompsen NLT 18 March 2026
Fri 27 th	Darwin	Spanner Club	1 CSSB – Details to follow locally
Tues 31 st	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

April

TBC	Canberra	ASM's Golf Day	RMC Golf Club
Wed 01 st	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Thurs 09 th	Campbelltown	NSW Committee Meeting & Casual Luncheon	Campbelltown RSL Club
Fri 10 th	Melbourne	Monthly Spanner Club	Ladida, 557 Little Bourke Street from 1600-1900h
Sun 12 th	Sunshine Coast	RAQ Sunshine Coast Gathering	Alex Surf Club, Alexandra Headland from 1200h with door prizes on the day
Sat 18 th	Adelaide	RAEME-SA ANZAC Day function	West Adelaide Football Club from 1130 for 1200h
23-25 th	SE-Qld	31 st Intake Apprentices – 50 th Year Reunion	Maroochy RSL
Sat 25 th	Nationwide	ANZAC Day	March & gathering details nationwide will be provided separately closer to the date

May

Fri 01 st	Canberra	Mixed Lunch	Ainslie Football Club from 1230h
Wed 06 th	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Fri 08 th	Melbourne	Monthly Spanner Club	Ladida, 557 Little Bourke St from 1600h
Wed 13 th	Keswick	Army Museum (Keswick) History Week Lunch	See Museum website for details when published
Thurs 14 th	Thirlmere	NSW Committee Meeting & Casual Luncheon	Wollondilly RSL, Thirlmere
Sat 16 th	South Arm	RAT Luncheon	South Arm RSL South Arm
Sun 17 th	Toowoomba	Darling Downs Luncheon	Toowoomba Golf Club from 1200h
Tues 26 th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

June

Wed 03 rd	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Adelaide	SA Committee of Management Meeting	Plympton/Glenelg RSL from 1700h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Fri 05 th	Canberra	Spanner Club and Sausage Sizzle	RMC Golf Club from 1600h

June continued

Sat 06 th	Brisbane	SE Qld Army Apprentices School Reunion 2026	Bulimba Bowls Club from 1100h
Fri 12 th	Melbourne	Monthly Spanner Club	Ladida, 557 Little Bourke Street from 1600-1900h
Sat 13 th	Townsville	RAEME NQ Gathering	1200h Location TBA
Tues 30 th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

July

Wed 01 st	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Fri 03 rd	Canberra	Mixed Lunch	Ainslie Football Club from 1230h
Sun 26 th	Ingleburn	NSW Christmas in July Function	Ingleburn RSL Club
	Sunshine Coast	Sunshine Coast Gathering	Alex Surf Club, Alexandra Headland
Tues 28 th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

August

Wed 05 th	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Fri 07 th	Canberra	Spanner Club and Sausage Sizzle	RMC Golf Club from 1600h

Fri 15 th – Sun 17 th	Currumbin RSL, Gold Coast	101 Fd Wksp Reunion Weekend	14 August – Catch up from 1700h 15 August – Dinner from 1700h 16 August – Farewells from 1100h Cost \$70 per pers. Contact Michelle Lafferty on 0404-004-775 for more details.
--	---------------------------------	-----------------------------	---

Sun 16 th	Toowoomba	Darling Downs Luncheon	Toowoomba Golf Club from 1200h
	Ross, Tas	Statewide Luncheon	Man of Ross hotel, Ross
Sat 22 nd	Gold Coast	RAEME Luncheon	Mermaid Beach AEME SLSC from 1200h

Sun 23 rd	SE-Qld	RAEME Reserve Reunion	Indooroopilly Sherwood RSL Club from 1100h
Tues 25 th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

September

Tues 01 st	Adelaide	Harry the Horse Luncheon	West Adelaide Football Club from 1200h
Wed 02 nd	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Adelaide	SA Committee of Management Meeting	Plympton/Glenelg RSL from 1700h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Fri 04 th	Canberra	Mixed Lunch	Ainslie Football Club from 1230h
Thurs 10 th	Ingleburn	NSW Committee Meeting & Casual Luncheon	Ingleburn RSL Club
Sat 12 th	Maroochydore	RAQ Sunshine Coast Luncheon	Maroochy RSL from 1230h
Tues 29 th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

October

Fri 02 nd	Canberra	Spanner Club and Sausage Sizzle	RMC Golf Club from 1600h
Wed 07 th	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Tues 27 th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h

November

Wed 04 th	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h

Dedication Recognised

Two soldiers have earned the Chief of Army Instructor of the Year award – one for advancing Special Forces medical skills and the other for modernising watercraft maintenance,

The RAEME recipient was Maritime Engineer Instructor Sgt Matthew Booth, of the Army School of Transport.

For Sgt Booth, the award was particularly significant as it came during his first instructional posting.

Despite being new to the role, he identified critical gaps and took the initiative to overhaul and combine two courses from a combined 64 days into a singular 50-day maintainer course at the School of Transport.

While navigating a staff shortfall, his leadership ensured training continued to deliver mission-ready technicians.

“The idea was to reduce the total course duration and create a more practical day-to-day-focused curriculum,” he said.

He also collaborated with a TAFE institute to integrate civilian-recognised qualifications into Army training.

“By collaborating with TAFE, we’ve been able to ensure our soldiers walk away with not just Army skills, but civilian-recognised qualifications that value-add to their careers,” Sgt Booth said.

He said receiving the award was meaningful as it proved he had successfully fixed the issues he had identified while a student.

His message to junior soldiers was to seek opportunity and give it a go. “The impact you can have is far greater than you think,” Sgt Booth said.

Source: Extracted in part from [Army News](#) Edition 1598. The full story provides details of the other worthy recipient, SF medic, CPL S.



Update to Army Rank Insignia

DEFENCE has issued an updated ADF ranks chart to reflect the transition to the reign of King Charles III and ensure official material aligns with current Commonwealth symbols.

While minor graphical updates have occurred over time, the previous chart had been in place for more than two decades.

The update reflects the change of sovereign and incorporates refinements to selected rank insignia across Navy, Army and Air Force to improve accuracy, consistency and visual clarity.

Key changes include updated crown imagery; simplified artwork for improved recognition, including black-and-white visibility; the inclusion of trainee ranks, such as staff cadet and officer cadet; and, the removal of obsolete ranks no longer in use.



The update applies to published rank imagery and reference material only and does not require immediate changes to uniforms or issued insignia. The updated chart will be available on the ADFHQ Governance intranet page and will be incorporated in the Defence diaries in 2027.

Source: [Army News](#) Edition 1597

Recent Events

RAQ Darling Downs gathering – Toowoomba



Members and guests enjoying the luncheon

The Darling Downs chapter had its first function at the Toowoomba Golf course on Sunday 15th February. We had a good turnout considering many people go travelling at this time of year. Many of the attendees will also be attending the RAEME Gathering at JBP Dam this weekend.

By popular vote, it was decided that we will hold our remaining three functions at the same venue this year. Our next function will be on Sunday 17th May and that will be our Vietnam Veterans function.



Members and guests enjoying the luncheon

North Queensland Spanner Club – 21 Feb 2026

A great turnout in Townsville today for our first 2026 NQ Gathering. Around 70 people enjoyed the balmy weather to catch up, enjoy a nibble and a refreshing beverage. RAQ NQ committee member, Brian Robb had the privilege of presenting Mr Mick Harris with a RAQ Ray Norman OAM award for Mick's service to the NQ region as the founding NQ merchandise member. Congratulations Mick. Member draw winner of \$100 was Aaron McLachlan.



The winners of the Lucky door prizes were:

- Des Hussey,
- Sharon Boughen and
- Wendy Dowling.

Congratulations to the three winners, and thanks to RAQ for providing the prizes.



Members and guests flanked by the old and new banners

Thanks also go to the Association, for providing us the new Corps Banner, with the new RAEME Badge incorporating the Tudor Crown, chosen by the Monarch to symbolise his reign. The attached photo shows the attendees flanked by the old and new banners.

Here's looking forward to another great year in the Association.

Arte et Marte

Pete Pile

Coordinator, RAQ-DD Chapter

southwest@qld.raeme.org.au

Well-done to Mick McMillan who won the meat tray draw. Thanks to the Bellevue hotel team for hosting us, it was a fantastic day.



Metal trades in Wodonga

18th Metal Trades (+ Wags) 63 years on at Wodonga RSL, 2nd of February. We've had a rough trot since the last reunion two years ago. Somehow, we lost three of our brothers in that time, Reg Brown (Blacksmith), John 'Zulu' Zawada and George Reid (Fitters). George, who did all the ground work for the reunion, died less than a fortnight before we had it.

Fourteen out of the original thirty managed to make it, a few medical apologies and one who has been AWOL for fifty odd years. The wives have managed to stick with us for forty years plus, they are all gems who deserve more than we can give them.

We thought this might be the last reunion for us, but a couple of the blokes are talking about Canberra and venues, and accommodation, etc. Watch this space in two years, it may be filled. They are a great bunch of blokes. PS. Nobody is owning up to hitting Blue, seated, with a cattle prod.



Harry the Horse Luncheon in Adelaide

As noted in the latest [SA Association Bulletin](#), the SA team recently held another successful “Harry the Horse” Lunch on Tuesday 3rd March at West Adelaide Football Club. We had a great turn out from the usual local members who all enjoyed a great meal and lots of Fun, Friendship and Fellowship. We encourage others to join us in September



The Group looking forward to their meals

Mixed lunch in Canberra

Members of the ACT Association enjoyed a relaxed and friendly luncheon at the Ainslie Football Club on Friday, 06 March, bringing together familiar faces and a few new ones for an afternoon of easy conversation and good company. The atmosphere was exactly what our Association does best — genuine camaraderie, shared stories, and the simple pleasure of catching up with people who understand the value of our RAEME heritage.

A highlight of the afternoon was the chance to pass around the newly arrived RAEME Craftsman magazines. Their arrival sparked plenty of discussion, memories, and a few laughs as members compared notes on articles, photos, and familiar names from across the Corps. It was a reminder of how these publications continue to connect us, no matter where we are or what stage of life we're in.

There was also plenty of talk about the strong turnout of serving members at our most recent Spanner Club. Their enthusiasm left a lasting impression, and many around the table spoke about how encouraging it was to see the next generation engaging so actively. We look forward to welcoming them again at future gatherings — especially at upcoming Spanner Clubs, which continue to grow into a vibrant meeting point for both past and present RAEME members.

Overall, the luncheon was a warm and enjoyable afternoon, filled with the kind of conversations and connections that keep our Association thriving.

RAT Meet and Greet

The RATs held its first function of the year at the Hobart RSL on Friday 13th March 2026. Sadly only 9 participants made it to the function. However, on a lighter note, there were a number of apologies from members who could not make the event.

Although numbers were down, overall, it could be deemed a successful get together, achieving in some way its goal of bringing together fellow RATs. The highlight of the night was our President Mark Wilson winning a prize in the nightly raffle. No doubt he will get a chance to use the voucher on ANZAC day at the RSL.

Top End Annual General Meeting

Whilst Association-specific information will generally be excluded from *Maintenance Matters*, we have made an exception for the NT crew due to a unique position they recently found themselves in. Whilst nearly all Association Committees are staffed by former-serving members, the lack of retired members in the Top End has meant that their committee holds a large complement of serving members. The challenge the NT Association found itself in this year was that the Army posting cycle saw the entire committee less their President posted out of the region at the same time!

To get around this, the Association held an AGM on the evening of 27 Feb in the hope that some serving members would step up and help them out. With a fantastic turnout, several serving members raised their hands for the various committee positions.

Some exciting new appointments confirmed for the NT committee included:

- **President** – Alan Dorahy
- **Vice President** – Robert Woods
- **Secretary** – [TBC] ← If you have the capacity to fill this role, please reach out to the NT team.
- **Treasurer** – Malcom Goldner
- **General Committee members**- Leon Riordan and Duncan Reid

It was a productive evening with strong discussions around how the Association can continue supporting our veteran community, along with some inspiring ideas for future events.

With some heavy-hitters on board, the NT Association is excited about the direction they're heading and look forward to everything 2026 has in store. Here's to a great year ahead!

The Australian Army Apprentices Association — <https://austarmyapprentice.org>

The February 2026 edition of *The Apprentice About* is a special 20th Anniversary Edition, celebrating two decades since the formation of the Australian Army Apprentices Association. It opens with a detailed and engaging history of how the Association was created, tracing the journey from the first idea of an Apprentices plaque at the Australian War Memorial through to incorporation in 2006 and the establishment of the national memorial at Bandiana.

This issue also features a message from the President, updates on Association members in the news, and recognition of several Apprentices receiving honours and awards. Readers will find welfare updates, a comprehensive Vale section, and current membership statistics showing 891 financial members as at January 2026.

Event reports include the ACT Region Quarterly Lunch and coverage of Corps and veteran-related activities across the country. Upcoming reunions and gatherings are listed, along with updates on the SPAASSM Collection and a wide range of Association merchandise.

The edition also highlights significant historical pieces, including milestones in the Army Apprentices School, museum updates, and commemorations at the Australian War Memorial.

This is a rich, informative edition well worth reading in full. You can find it at: <https://austarmyapprentice.org/newsletters/>



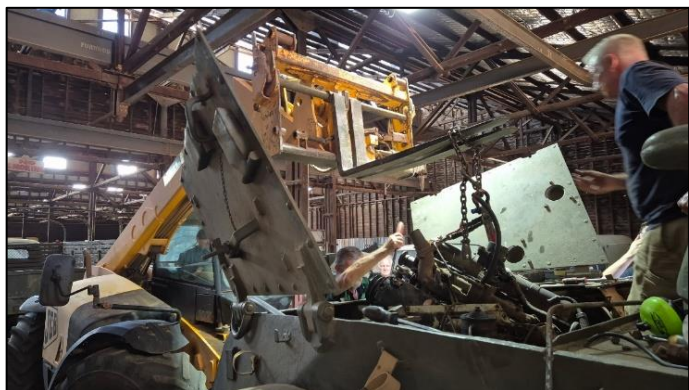
WA Association – Supporting the Nungarin Museum



The Team on this trip – 31 Jan – 1 Feb

A big weekend! We had some plans to get some jobs completed this weekend... But as to be expected with working on old stuff... nothing goes to plan!

The Stag Hound – The main goal was to have her fully assembled and hopefully driving... We were tracking well, we had the right engine fuelled up and running, we did the same for the left... Unfortunately, when we turned her off, we heard a dribbling noise! It turned out the Fluid Couple (torque converter) Seal on the transmission decided to let go and started to pump the transmission dry. This resulted in us pulling the motor out again.



Once we had her out, we pulled it apart and found the offending item. The parts have been acquired and are waiting our next trip. We continued on the Right engine. We connected up the drive shaft, filled the transmission and got the girl to move for

the first time under her own steam. No one at the Museum has ever seen her move under her own power, so we are assuming she hasn't run for the past 20 years (guess). This was a great achievement for the team! (Bryce, Steel, Coles, Smithers)

Other tasks that occurred concurrently included Stinno rewiring of the electrics on the half-track. This is progressing steadily with the rear lights repaired and the new loom run up to the console.

The Studebaker with the blown head has had its head removed (Steel) and a Gasket is being flown in from QLD and the head is off to be machined.



Coles and Steel reinstalled the overhauled Master Cylinder in the Blitz Truck and bled the brakes up. Finally brakes! They took her for a drive.

They got the Willy Jeep started and took her for a quick run also.

We also did some further investigation into the Scout Car. The rumours turned out to be true. After we removed the Brake Master Cylinder for overhaul, we started to check out the drive line. We have now confirmed that the right front Drive Shaft is absent. We hope to recover one from the wreck in the paddock!

The story continues.....

Marching the Distance of Courage

Corps member Lee Beaumont is marching 192km to support his fellow veterans and their families as part of [Soldier On's March On](#) challenge and he needs your support.

March On is a free virtual challenge that veterans can complete anywhere and anytime during the month of March. *Soldier On* is calling on members to walk (or run) 96km, symbolising the length of the Kokoda Track to honour the courage and sacrifice of our veterans and their families.

By joining the *March On* community, you'll show our brave heroes that they are not forgotten... we stand strong with them. If you can donate to support this cause, please visit [Lee's page](#).

You can also find more info about the Challenge on the pages linked above.



RAEME Heroism in the air

For his actions during Operation Renmark, Captain James Campbell, a 9th Intake RAEME Vehicle Mechanic, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross after repeatedly landing his virtually unprotected Bell Sioux chopper into a minefield after a 3 Cav armoured personnel carrier was destroyed by an estimated 500-lb mine and dismounted troops triggered a further M16 jumping jack mine. After the second mine explosion there were thirty-two diggers trapped in the minefield.



Portrait of 18548 Captain (Capt) James Douglas Campbell, a flying instructor with 1st Aviation Regt, 1968

At great personal risk and complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Campbell flew a medical officer to the scene of the mine explosions, and repeatedly landed in the minefield knowing full well that he and his helicopter could be destroyed by a mine explosion triggered by the helicopter's skids or the down blast of the rotors. He shuttled the wounded to a safer LZ for other RAAF choppers where they could quickly extract the wounded to Vŭng Tàu for treatment.



Major Harry Smith (left) and pilot Captain Campbell of 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight standing in front of a Bell 47 Sioux helicopter

A Canberra Times report on Feb 23 1967 lists the names of all but one of the wounded (whose family in Britain has yet been notified). These were:

- 5RAR
 - Major Malcolm Bruce McQualter (OC B Coy)
 - Sergeant Kevin James Wass
 - Staff Sergeant Kenneth Russell Benson
 - Cpl Alan George Buckingham
 - Cpl John Alvin Bouse
 - Cpl Robert Neil McKenzie
 - Cpl Ronald Frederick Alexander Nichols
 - LCpl Joseph Phillip McAlister
 - Pte Lutz Bockisch
 - Pte Neville Rodney Bryant
 - Pte Terrence James Duffy
 - Pte Robert Stewart Ferguson
 - Pte Barney Arthur Gee
 - Pte Darrel Lloyd George
 - Pte Denovan Eric Hillier
 - Pte Johannes Gerhardus Nyhuis
 - Pte Dennis Bruce Tape
 - Pte Robert Wilfred Turner
 - Pte Frederick Richard Clark
 - Pte Richard Lloyd
 - Pte Richard Lane Anthony
 - Pte Morris Noel Dwyer
- Supporting Units:
 - LBdr Peter Reymond Jones (103 Field Battery, RAA)
 - Spr Noel Roy McDuffie (1 Field Squadron, RAE)



The helicopter CAPT Campbell flew on Operation Renmark is in the collections of the Australian War Memorial.

Images courtesy of the Australian War Memorial



Raemus Rover

It's been over 10 years since the last instalment of Raemus Rover in the Corps magazine, so it's about time we give it another go. The team (born from Raeme) is still racing and supporting veterans, we've expanded further, have our own race track and we operate in both North and South Queensland.



Raemus history in brief

For those who are not aware of Raemus Rover, very briefly I'll explain its history to now story. Initially raised as a cross-training activity at Puckapunyal Workshop Coy in the 1970's, it raced around the east coast till about 1989 as a Raeme workshop activity (it is a 1963 Series 2A Land Rover). It allowed the various trades to be trained in the other skills of the Corps, such as a welder learning electrical skills etc. Once the majority of the regular forces moved out of Puckapunyal the car was relocated and set in storage at Bandiana then Bonegilla.



After 22yrs in storage the car was re-allocated to 6 ESR in Amberley again as a trade training activity. Very soon after a ride activity with soldiers from the Soldier Recovery Centre at Enoggera (most were from 6 RAR and had just returned from Afghanistan) the focus shifted dramatically to be what it is now, a multi-faceted veteran support program.



So where are we now?

The team has the old Raemus Rover, being fully rebuilt at the Ipswich workshop (our primary base) and a class 7 Pajero that has achieved Qld class champion for the past 2 years straight. Plus, we have a class 6 SXS owned by the Vice President that's primarily used for the South Qld events. In the north based just out from Townsville the President (Ex-WO1 Ian Baker has a Class 1 Pro-lite buggy, they recently finished 2nd in class at Goondiwindi and is also primarily used for the program.



So that's a team of 4 cars which means lots of work for the pit crew. The workshop relies heavily on ex-RAEME members providing the technical support, familiar names like: Tony Stirzacker, Matt Richards, Murray John, Nathan McMaster, Jason Wilson and more, all volunteer hours to ensure both the racing and the program weekends run smoothly.



What we do

The Raemus Rover program has several lines of operation: race team function, Veteran transition support, Veteran social engagement and mental health support. We have found the benefit of having a relaxed workshop environment with staff trained in the various support disciplines along with a raft of linked support program referral options is the right recipe for the veterans find the help, support and mateship for those who are either serving or ex serving. Our key saying is "We don't know everything, but we do know a guy".

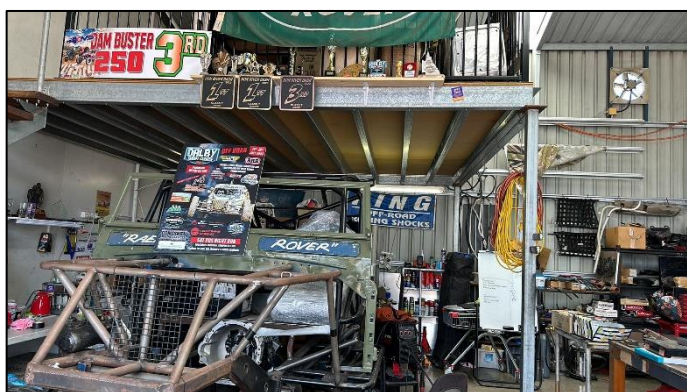
Raemus Rover knows the importance of being able to backup what you claim, our program has been independently assessed and studied by Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation.

Our staff are also qualified to conduct race events, sign off on race licence applications, provide qualified mental health support and much more. We have taken lessons learnt on domestic training and combat deployments that we need to ensure we exceed the expectations of those around us, so we can get on with the business of veteran support and race team functions without drawing any undue attention. It has to be said the inherent military skills joined with our technical skill has made us a valuable asset to race event providers, as we often provide skilled staff to support the races.



What's next

We'd love to see current and ex-serving corps brothers joining and help working on race cars.



Operation Spanner Pack Update

Operation Spanner Pack continues to provide a small but meaningful connection between home and deployed RAEME personnel, reminding our tradesmen and women that the Corps and Association are thinking of them while they are away on operations or long-term training activities.

During the first two months of 2026, no new requests for Spanner Packs were received. While this is not unusual early in the year, efforts are continuing to ensure we maintain awareness of any upcoming deployments or activities where RAEME personnel may benefit from a Spanner Pack.

Five Spanner Packs were dispatched late last year to RAEME members deployed on Operation Kudu in Germany. We hope the packs reached their intended recipients and were enjoyed over the Christmas period.

The beauty of this form of motorsport is the total absence of Engineering Change Proposals (ECP), alongside the requirement to be more creative and skilful when working on the race cars than what we challenge our in-service tradesmen. That's not an indictment on our in-service tradesmen; it's simple fact that there is more latitude available in off-road racing design and solutions than the systems the military require for combat effectiveness.

If you have spare time and would like to experience joining a genuine race team or need some guidance or answers about transition or DVA issues etc, we're only a workshop away. The connection with our Corps roots is strong and we pride ourselves on using the strength that a field repair team experience brings to the off-road racing pit. If you're struggling finding your way after service or just need advice from outside the structured uniform system, we are here for you.



More information

To learn more about Raemus Rover or how to support the team, visit their online sites at:

- <https://www.raemusrover.com.au/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/RAEMUSRover/>
- <https://engage.forcenet.gov.au/provider/raemus-rover-off-road-racing>



This submission was voted as the best member submission for this edition. Details of the prize will be forwarded to the author.

To improve awareness of future opportunities to support deployed personnel, contact has recently been established with HQ 1 Division. We're hoping these contacts will keep the Operation Spanner Pack team informed of any deployments or extended training activities involving RAEME personnel that may benefit from receiving a pack. This engagement will help ensure Operation Spanner Pack continues to reach those who would most appreciate a reminder that the Corps community is behind them.

If you are aware of a RAEME deployment, exercise, or training activity where personnel may appreciate receiving a Spanner Pack, please reach out to the Operation Spanner Pack team so we can continue this small but valued tradition of Corps support.

Major Tom Cross (Retd)

Spannerpack@qld.raeme.org.au

Part 1 of 8 – New Capability for Army Aviation – The 16th Aviation Support Battalion

Editor's Note: The following article provides an early overview of a critical new and evolving logistic and maintenance capability in the Australian Defence Force that is designed to support Army's aviation existing and emerging capability. This is the first part of a series that will continue in "Maintenance Matters" over the coming months to provide details of new logistic and maintenance concepts, doctrine, adaptability, and the restructuring required to reach Army Aviation's full potential.

Introduction

The establishment of the 16th Aviation Support Battalion (16 ASB) in Townsville and Oakey represents a significant shift towards centralised Army aviation support within the ADF. The Battalion consolidates governance, maintenance, refuelling, rearming and logistics functions, previously distributed across the 1st Aviation Regiment (1 Avn Regt) and 5th Aviation Regiment (5 Avn Regt), into a single unit.

This centralisation allows the aviation regiments to focus more on planning and preparing for, and conduct of, combat aviation operations.



16 ASB Unit Emblem

'Endurance', the Battalion motto, is the ability to maintain operational effectiveness for the duration of and operation or operations to achieve the mission. In an era when operational reach increasingly depends on aircraft operational availability (Ao), the Army's ability to sustain aviation at scale has become an important factor of national defence. Raising a dedicated Aviation Support Battalion isn't simply a structural change—it's a strategic leap, one designed to force generate enabling capabilities towards successful combat aviation operations.

The Context of the ASB. Australian Army Aviation Corps (AAAvn) units in Townsville continue the important process of modernisation. This is largely characterised by the delivery of UH-60M Blackhawk and AH-64E Apache helicopters, however, it also allows for the growth of the CH-47F Chinook fleet and Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS). Collectively, this represents a significant uplift in Army's aviation capability that requires consideration of underlying sustainment and operating models. In response, Aviation Command (AVNCOMD) undertook an organisational capability review, which led to the establishment of 16 ASB.

The new battalion coordinates Australian Army, Royal Australian Air Force, Australian Public Service, Defence Industry and foreign technicians across the Darwin, Oakey and Townsville regions in support of UH-60M, AH-64E and CH-47F operations.

16 ASB, has three discrete sub-units spanning deeper aviation maintenance, aviation rearming and refuelling and land logistics support. 16 ASB will drive improvements in military rotary wing Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul and Upgrade (MRO&U); supply chain management; and Combat Service Support (CSS) to a complex aviation dependency. Within the 16th Aviation Brigade,

16 ASB will work closely with the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) and Defence Industry partners.

ASB Connection with Army Aviation Units

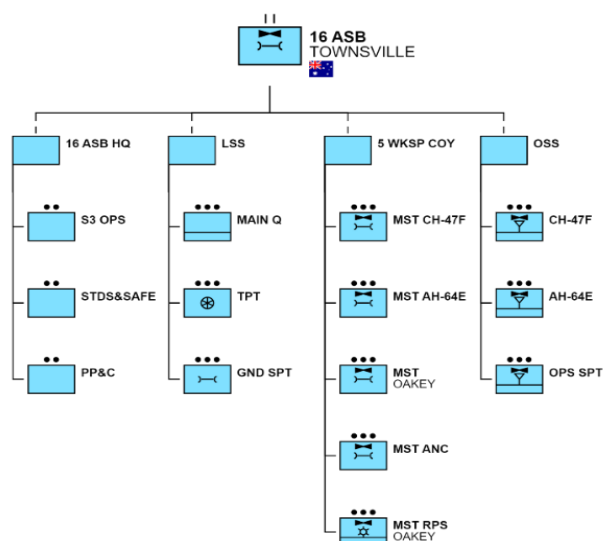
The ongoing co-location of 16 ASB with 1 Avn Regt and 5 Avn Regt in Townsville, complements integral regiment assets with centralised logistics and maintenance services provided by the ASB. This posture and relationship will meet the requirements of AAAvn capabilities into the future by leveraging the benefits of sustainment mass and density, geographical co-location and an aviation "centre of excellence" model. The benefits of centralising logistic and maintenance resources and facilities in Townsville must be weighed against the need for operational autonomy, when required, and will continue to be refined over time. This footing also allows for a deliberately measured balance of capability generation and management for AVNCOMD. Maintenance support to the School of Army Aviation's, UH-60M fleet, Oakey, is also provided in this construct.



16 ASB Soldiers and Officers following the 16 Aviation Brigade 2025 parade

Organisational Structure

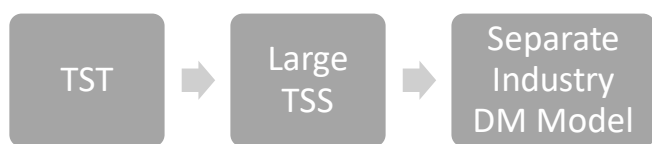
The current organisational structure of 16 ASB is shown below, together with some mention of geographical dispersal of sub-elements to Oakey and acknowledging further collocation of Darwin resources is ongoing:



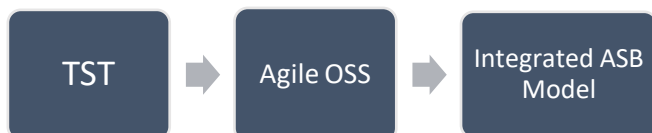
Note: It is important to note that 6 Avn Regt and 20 Regt are not directly enabled by the ASB, as they retain their organic CSS elements.

The Challenge Facing the ASB Maintenance Capability

Realising the full potential and benefits of 16 ASB relies on a shift in mindset across the entire Army aviation continuum, away from the long-standing model shown here:



...towards a new model below:



The 1 Avn Regt and 5 Avn Regt command the 'Operational Support Squadron' (OSS) elements, which provide an agile platform focused flightline and commensurate line servicing capability. Commanding the Technical Support Troops (TST) or Maintenance Support Troops (MST), the AVN REGT OSS also maintains a strong readiness posture and tactical focus. The AVN REGT OSS are comprised of the resources of the original Technical Support Squadrons (TSS) elements that were not amalgamated into 16 ASB.

Critically, the Integrated 16 ASB model has raised the 5th Workshop Company (5 Wksp Coy), operating at depth with centralised specialist capabilities. This inherent depth in maintenance capability will ensure sustainability across near peer conflict and training situations alike.

It is important to note that within 16 ASB resides an integrated fleet planning cell, which schedules all deeper maintenance and upgrade modifications of Army's battlefield helicopters. Critically, the cell factors operational requirements seeking to maximise current availability and future assurance. 16 ASB's deeper aviation maintenance focus will establish a long term, stable and predictable "production line" of MRO&U. Initiatives to complement maintenance planning include the integration and authorisation of RAAF, foreign partner and reserve technicians to a greater extent than in the past. This inclusive team will be collectively responsive as a single entity to the Commander's Main Effort. The tactical and operational agility in deployed operations will be generated by force assigning task organised logistic specialist capabilities to an Aviation Task Unit or Group.

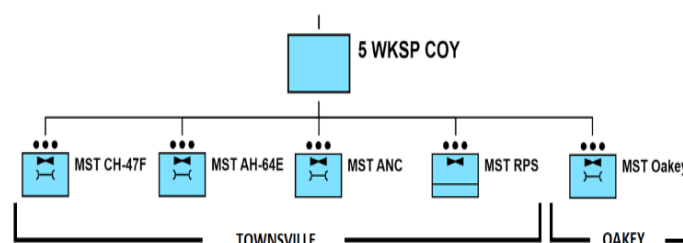
Our Connection with History

The 9th Advanced Ordnance Workshop (9 AOD) was raised in July 1942 at Bushmead, Western Australia. In February 1944, it merged with the 5th Tank Workshop Company and the 4th Ordnance Tank Depot Workshop Section to become the 5th Australian Base Workshop.

By January 1945, with troop numbers in the region decreasing, the unit was scaled back and renamed the 5th Australian Advanced Workshop. The unit continued to operate in Nungarin until the end of the war.

In 1972, at the conclusion of the Vietnam War, the existing 1 Avn Regt Wksp was re-organised to become the 5th Base Workshop Battalion (5 Base Wksp Bn), Amberley, and moved to Oakey Airfield in December 1973. In 1989, 5 Base Wksp Bn was redesignated as the Oakey Workshop Battalion (OWB), and again in 1993, as the Oakey Logistic Battalion (OLB). Three years later it was renamed the Aviation Support Group Workshop (ASGW). Over the next two decades the workshop provided operational support to the School of Army Aviation and deep maintenance support for the rest of the Army aircraft fleets. ASGW was officially disbanded in 2007 and outsourced commercial support for maintenance and training was introduced.

In 2025, in a nod to the past, the 5 Wksp Coy was raised as part of the 16 ASB. Today, 5 Wksp Coy at Oakey conducts operational maintenance support to the School of Army Aviation (SAA) and is establishing UH-60M fleet deep maintenance capability through its Maintenance Support Troop (MST). In Townsville, 5 WKSP COY provides deep maintenance support to the CH-47F fleet and supports 1 AVN REGT with the delivery of the AH-64E.



Also raised in 2025 was the Aviation Groundcrew Squadron. The Logistic Support Squadrons of 1 and 5 Avn Regts were amalgamated and re-raised within 16 ASB. Together all three subunits enable 1 Avn Regt, 5 Avn Regt and SAA with a BPT task to support 6 Avn Regt and 20 Regt. 16 ASB's culture and service ethos is drawn from the best parts of our history, and we acknowledge the giants who have gone before us.

Army aviation has a strong history and relationship with Defence Industry, with Army's platform prime partners being Airbus Australia Pacific, Boeing Defence Australia and Lockheed Martin Australia – this relationship will be enhanced in the new business model.

Conclusion

The evolving strategic landscape necessitates a re-focused approach to aviation support, directly responsive to the Commander's Main Effort. Aviation Command has commenced the development of an Aviation Support Battalion that is agile, industry-integrated, and capable of sustaining high-readiness aviation operations in diverse environments. Inheriting a rich history of support to the nation, 16 Aviation Support Battalion's establishment will ensure that Army Aviation remains a formidable force, prepared to meet future challenges with confidence. Let's look at the other capabilities of 16 ASB in the following paragraphs.

LTCOL Chris Porada

Commanding Officer

16 Aviation Support Battalion



Australian Army Maintenance History: A Guide for Army Maintainers and Junior Leaders

Before reading this article, you are highly recommended to review the keynote speech given by the Deputy Chief of the Army (DCA), MAJGEN Chris Smith at the Chief of Army History Conference 2025.



This article is written to deepen serving RAEME members understanding of the support they provide to the Army. It does so through a series of considerations, case studies and questions intended to prompt thoughts, discussion and growth.

Introduction

The Australian Army is a modern, technologically advanced force, but it is also an institution shaped by more than a century of war, adaptation, and hard-earned lessons. In his recent address, MAJGEN Chris Smith reminded us that the study of history is not an academic luxury — it is a professional necessity.

“The study of history is not just the study of the past,” he said. “It’s an explanation of the present.”

For maintainers and the leaders responsible for them, this message is not peripheral. It goes to the heart of readiness, discipline, and the Army’s ability to fight and win.

Maintenance is often described as a support function, but history shows that it is far more than that. Maintenance is a combat function. It shapes tempo, survivability, and the ability of commanders to seize and hold the initiative. When maintenance culture is strong, armies endure. When it is weak, armies falter — sometimes catastrophically.

This guide explores how history, simplicity, and clear language can strengthen Army maintenance, and why maintainers and leaders must understand the nature of war if they are to prepare soldiers and equipment for it.

Why Army’s Maintainers Must Study History

DCA argues that the Army has neglected parts of its profession that require: no government funding, discipline, training, tactical competence, or professional education. Maintenance sits squarely in this category. To improve our maintenance culture, we need a better understanding.

History gives maintainers context. It shows that the challenges we face today — time pressure, limited resources, complex equipment, competing priorities — are not new. Soldiers in the Sinai desert, in North Africa, in Vietnam, and in Afghanistan all faced similar pressures.

What separated success from failure was not technology, but discipline, clarity, and a deep understanding of the fundamentals.

History also gives maintainers humility. Without historical grounding, it is easy to believe that our era is uniquely complex, that our equipment is uniquely advanced, and that our problems are uniquely difficult. DCA warns against this mindset. He points out that many officers have grown up with a shallow understanding of war, leading them to exaggerate the novelty of their experiences. The same risk applies to maintainers. When we believe our challenges are unprecedented, we stop learning from those who came before us.

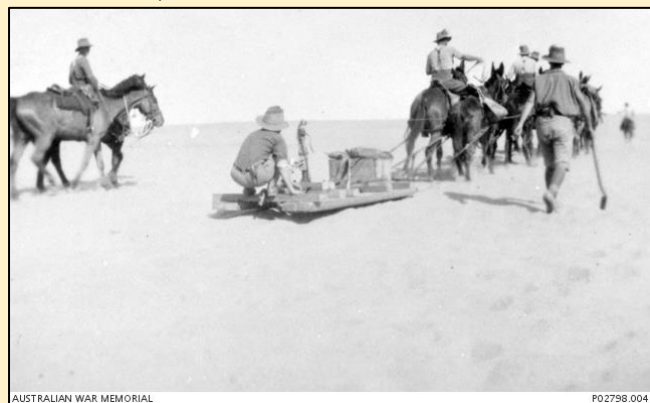
Finally, history gives maintainers perspective. It reminds us that maintenance is not an administrative activity — it is preparation for combat. A weapon that fails on the range is a frustration. A weapon that fails in contact is a death.

Case Study: The ANZAC Light Horse in the Sinai Campaign (1916–17)

The Sinai desert was one of the harshest environments Australian soldiers have ever fought in. Heat, sand, and distance were constant enemies. The Light Horse fought with rifles, bayonets, and horses — simple tools by modern standards, but tools that required relentless maintenance.

Rifle maintenance was a matter of survival. Sand can jam a bolt, foul a chamber, or ruin a firing pin. Soldiers cleaned their rifles constantly, often multiple times a day. They understood that a rifle that failed in contact meant death. They also maintained their horses with equal discipline. Water discipline, grooming, hoof care, and load management were all forms of maintenance. Without them, the Light Horse would have lost mobility, and without mobility, they would have lost the campaign.

The Light Horse succeeded not because they had superior technology, but because they had superior discipline. Their maintenance routines were simple, repeatable, and enforced. They understood the connection between maintenance and combat effectiveness. They did not need managerial language to describe it. They lived it.



Question:

1. What past-war examples can you find to teach about the consequences of poorly understanding fundamentals?

The Danger of Managerial Language in Technical Work

One of the most striking themes in DCA's address is his critique of the Army's language.

"We've never met an adjective or adverb we didn't like," he said. "We speak with unnecessary jargon & gibberish."

He gave examples of sentences so abstract that they could describe an advertising agency as easily as an army. This is not a trivial complaint. Language shapes thinking, and unclear language leads to unclear decisions.

For maintainers, the danger is even more acute. **Maintenance is a technical discipline.** It depends on precision, clarity, and shared understanding. When faults are described vaguely, when reports are padded with buzzwords, or when we talk about "effects" instead of specifics, critical details get buried. DCA's example of the Columbia shuttle disaster is a warning: engineering risks were hidden inside bullet points and abstract language. Senior decision-makers never saw the real danger because it was buried under managerial phrasing.

Maintenance demands clarity. A fault is either present or not. A vehicle is either serviceable or not. A risk is either acceptable or not. When we replace simple words with managerial ones, we lose connection to the reality of our work. We also lose the ability to communicate risk effectively. A maintainer who says "the platform is experiencing intermittent performance degradation" is not helping anyone. A maintainer who says "the engine cuts out under load" is.

Clear language is not optional. It is a form of discipline. It is also a form of integrity. When we speak plainly, we force ourselves to confront the truth of a situation. When we hide behind jargon, we hide from responsibility.

Case Study: The Desert Workshops at El Alamein (1942)

The North African campaign was a war of attrition fought across vast distances. Tanks, guns, and vehicles were consumed at staggering rates. The 9th Division's ability to hold and counterattack at El Alamein depended on the extraordinary work of forward maintenance teams.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

024932

These "desert workshops" operated within artillery range to reduce turnaround time. They cannibalised wrecks, improvised parts, and prioritised repairs based on tactical need. They worked under pressure, in heat, and often under fire. Their language was simple and direct. Faults were described plainly so repairs could be made quickly.

Rommel later remarked that Allied repair and recovery capability was "worth more than an extra armoured division." This was not hyperbole. Maintenance tempo decided battles. The ability to repair tanks faster than the enemy could destroy them shaped the operational tempo of the entire campaign.

The lesson for today is clear: maintenance is not a rear-area activity. It is a forward, combat-relevant function that shapes tempo and survivability. When maintenance is slow, the force is slow. When maintenance is agile, the force is agile.

Questions:

2. How often do you describe maintenance outcomes in abstract terms rather than concrete ones?
3. What parts of your craft have you allowed to atrophy because you assume that modern systems will compensate?

Maintenance and the Nature of War

DCA argues that many officers misunderstand war's violent essence.

"War is by definition an act of killing and destruction," he said. "Without violence, there is no war."

This may seem distant from maintenance, but it is not. **Maintenance exists to enable violence or survive it.** Every vehicle, weapon, radio, and system we maintain is designed to help soldiers fight, kill, or endure the enemy's attempts to do the same.

Understanding war's nature changes the way maintainers think about readiness. It shifts maintenance from a compliance activity to a combat activity. It reframes inspections, servicing, and repairs as acts of preparation for violence. It reminds maintainers that their work has consequences measured not in paperwork, but in lives.

This understanding also shapes priorities. **In war, not all faults are equal.** Some faults reduce comfort. Some reduce efficiency. Some kill. Maintainers who understand war's nature know the difference. They know which faults must be fixed immediately, which can be deferred, and which can be accepted. They know when to improvise, when to cannibalise, and when to push back against pressure to cut corners.

Questions:

4. How does your understanding of war's nature change the way you think about readiness?
5. How does current maintenance policy allow for you to ensure the operational tempo is maintained whilst managing associated risks?

Case Study: RAEME in Vietnam (1965–72)

Australian forces in Vietnam relied heavily on mobility and firepower. RAEME's mobile workshops were often the difference between a platoon being extracted safely or being overrun. They repaired APCs under fire, recovered vehicles from ambush sites, and kept helicopters flying in monsoon conditions.

One example is Operation Bribie, where APCs were hit by mines and small arms fire. RAEME teams recovered and repaired vehicles under fire, restoring mobility within hours. Their work allowed infantry to manoeuvre, evacuate casualties, and maintain pressure on the enemy.

These teams worked with minimal tools, improvised parts, and a deep understanding of the tactical situation. They did not wait for perfect conditions. They did not hide behind process. They understood that maintenance was a combat function, and they acted accordingly.



Simplicity: The Foundation of Effective Maintenance

Across all these examples, one theme stands out: simplicity. Historically, maintenance was governed by clear routines, plain language, direct supervision, and technical mastery. Soldiers understood their equipment, their environment, and their mission. They did not need complex language to describe simple truths.

DCA warns that modern Army language has become abstract. He points out that we use words like “provide” and “deliver effects” instead of “fight,” “kill,” “repair,” or “recover.” This abstraction disconnects us from the reality of our work. It also disconnects us from history.

Simplicity is not old-fashioned; it is effective. It is also safer. When language is simple, faults are understood. When routines are simple, they are followed. When priorities are simple, they are executed.

Questions:

6. What modern maintenance tasks have become more complicated in language than in reality?
7. What historical routines were simple, effective, and worth rediscovering?

Field Discipline and the Consequences of Complacency

DCA's examples from Rwanda and Afghanistan highlight the consequences of complacency. Soldiers who believed their behaviour was “normal drills” exposed themselves to unnecessary risk. They lacked historical perspective, and they lacked discipline.

The same risk exists in maintenance. When shortcuts become normal, when inspections become tick-and-flick, when faults are downplayed, when documentation is rushed, complacency takes root. **Maintenance discipline is field discipline.**

A soldier who cuts corners in the workshop will cut corners in the field. Likewise, a soldier who adheres to excessively long processes that add no value to the intended outcome can hinder effective maintenance. A leader who tolerates any poor or substandard maintenance will tolerate poor tactics.

History shows that armies with strong maintenance discipline fight longer, harder, and more effectively. Armies with weak maintenance discipline suffer avoidable casualties.

Case Study: Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003)

During the rapid advance to Baghdad, U.S. forces outran their supply lines. Maintenance units improvised a modern version of the WWII Red Ball Express — a high-tempo, high-risk sustainment effort that kept armoured columns moving.

They conducted repairs during halts, cannibalised vehicles, and made decisions at the lowest level. Junior NCOs prioritised repairs based on tactical need, not administrative neatness. Their language was clear, their decisions were fast, and their understanding of the battlefield was deep.

The lesson is simple: speed in war depends on maintenance agility. Bureaucracy kills tempo. Clarity enables it.



Questions:

8. Where have you normalised or where could you implement shortcuts?
9. What would a historical maintainer think of our current standards?
10. What do you need to do to identify, assess, report and improve maintenance practices in your workplace?

Rebuilding Integrity Through Historical Perspective

DCA argues that loss of historical understanding leads to loss of integrity. For maintainers, integrity means honest fault reporting, accurate documentation, and refusal to cut corners. It means admitting when equipment is not ready, even when pressured to say otherwise.

History reinforces this. In every conflict, the armies that maintained integrity in their maintenance systems — even under pressure — performed better. They avoided catastrophic failures. They preserved combat power. They saved lives.

Integrity is not a slogan; it is a habit. It is built through discipline, reinforced through leadership, and sustained through historical understanding.

Questions:

11. What maintenance processes used today are overly complex for no perceived gain?

12. Where can we return to principle-based maintenance?

Leadership and the Maintenance Culture

Leaders at every level shape maintenance culture. They set standards, enforce routines, and model behaviour. They decide whether maintenance is treated as a combat function or an administrative burden. They decide whether faults are addressed or ignored. They decide whether language is clear or abstract.

Leaders who understand history know that maintenance failures have strategic consequences. **They know that maintenance discipline is not optional.** They know that soldiers will follow their example, for better or worse.

Leaders must therefore speak plainly, enforce standards, and teach history. They must explain why routines matter, why shortcuts kill, and why maintenance is a combat function. They must connect the daily work of maintainers to the broader profession of arms.

Case Study: Major Claude Palmer – Leadership in 106 Field Workshop, Vietnam

Major Claude Palmer, OC 106 Fd Wksp, RAEME, demonstrated how strong maintenance leadership can directly shape combat effectiveness. Raised in theatre and operating under constant threat, his workshop became essential to the Task Force's ability to fight in Vietnam.

Palmer treated maintenance as a combat function. He pushed his teams forward, embedding them with armoured and infantry units so they could repair battle-damaged vehicles immediately. This forward posture enabled rapid recovery, including the eight-hour rebuild of a Centurion tank that had struck a Viet Cong mine — a repair made possible because Palmer had positioned an armoured mobile repair unit close behind the fighting troops.

His most significant achievement was leading the design and construction of anti-mine armour kits for Australian APCs. After repeated mine casualties, Palmer's team developed modifications that were tested, approved, and fielded quickly. According to the official account, these armour kits "saved many young soldiers from death and serious injuries".

Palmer also built a resilient, cohesive unit culture through humour, initiative, and community engagement. His leadership combined technical mastery, moral courage, and genuine care for his soldiers — a model for modern maintenance leaders.



Question: 13. On what fundamental elements or personal attributes do you base your leadership style?

Conclusion: Returning to the Fundamentals

History teaches us that maintenance is not a support function — it is a combat function. Simplicity is not old-fashioned — it is effective. Clear language is not optional — it is a form of discipline. Understanding war's nature is not abstract — it shapes every decision we make.

As DCA said, *"History isn't just the study of the past. It's an explanation of the present."*

For Army maintainers and leaders, it is also a guide to the future. If we study history, speak clearly, and return to the fundamentals, we will build a maintenance culture worthy of the profession of arms — one that keeps soldiers alive, keeps equipment ready, and keeps the Army capable of fighting and winning the nation's wars.

Learn to remember but remember to learn.

Questions:

14. If future historians studied our current maintenance culture, what would they say we consistently got wrong — and what would they praise us for?

15. What parts of your daily maintenance practice would still make sense in a high-intensity war — and what parts would collapse immediately under real operational pressure?

16. What can you do to improve your support to the Army?

Author: I Cook

Say 'Cheese'...

RAEME Photographic Competition

We know RAEME members are out there doing incredible work every day—now it's your turn to show it off. We're launching a brand-new RAEME Photography Competition, and we want to see the Corps through your lens.

Whether you're maintaining, recovering, fabricating, diagnosing, testing, or solving the impossible with a bit of RAEME ingenuity, capture the moment and send it in. Action, teamwork, problem-solving, craftsmanship—if it's real RAEME work, we want to see it.

The winner will be on the cover of the December Maintenance Matters.

✔ Photo Requirements

Portrait orientation preferred
The photo should have been taken recently

✔ How to Enter

Submit your photo using the link below:

<https://raeme.org.au/index.php/publications/newsletter/article-submission>.

Make sure you include "Photo Competition Entry" in the description box so we don't miss it.

Entries close: 05 November 2026

Grab your camera (or your phone), get creative, and show the Corps what RAEME looks like in action. We can't wait to see the moments you capture.

Let the competition begin



RAEME Crossword Solution

Across

[1] MILIS
[3] Fitter
[5] Grade
[7] Non-tech
[9] RPS
[10] Hook
[13] Repair
[15] Engineers
[17] Recovery
[20] Technician
[20] Artificer

Down

[1] Modify
[2] Crafty
[4] Sparkie
[6] Russ Cliffe
[8] Operator
[11] Operational
[12] Training
[14] Apprentices
[16] Boffin
[18] Design
[18] Overhaul

ADF Pay and Conditions News

Each month, the ADF update all members on the latest changes to ADF pay, benefits and conditions of service to help them stay informed about things that may affect them and their families. These updates outline what has changed in the most recent Defence Determination and are reflected in PACMAN.

Changes to Conditions of Service noted in [Defence Determination, Conditions of Service Amendment \(No. 1\) 2026](#), which took effect on 12 February 2026 include:



New support for members on short-term duty overseas

Defence has expanded the benefits available for members on short-term duty overseas. A close relative may now travel to the overseas location to make necessary arrangements and attend the funeral of a member who dies while on duty overseas.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the benefits for members on short-term duty overseas.

Expanded exemptions from casual meal charges

Members do not have to pay the casual meal charge to eat in a mess if they:

- have no resident family or recognised other persons, and
- are posted to a seagoing submarine and can't use the submarine's galley because it's unavailable.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the casual meal charges and the current rates.

Can't find what you're looking for? Try [PACMAN](#). The Pay and Conditions Manual is our source of truth and is designed for administrators and decision-making purposes.

Specified moving benefits for postings to RAAF Base Tindal

Members being posted to RAAF Base Tindal will now be eligible for a removal of their furniture and effects to an approved store when these items cannot be housed in their living-in accommodation (LIA) at the base.

Learn more about [moving and storing](#) your belongings, as well as the benefits for members who are [posted to remote locations](#).

Clarification of the impact of leasing a home to DHA

Defence have clarified the benefits available to members who are leasing their suitable own home to DHA.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the housing options and assistance available to members.

News from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)

Show your Veteran Card – get the care you deserve

[17 February 2026](#)

Health providers need to confirm what treatments are covered under your DVA entitlements. Showing your Veteran Card—physical or digital—helps providers understand your eligibility and prevents delays.

If you hold a Veteran White Card, bring details of your accepted conditions to your appointment. This helps them understand what treatment DVA will fund.

How to find your accepted conditions

- If you have linked MyService to your myGov account, you can view your accepted conditions under your DVA Veteran Card in MyService. From MyService you can generate a list of your accepted conditions to be saved as a PDF which you can choose to share with your provider.
- Step by step guidance to help you find your accepted conditions is in MyService, visit: [How to find your accepted conditions and check your legislation in MyService](#).
- If you don't have MyService it's easy to set up, visit the DVA website to [find out how](#).

- Call the Veteran Access Network on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) and ask us to send you a letter listing your accepted conditions.

Tips for a hassle-free visit

- Check before booking: Contact the health provider to find out whether they accept Veteran Cards before making the appointment.
- Keep records handy: Give permission to your GP or other regular health providers to store your accepted conditions in your health records. This makes future appointments easier.

Need help?

Support is available. If you're having trouble with MyService or unsure how to find your accepted conditions, DVA staff and Veteran Support Officers can assist. Contact DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). For further information on MyService visit <https://www.dva.gov.au/about-myservice>.

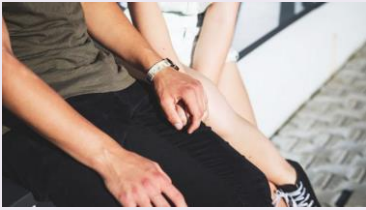
Treatment programs and Workshops

Open Arms offers a range of free group programs to assist the serving and ex-serving community, as well as their families, live their best life. Call 1800 011 046 to speak with an Open Arms staff member for assistance in finding the right program for you.

The following online courses are open to all members. Consider them to be preventative maintenance for your mental health.

[Click here](#) for further courses available in your region.

Course	Overview	Dates/Times
Sleeping Better 	A program to help you manage disturbed sleep Develop an understanding of the sleep process and factors impacting on sleep. Learn ways to reduce or eliminate factors detrimental to sleep and to introduce or enhance those beneficial to sleep. Explore and understand the impact of sleep disturbances on mood, behaviour and relationships.	Two 90-minute sessions on: • 12 & 14 May • 26 May, & 2 June • 9 & 16 June • 23 & 30 June Click here for more details
Stepping Out 	Stepping Out is a free, two-day group program designed to increase the awareness of important wellbeing, personal and social adjustment factors and to support ADF members and partners as they are transitioning, or who have transitioned, from the military to civilian life. Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses	A two-day program is run online on: • 18 & 19 March • 21 & 22 May
Managing Depression 	A program to help you understand and manage depression Learn about: Signs, symptoms and situations that contribute to depression; The impact of depression on the body, mind and relationships; and Evidenced-based strategies and techniques to better manage depression.	In-person only courses have been scheduled at this moment. Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses
Managing Anger 	A program to help you understand your anger better Learn how the components of anger interrelate and recognise individual triggers. Understand how emotions and cognitions impact anger. Develop skills and strategies to effectively manage your anger response. Build communication skills to increase effective communication and relationship dynamics. Develop a Personal Anger Management Plan.	Online courses include: • 19 March • 23 April • 21 May Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register your interest
Understanding Anxiety 	A program that teaches you strategies and skills for managing anxiety. Understand the impact of military training and experiences on anxiety. Learn strategies to challenge/change unhelpful thoughts and behaviours. Discover lifestyle factors for managing anxiety. Develop a Relapse Prevention Plan.	Online courses include: • 21 April • 02 June Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses

Course	Overview	Dates/Times
Recovery from Trauma 	A program to help understand and manage the impact of trauma on you and your family. Identify and reduce heightened physical responses to trauma. Manage avoidance behaviours and develop a strategy to safely confront fearful situations. Learn how to modify unhelpful thinking. Develop skills to improve relationships and meet healthy lifestyle goals.	Online courses include: • 05 May • 02 July Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses
Relaxation and stress management 	Practical skills that can be used in everyday life to de-stress. Discover mindfulness as a practice to shift focus from 'what has happened in the past' and 'what may happen in the future' to 'what is happening right now'. Learn strategies to alleviate a variety of conditions, including pain, stress and mild depression.	In-person only courses have been scheduled at this moment. Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses
Managing pain 	A program to help you learn about effective pain management strategies Understand the link between physical and psychological aspects of pain. Learn strategies to challenge/change unhelpful thoughts and behaviours. Discover important lifestyle factors for managing pain. Develop a Personal Pain Plan.	In-person only courses have been scheduled at this moment. Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses.
Building better relationships 	A program to help you rediscover what's important in your relationship and to rebuild a relationship with your partner. Focus on what works well to strengthen your relationship. Enhance the resilience of individual partners and the relationship. Create shared meaning through values and rituals of connection. Understand the emotions behind your partner's life dreams. Manage conflict positively and adopt a positive perspective.	In-person only courses have been scheduled at this moment. Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses.
Beating the blues 	A program to help you understand and manage depression. Understand the signs and symptoms, situations and thinking patterns that contribute to depression. Challenge unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours. Learn techniques to manage stress and depressed moods	In-person only courses have been scheduled at this moment. Please visit the Open Arms site for more details or to register interest for future courses



Call Open Arms

24 hours

1800-011-046

In One Page – How to Have a Successful Career in RAEME

Success in the Army is often measured by ranks attained, years served, technical mastery, postings held, beret colours, or commendations awarded. While these may be important, they don't tell the whole story. True success begins with defining what it means to you. Every career is unique, and the path to fulfillment depends on your own vision of where you want to go.

Define Success for Yourself

Success is not one-size-fits-all. For some, it may be command; for others, technical mastery, or simply being part of a team that makes a difference. Ask yourself: What does success look like for me? Once you know, you can chart a path toward it.

In RAEME, success is not just about personal achievement. It's about contributing to the Corps' mission: keeping the Army moving, fighting, and effective. Whether you're a Craftsman repairing vehicles in the field or a Major shaping maintenance policy, every Corps member plays a vital role in ensuring RAEME delivers on its motto: Arte et Marte — by skill and by fighting.

The Power of Mentorship

A mentor is someone whose skills, leadership, or approach you admire. They can be any rank, gender, or trade, and may be in your unit or across the nation. **Find that mentor** and don't hesitate to reach out — whether in person, by email, or over the phone. Be direct: tell them you respect how they do something and ask if they'd be willing to discuss your career plans.

If you're approached for advice, remember: someone sees qualities in you that they aspire to. Treat them with respect. A thoughtful response can shape another soldier's career.

Within RAEME, mentorship is especially powerful. Our Corps thrives on technical expertise, problem-solving, and innovation. Passing on knowledge ensures that the next generation of tradespeople and officers can uphold RAEME's reputation for excellence.

Planning Your Career Path

Career advisors and senior leaders are valuable resources, but they manage many people. The most effective career planning starts with you. Work out where you want your future to be and make a plan to get there.

For soldiers, if your goal is to be an ASM of a large workshop, identify the positions that provide the broad exposure needed to reach that target. For officers, think about the experiences that will prepare you for the roles you aspire to at every level, not just the next.

Understand the career guidance cycle and how it applies to you. Are you ready?

Use the Gazette to track upcoming positions. Instead of a short 3 to 5-year plan for your career interview, prepare a 10

to 15-year plan with specific units, roles and even position numbers. Presenting this to your career advisor makes their job easier and shows you're serious about your future.

In RAEME, career planning is about more than just progression. It's about ensuring you gain exposure to different levels of repair, different corps, and different operational environments. That breadth of experience makes you more effective — and more competitive.

Plan B: Flexibility in the Face of Change

We all have plans for success, but life sometimes gets in the way. In the Army, operational priorities, organisational needs, or unforeseen circumstances may steer you off your intended path. That's why it's critical to have a Plan B.

Review your goals regularly to ensure they remain achievable and feasible. Adjust your path, when necessary, but never lose sight of your ultimate vision. Flexibility is not failure — it's resilience.

RAEME's history is full of adaptability. From jungle warfare to modern mechanised operations, our Corps has always evolved. Your career should reflect that same spirit.

Never Stop Learning

Critically review your own knowledge strengths and weaknesses but be pragmatic and regularly review your goals. The Army is vast, with diverse opportunities across trades, corps, and units. Explore them. Learn how different corps operate, what maintenance they require, and the levels of repair involved.

Understand RAEME's role and capabilities. The more you learn, the more adaptable and valuable you become. Continuous learning is the hallmark of a successful career. In RAEME, it's also essential: technology changes rapidly, and our Corps must stay ahead to keep the Army operational.

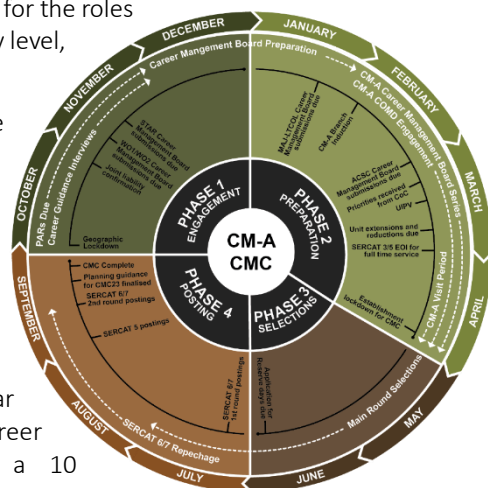
Every rank contributes to this and all members are part of a system that ensures the Army can fight and win. Success in RAEME means recognising that your contribution — whatever your rank — strengthens the Corps and the Army as a whole.

Final Thoughts

A successful career in RAEME is not just about climbing the rank ladder — it's about defining your own vision, seeking guidance from those who have more experience, planning deliberately, and embracing lifelong learning. Whether you're a Craftsman just starting out or a junior officer shaping your future, the principles remain the same: know what success means to you, take ownership of the journey, find a mentor and always have a plan as well as a Plan B.

Remember: even the current Chief of Army began his career as a soldier. His journey is proof that opportunities are endless — but only if you have a plan. A dream without a plan will remain a dream. A dream with a plan becomes a goal, and goals can be achieved.

Most importantly, remember that RAEME is a Corps built on teamwork. Every rank, every trade, and every posting contributes to the Army's ability to fight and win. Your success will not only be personal — it will strengthen RAEME, and through RAEME, the Army itself. Go for it!



Vale Notices

Our Corps has lost the following members in recent times. Full details of each member may be found at the [RAEME Vale page](#).

WO1 David “Dave” FRENCH (Retd)

WO1 French passed away on 04 March 2026 following an accident. Dave was an outstanding soldier and technician who dedicated much of his career to supporting Army Aviation capability. Through his professionalism, technical mastery and commitment to the highest maintenance standards, he played an important role in ensuring the safety and serviceability of Army aircraft.



216592 CPL Geoffrey Alan ASTLE (Retd)

Geoffrey Alan Astle passed over on the 02 March 2026 in Brisbane, aged 79. Geoff was born on 15 August 1946 in Sydney, New South Wales, and served as a Vehicle Mechanic with 7 RAR during the Vietnam War from 8 April 1967 to 26 April 1968, supporting Australian forces during a demanding period of operations. Click on Geoff's photo for more.



243400 CFN Kevin Brian PARKES (Retd)

Kevin passed away on 27 February 2026 in Townsville after a short battle with heart and lung failure. Born on 02 February 1948 at Kogarah, NSW, Kevin served as an Instrument Fitter in 161 (Indep) Recce Flight from 21 May 1969 until 30 April 1970. He also deployed to Vietnam in this role. Kevin is survived by his wife Bev, who is in a nursing home in Townsville, and his extended family members.



17048 LTCOL Claude Vivian Loftus PALMER (Retd)

LTCOL Palmer passed away on 23 Feb 2026. He was 91 years old. In recognition of his service to the Army and Corps, he was honoured by the Governor-General who officially named the 106 Fd Wksp facility after him. Claude requested no funeral however a memorial service was organised for him by the Southport RSL. Many who serve in our Corps aspire to greatness. Claude personified that ideal in his words and in his actions. A true soldier. A true leader. A true legend. RIP Claude.



13065 SGT Bryan Walter 'Chips' ROSS (Retd)

Bryan passed away on 19 February 2026, aged 96 years. Born on 15 July 1929 in Brisbane, Chips served for over 20 years. He saw operational service in Vietnam with 102 Fd Wksp from 9 April 1969 to 25 March 1970, Chips was buried on 5 March at Pinnaroo Crematorium and Lawn Cemetery, Bridgeman Downs.



Daniel Henry CLARKE

Daniel, or Danny as he was known to his mates passed away on 12 Feb 2026 aged 87 years old. Late of Dubbo, Danny was a 10th Intake Apprentice, who learnt his trade at Balcombe Army Camp, serving from 7 Jan 1955 to 7 Jan 1970. He is now together again with his beloved wife, Thelma. A loving father and father-in-law of Annette & Peter Bateman and Sharon (dec) & Geoffrey Pietsch, Danny adored being Pop to Kelly, Melissa, Mark, Ben and Kylie.



Sick Parade

We have received notification that the following Corps member is facing significant health concerns at the moment.

Brian “Bung” REARDON

Bung is under the care of the palliative team at The Toowoomba Base Hospital. He's having a lot of trouble with his hernia at the moment which is really annoying him. He's barely sleeping so he tries to get as many naps as he can throughout the day. Other than the hernia issue he is in fairly good spirits. Bung's daughter reports that he is still cracking jokes and as stubborn as ever.

WO1 Russ Cliffe

On Tues 10 Feb, Russ Cliffe suffered from a stroke that saw him hospitalised in Brisbane. He has since been moved to Rocky where he is likely to remain admitted for rehab for several weeks or even months. If you wish to visit him, please contact Rockhampton Base Hospital directly on 07-4920-6211. You can also deconflict your visits with others by entering your time on the visit schedule which can be accessed by [clicking this link](#). Russ has been thrilled to see those who have already visited him or speak to those who have phoned him.

How to provide welfare notifications

Please visit the [RAEME Welfare Notification page](#) to report the passing or change in health circumstances for any Corps member

WE WANT YOU!

RAEME

We want you to share your story with the rest of us.

We want you to tell us about what you have done, what you are doing, or what you are planning to do.

We want you to tell us about your role in the Army and how you contribute to strengthening the Army, especially if you are in one of those niche roles that many people don't know exists.

We want you to **win the \$50 prize** that will be awarded to the best submission each month.

We want you to submit your story **by the 5th of the month**. Great stories may be considered up until the 12th but after that, it will be in the next edition.

We want you to visit:

<https://raeme.org.au/index.php/publications/newsletter/article-submission>

**CLICK HERE FOR
GUIDANCE ON
HOW TO
SUBMIT**

STAY ON ► MOVE FORWARD