MAINTENANCE MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
EDITION 09 – OCTOBER 2026

Afghanistan – 2001-2021



MTF-1, Afghanistan, 2010. LAV Gunner/Combat First Aider (unnamed), CFN Gavin Jones (Vehicle Mechanic – rear), and CFN Shaun Nicholaas (Recovery Mechanic – front right wearing RAEME hat) carrying an ill ASLAV Crew Commander (unnamed) to a waiting US medivac helicopter. The Crew Commander had fallen ill after several days on an overwatch at the edge of the Green Zone. SGT Mark Unsworth (Armourer/Crew Commander – not in photo) was providing security to the rear with Infantry (also unseen in photo) to the flanks.

Image provided by CFN Gavin Jones. A similar image from the same incident was also published in *The Australian*.

OPERATION SLIPPER

25 Years Since Afghanistan – Honouring RAEME Service

This year marks 25 years since the first ADF personnel deployed to Afghanistan. For many Australians, the conflict is remembered through news reports, military operations and the sacrifices made by those who served. For RAEME, however, Afghanistan is also a story of tradesmen, artificers, engineers and logisticians who quietly ensured that combat capability remained available whenever and wherever it was needed.

From the earliest deployments in 2001 through to the end of Australia's military commitment, RAEME soldiers served across Afghanistan in a remarkable variety of roles. They repaired battle-damaged vehicles, recovered equipment from hostile environments, maintained weapons and communications systems, supported aviation operations, trained local personnel and provided the technical expertise that kept Australian operations moving. Whether serving from forward operating bases, mentoring Afghan security forces, supporting units or working within multinational HQs, RAEME members consistently lived up to the Corps motto of Arte et Marte.

Many of those who deployed will tell you that their proudest achievements were not the vehicles they repaired or the equipment they maintained, but the soldiers they supported. Every patrol that returned safely, every convoy that reached its destination and every mission that succeeded depended in part on the efforts of RAEME personnel working behind the scenes and at the leading edge. Their contribution ensured that Australian soldiers could operate effectively in one of the most demanding environments of the modern era.

Afghanistan was not without cost. Many serving and former members continue to carry the physical and emotional effects of their service. As we reflect on this anniversary, it is important that we continue to support one another. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength. If you are struggling, please reach out to your mates, your family, Open Arms, or the many support services available to veterans and their families.

While Afghanistan was a conflict, it was also a mission that sought to improve the safety and wellbeing of the Afghan people. Australian personnel contributed to the development of local security forces, improved access to education, supported infrastructure projects and helped create opportunities for communities affected by decades of conflict. RAEME members played a vital part in those efforts, often through mentoring, technical training and capacity building that extended beyond the immediate battlefield.

One enduring symbol of RAEME's commitment to Afghanistan can be found today in the Army Museum Bandiana. The War Horse sculpture, incorporating the RAEME badge and crafted in Afghanistan, stands as a tangible reminder of the ingenuity, resilience and spirit of the Corps during the campaign. More than just a piece of art, it represents the dedication of the men and women who served there and the bonds forged through shared hardship and purpose.

As we mark 25 years since the commencement of Australian operations in Afghanistan, we remember all those who served. We honour those who did not return, support those who continue to carry the burden of service, and recognise the thousands of RAEME members whose professionalism kept capability available when it mattered most.

Their service formed part of a proud chapter in the history of our Corps. Their legacy endures in the equipment they maintained, the soldiers they supported, the lives they influenced and the enduring spirit of the Bluebell.

Click here for an operational overview

Click here for details of a commemorative coin being released



Maintenance Matters

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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.

25th anniversary of Australian service in Afghanistan 2001-2021

Click here for details of the Commemorative Coin































ST ELIGIUS TROPHY 2026 – SHOWCASING EXCELLENCE

From 13–14 October 2026, Holsworthy Barracks hosted the third annual St Eligius Trophy competition, testing and developing the Army's Land Domain Support System Methods of Employment, with a strong focus on tactical maintenance. The top of the trophy is pictured below.



Named in honour of St Eligius, patron saint of the Corps, the event showcases the technical skills and leadership of our soldier-technicians and junior officers. Through challenges including contingency maintenance, battle damage repair, recovery practices, controlled parts exchange and rapid adaptation, participants demonstrated the ingenuity and resilience that keep Army moving.

This year saw fierce competition between teams from the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Brigades along with teams from the 17th Sustainment Brigade and Special Operations Command. Following a demanding program that started with a day of rehearsals. The 14-hour activity day started at 0430h with a 90-minute PT session! It culminated in a formal dinner and presentation ceremony with Head of Corps, the Representative Colonel Commandant, the RSM-A, a former mechanic, and the Corps RSM present. **7 Brigade emerged as the overall winner**.



Now in its third year, the St Eligius Trophy competition is establishing a strong tradition of building the skills, confidence and capability needed for future operations. Congratulations to all participants, organisers, support staff and the hosting unit.









IMPENDING EVENTS

Planned RAEME gatherings across Australia for the next few months are summarised below. For further details on any events shown, 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 mbrs:** 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 advance planning, including reunions, may be highlighted below, as are days of national significance.

October

Mon 19th	Day of Reflection	War Widows Day	War Widows Day is a reminder of Australia's history and the ongoing contributions of the families of our veterans.
Tues 27th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h
Fri 30th	Adelaide	All Ranks Log Dinner	**Venue**: Barton Room, Caledonian Hotel, 215 O'Connell Street, North Adelaide, from 1830 h for 1900 h **Dress**: Coat and tie with medals **Tickets**: Click here to book your ticket.

November

Sat 01st	Perth	Annual General Meeting and Social Gathering	Ibis Hotel, Rubix Bar from 1300h
Wed 04th	Wodonga	Coffee Morning	Wodonga Plant Farm from 1000h
	Brisbane	RAQ Monthly Meeting	Kedron Wavell Services Club from 1730h
Thurs 05th	Melbourne	Spanner Club	Ladida, 577 Little Bourke St from 1600h
Wed 11th	Day of Reflection	Remembrance Day	It's a day when we acknowledge those who died or suffered while serving in wars, conflicts and peace operations.
Thurs 12th	Ingleburn	NSW Committee Meeting and Casual Luncheon	Ingleburn RSL Club
	Melbourne	Spanner Club	Ladida from 1600h
Fri 13th	Canberra	End-of-Year Dinner	Barker St Social (formerly Gyphonn's Bar and Caffe) from 1800h
Sun 15th	Toowoomba	RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon	City Golf Club from 1200h
Sun 22nd	Sunshine Coast	RAQ Gathering Sunshine Coast	Brightwater Hotel from 1200h
Tues 24th	Canberra	Mixed Drinks	Gungahlin Lakes Golf Club from 1930h
Fri 27th	Brisbane	Women in RAEME (WIR4)	Ship Inn, Brisbane

December

Tues 01st	Nationwide	RAEME's 84th Birthday	Details provided separately
Sat 12th	Townsville	10 Term Regt Workshop Reunion	The Vale Hotel from 1200h. The POC for this is Steve Murphy – stevemurphy2528@gmail.com

RAEME BIRTHDAY PLANS

RAEME's 84th Birthday Celebration Plans

Whilst the plans for RAEME Birthday are still being locked in nation-wide, the following is provided for planning purposes. Individual RAEME Associations or Regional RAEME Representatives should be contacted to confirm final details for each region.

ACT - Canberra

Date: Fri 27 Nov

What: RAEME Birthday Spanner Club and Sausage Sizzle

When: 1600h for 1630h

Where: RMC Golf Club, Calculus Lane, Duntroon

Who: All Association members, visitors and guests

Cost: Self-funded drinks. Sausage sizzle by donation only

Details: Click here for more info.

NSW – Ingleburn

Date: Fri 27 Nov

What: 84th Birthday BBQ

When: 1200 for 1230h. BBQ to commence at 1300h.

Where: Ingleburn RSL Club, Memorial Gardens

Who: All members of the Corps past and present, their partners, friends and friends of RAEME

Cost: $15 per person

Dress: Smart casual

Details: Click here for more info, including payment details.

NSW – Holsworthy

Date: Fri 27 Nov

What: Cart race, spanner throw , tug of war, raffle, trade stalls, BBQ, freebies and more

When: 0930 – 1730h

Where: Holsworthy Barracks (Unit location TBC)

Who: All serving members in the region and all civilian members as coordinated with the organisers or through the RAEME Association NSW.

Details: Further details will be provided when confirmed



Qld – Brisbane

Date: Sun 29 Nov

What: All Ranks 84th Corps Birthday Luncheon

When: From 1130 for 1230h start until 1700h

Where: Port Office Hotel

Meal: Entree, Main, dessert (cake) tea and coffee. Drinks TBA

Dress: Smart Casual

Cost: TBA

Details: Click here for more info and to RSVP.

Qld – Townsville

Date: Tues 01 Dec

What: Planned activities include volleyball, tug-of-war, chain-of-command relays, go-kart racing, displays, along with food and drinks throughout the day.

When: 0800-1600h

Where: 4 Regt, Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV) Workshop

Details: Click here for more info.

Qld – Darling Downs

Date: Sun 15 Nov

What: Luncheon

When: 1200-1600h

Where: City Golf Club

Cost: Self-funded

Details: Click here for more info and to RSVP.

Qld – Sunshine Coast

Date: Sun 22 Nov

What: Luncheon with lucky door prizes

When: 1200-1700h

Where: Brightwater Hotel

Cost: Self-funded

Details: Click here for more info and to RSVP.

RAEME BIRTHDAY PLANS

Qld – Oakey

Date: Fri 27 Nov

What: Dinner hosted by Rotary Wing Aviation Maint School

When: 1700-2359h

Where: CH-47 Training Hanger, Swartz Barracksl

Cost: RAMs Trainees $60; Others $75 per person

Details: Click here for more info and to book tickets

Qld – Enoggera

All details are yet to be promulgated.



WA – Perth

Date: Fri 04 Dec

What: Cocktail Party

When: 1900-2200h

Where: ANZAC House

Cost: Food is being subsidised by the WA Association, with a Cash Bar.

Details: Click here for more info and to RSVP.

Tasmania – Hobart

Date: Sun 29 Nov

What: Luncheon with raffle of a 2025 RAEME Malt Whiskey.

When: From 1200 for 1230h.

Where: South Arm RSL

Cost: Lunch self-funded. Tickets will be available from 1 November 2026, priced at $2 each or 3 for $5.

POC: Contact Rolly via email (sadakr@gmail.com) if you can make it on the day.

Details: Click here for more info.

Victoria – Melbourne

Date: Sat 28 Nov

What: RAEME Birthday Muster

Events: Marching in RAEME and Australian Flags; lighting of a remembrance candle; Ode; formal welcome; Dinner service; Guest speakers on the East Timor, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan Conflicts.

When: From 1600h onwards

Where: Warragul RSL

Cost: $30 per person

Dress: Suit or smart casual for men, smart casual for ladies.

Details: Contact Paul Turner on 0402-013-137 for more info.

Victoria – Bandiana

Date: Tues 01 Dec

What: A variety of competitions, formalities and activities which may include: Siege Equipment Launch, Vehicle Display (Show and Shine), Tug-of-War, Volleyball, Spanner Toss, Bill-eKart Race, PT/Strength Challenge, Chain of Command Relay, Civilian food vendors and BBQ

When: Timings TBC

Where: ASEME at Gaza Ridge Barracks, North Bandiana

Dress: Wing / RAEME PT Attire or as directed by event OICs. Neat civilian attire for guests.

Details: Click here for more info, including payment details.

SA – Adelaide

Date: Sat 28 Nov

What: RAEME Birthday / AGM

When: AGM from 1000h. Birthday from 1200h.

Where: West Adelaide Football Club

Details: Click here for more info and to RSVP.

NT – Darwin

All details are yet to be promulgated.



OUR PEOPLE

Welcome to the family

From The Springfield Anglican College (TSAC), Springfield, SE-Qld.



What began as encouragement from his parents to join the Australian Air Force Cadets while at TSAC became the first step towards a career in the Australian Defence Force for Arjun Prabhukumar. During his six years in cadets, Arjun rose to the rank of Cadet Warrant Officer and earned both the Overall Drill Excellence Award and Commanding Officer's Commendation Award.

Just one year after graduating from TSAC, Arjun has taken the next step towards his goal of serving in the Australian Defence Force, graduating from Kapooka in July and now undertaking specialist training as an Avionics Technician with RAEME. Reflecting on the journey, Arjun says three words define his experience: patience, commitment and evolving.

Congratulations, Arjun. We're proud to see you turning ambition into action and wish you every success in your military career.

Milestone Birthday of a Recovery Legend

On 03 Oct, Recovery legend Peter Sandilands celebrated his 80th birthday with good mates by his side.



Former RAEME members celebrating Pete 'Sandy' Sandilands' 80th birthday . L/R front row, Mark Hayden, Sandy, Mick Shanahan Back row L/R Chris Newman, Peter Yates, Ian Spargo, Ken Smallacombe.

Peter was a long-standing member of the Corps who served extensively through the ranks and he was instrumental in the training and mentoring of many junior tradesmen. He is currently living on the Sunshine Coast and remaining active whilst dealing with some significant health challenges. Happy Birthday, Sandy!

Second Federation for Tasmanian Crafty

CFN Nigel Fox was recently presented with his second Federation star for 45 years of service in the Army.



COL Andrew Herbert making the presentation to CFN Fox

CFN Fox enlisted in the Australian Army on 13 January 1981. At the completion of initial training, he was allocated to the corps of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. CFN Fox has performed a wide range of duties across a number of units and served operationally in East Timor.

Congratulations on being awarded your second Federation Star for your commitment and dedication to the service of our Nation within the Australian Army!

Leading from the front

Throughout October, our Representative Colonel Commandant, BRIG Ed Smeaton, will be participating in the Bravery Trek, which means he will be completing a 240km walk/run/cycle to raise funds for veterans.

If your situation permits, you may wish to make a donation to Ed and his team so they can raise money to support veterans. You can find details at: https://braverytrek.com.au/ed-smeaton



OUR PEOPLE

Recognising Recovery Brilliance

It was a big week for ASEME's Recovery Platoon (plus or minus) in early October.

Recovery Platoon and members who have assisted through the year, were recognised for their efforts in regard to building capability (Max DTR over the last four courses), A high volume of additional tasks not within their scope and maintaining high standards of training all while under-resourced and under-staffed.

In recognition of their efforts, Recovery Platoon received the TEAM ARMY award for 2026. Recognised members included:

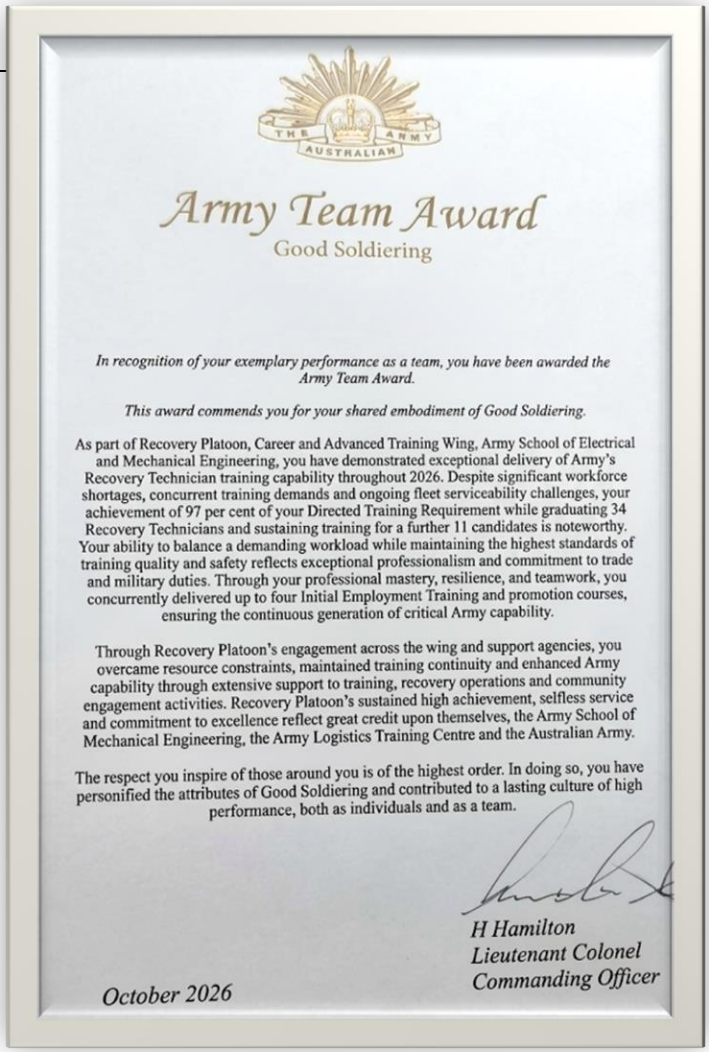
- WO1 Wynd
- WO1 Huckel
- WO2 White
- WO2 Clune
- WO2 Currey
- SGT McCarthy
- SGT Adams
- SGT Lowe
- SGT Smith
- SGT Warsing
- CPL Sims



The award this month for the best submission goes to the author if this article, not for the article itself but the high-quality photos here and for the Recovery Reunion report (Page 13)

We should also take this time to congratulate WO2 Peter White on his Second Clasp to the DLSM and SGT Ricky Lowe for his receipt of a CO's commendation for his outstanding performance at ACW.

Solid effort to all involved.



THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

Army Team Award

Good Soldiering

In recognition of your exemplary performance as a team, you have been awarded the Army Team Award.

This award commends you for your shared embodiment of Good Soldiering.

As part of Recovery Platoon, Career and Advanced Training Wing, Army School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, you have demonstrated exceptional delivery of Army's Recovery Technician training capability throughout 2026. Despite significant workforce shortages, concurrent training demands and ongoing fleet serviceability challenges, your achievement of 97 per cent of your Directed Training Requirement while graduating 34 Recovery Technicians and sustaining training for a further 11 candidates is noteworthy. Your ability to balance a demanding workload while maintaining the highest standards of training quality and safety reflects exceptional professionalism and commitment to trade and military duties. Through your professional mastery, resilience, and teamwork, you concurrently delivered up to four Initial Employment Training and promotion courses, ensuring the continuous generation of critical Army capability.

Through Recovery Platoon's engagement across the wing and support agencies, you overcame resource constraints, maintained training continuity and enhanced Army capability through extensive support to training, recovery operations and community engagement activities. Recovery Platoon's sustained high achievement, selfless service and commitment to excellence reflect great credit upon themselves, the Army School of Mechanical Engineering, the Army Logistics Training Centre and the Australian Army.

The respect you inspire of those around you is of the highest order. In doing so, you have personified the attributes of Good Soldiering and contributed to a lasting culture of high performance, both as individuals and as a team.

H Hamilton
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer

October 2026







ANNOUNCEMENTS

Support RAEME Member and Artist Matt Redwood in the People's Choice Award



We are proud to share that Matt Redwood has been selected as a finalist in the 2026 Napier Waller Art Prize for his powerful work, *Generations of Conflict*.

The Napier Waller Art Prize, presented by the Australian War Memorial, is open to current and former Australian Defence Force personnel. The prize encourages artistic excellence, promotes the transformative power of creativity, and raises awareness of the experiences and talents of service personnel.

Matt's artwork explores the enduring effects of military service across generations and reflects themes that will resonate with many within the RAEME family. Being selected as a finalist is a significant achievement, and all shortlisted works are eligible for the People's Choice Award, which is decided by public vote.



We encourage all members, veterans, families and friends of the Corps to take a few moments to view Matt's artwork and cast their vote in support of him. Supporting veteran artists is an important way to recognise the many talents, experiences and stories that exist within our Defence community.

Please consider sharing the link below with your family, friends and social networks. Every vote helps recognise Matt's achievement and supports the wider veteran community through one of Australia's most respected military art prizes.

Vote here: https://www.awm.gov.au/napier-waller-art-prize-hub/2026/generations-conflict

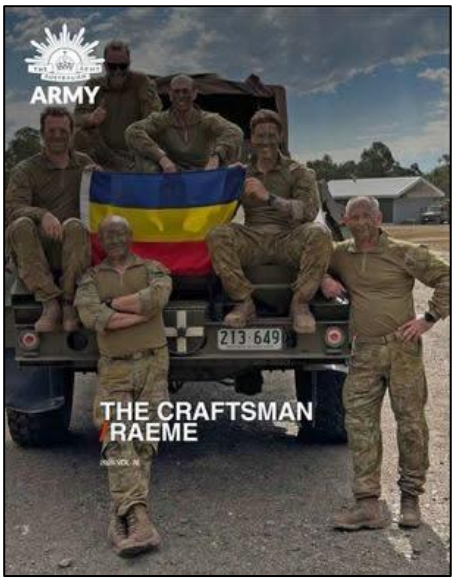






The RAEME Craftsman magazine – 2026 Edition – Call for Submissions

Work is now underway for the 2026 edition of The Craftsman, and we are inviting contributions from across the Corps, the wider Defence community, and our veteran network. This annual journal is one of RAEME's most important historical records, capturing the achievements, challenges, innovations and stories that define who we are. Every article, photo and reflection helps preserve our heritage and ensures future generations understand the depth and diversity of our Corps.



The editorial team will welcome submissions covering unit activities, capability developments, technical innovation, training achievements, operational experiences, Corps history, and personal reflections on service. Articles from all ranks and all ECNs are encouraged, as are contributions from associations and retired members. If you have a story worth telling, a lesson worth sharing, or an achievement worth celebrating, we want to hear from you.

To submit content, please send articles and images to raeme.hoccell@defence.gov.au or contact the Editor, WO1 David Clarke, directly. The deadline for the 2026 edition is 11 December 2026. Photos can be embedded in your Word doc. However, it is important that you also submit the photos separately as they lose resolution when added from a Word doc. DO NOT include photos taken from publications or the internet!

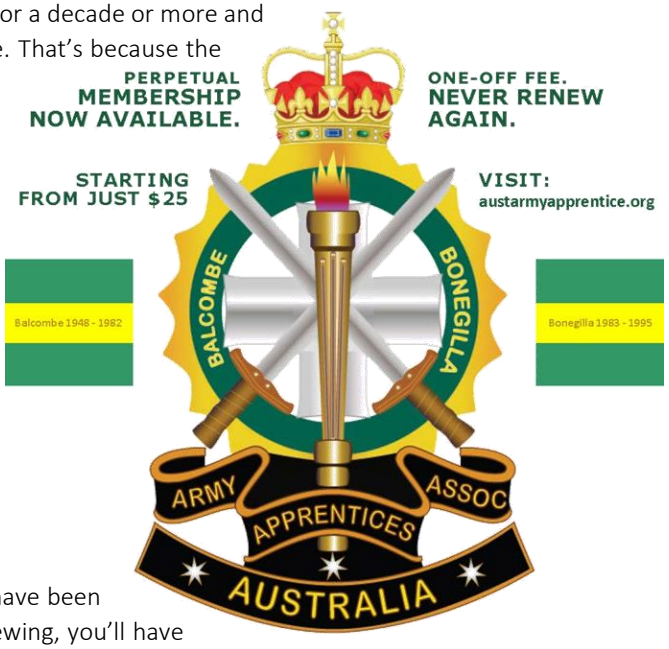
Your stories are the heartbeat of our Corps. Help us capture another year of RAEME excellence.

Click here to download the 2025 edition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Apprentice Association launches Perpetual Membership

If you've been a member of the Australian Army Apprentices Association for a decade or more and find a renewal reminder in your inbox, you might be in for a nice surprise. That's because the Apprentice Association has now introduced Perpetual Membership, which operates much like life subscriber status, that is, you'll never have to renew your Apprentices Association membership ever again.



Anyone eligible for Ordinary Membership, i.e. anyone who held the rank of Apprentice at either Balcombe or Bonegilla, is also eligible to become a Perpetual Member.

Perpetual Membership fees are tiered according to the number of years you have been a financial member. If you have remained financial for:

- More than 10 years - $25
- Between 5-10 years - $125
- Less than 5 years - $225
- New members - $225 + $10 joining fee.

Perpetual Membership is a no-brainer for the vast majority of members have been financial for 10 or more years. The cost saving is substantial. And by renewing, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're making a valuable contribution to the maintenance of the Australian Army Apprentices Memorial at Bandiana and Army Apprentice School heritage. Members also benefit from the Association's public liability insurance coverage for events, which offers peace of mind for anyone organising an Apprentice reunion.

If you have any questions or need help with converting your membership, reach out to the Association's Membership Secretary Graeme Smail on 0438 212964 or email him at membership@austarmyapprentice.org.

Can You Help? Iraq and Afghanistan Project



This is a fishing expedition on behalf of RAEME member, Jeff Biddle.

Jeff's local RSL Sub Branch is developing a memorial to honour Australian Defence Force personnel who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. A veteran involved with the project suggested that incorporating a component from a Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle that had seen operational service would provide a fitting and meaningful tribute.

Jeff is seeking advice about whether obtaining such a component may be possible and, if so, where the Sub Branch should begin its enquiries.

Members with knowledge of Bushmaster fleet management, Defence disposals, heritage collections or other relevant contacts are invited to assist. Even advice about the appropriate organisation or person to approach would be greatly appreciated.

Anyone who may be able to help can contact Jeff Biddle through Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/jeffrey.m.biddle

Image: Craftsman Cody Hunt, a vehicle mechanic with Task Group Afghanistan, prepares for another shift in the workshops at Camp Qargha, near Kabul, while deployed on Operation Highroad 2018

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RAEME Port – Stock limited

The 2026 RAEME Craftsman Series, featuring this year's commemorative Craftsman Port (Tawny) and Single Malt Whisky is available to purchase. This special release honours the dedication, professionalism, and enduring legacy of RAEME soldiers past and present, while celebrating the proud history and traditions of the Corps. The 2026 Craftsman Series commemorates:

- 125 years of the Australian Army
- 84 years of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
- 40 years of the Prince Philip Banner

Special recognition should also go to WO1 Marcellin Chee and WO1 Marc Craigie, who have been instrumental in driving and coordinating this year's release. Their work behind the scenes has helped bring together a fitting commemorative product that reflects the heritage, pride, and craftsmanship of the Corps.

Product Details

- 700 ml Craftsman Port (Tawny) – $60.00- Available
- 700 ml Single Malt Whisky – $87.00- Available
- Postage – $19 (up to 6 bottles)

PLEASE NOTE – Maximum purchase of six bottles per order, in any combination.

Delivery will occur in batches throughout 2026.



CHIEF'S SON DISTILLERY

How to Order

To place an order, please scan the QR code or click on this link.

All orders will be delivered directly to your door.

Orders are now open, with **final orders closing on 31 October** unless sold out sooner.

Veterans Grants Available

Community-Led Projects to Strengthen Veteran Wellbeing

Veterans and families of veterans across Australia will soon benefit from more projects and activities that support their health, wellbeing and social connection. The Australian Government has opened applications for the 2026-27 Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program with more than $3.7 million in funding available.

The VWG Program supports sustainable projects that improve health and wellbeing outcomes, strengthen community connections and raise awareness of issues affecting the veteran community.

Eligible organisations can apply for:

- **Small Grants** of up to $50,000 for local, community-based projects and activities that support safe and accessible environments for veterans and families of veterans.
- **Large Grants** of between $50,001 and $200,000 for broader initiatives that improve health and wellbeing, strengthen social connection, build community capacity, expand existing services and raise awareness of issues affecting veterans and families of veterans.

In the previous funding round, grants supported a diverse range of initiatives, including family and veteran wellbeing camps, outdoor recreation programs, Indigenous-led wellbeing projects for First Nations veterans, trauma-informed yoga workshops, inclusive sports programs and the Dance for Veterans program.

Applications will close on 10 November 2026. Organisations interested in applying are encouraged to carefully review the updated Guidelines and submit applications that clearly demonstrate wellbeing outcomes for veterans and families.

To learn more about the program, visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs website.

Source: https://minister.dva.gov.au/news-and-media/minister/community-led-projects-strengthen-veteran-wellbeing

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rifle Company Butterworth Recognition



The Minister for Defence Personnel, Matt Keogh, recently announced that the Australian Government will reclassify service at Butterworth in Malaysia between 1970 and 1989 as 'non-warlike service', replacing the previous 'peacetime service' classification.

This decision acknowledges the unique environment in which Australian Defence Force personnel served while protecting RAAF Base Butterworth and supporting Australia's longstanding security commitment in the region.

Click here for more information.

Women in RAEME 2026

The RAEME Association Queensland warmly invites you to Women in RAEME 2026, celebrating the achievements and contributions of women across RAEME, Defence and industry. Everyone is welcome, including veterans and their families, serving ADF members, Defence and industry representatives, members of the wider business community, friends and supporters.

Join us at The Ship Inn, South Brisbane, on Friday, 27 November 2026, from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm, for inspirational speakers, canapés and a lucky door prize in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Tickets are $25 per person. Places are limited, so early registration is strongly encouraged. See the *Impending Events* page for more details



Our guest speaker: Melanie Annand, President of Women Veterans Network Australia

We're pleased to announce Melanie Annand as our latest guest speaker. A Royal Australian Navy veteran, mental health support worker and advocate, Melanie brings more than 16 years' experience supporting veterans and their families across Australia.

As President of Women Veterans Network Australia, Melanie provides national leadership focused on recognition, connection and better outcomes for women who have served. Her work spans veteran wellbeing, welfare advocacy, crisis support and community connection, with a strong commitment to trauma-informed, person-centred support.

Melanie has also contributed to national discussions and submissions on veteran wellbeing, military sexual trauma and service system reform, including contributions to the Australian Human Rights Commission and parliamentary inquiry processes. She is an Associate Investigator with Phoenix Australia and an advisory partner with La Trobe University on research relating to military sexual trauma among serving and former Australian Defence Force members. Melanie's contribution to the veteran community has been recognised through several honours, including Life Membership with RSL Australia for more than 15 years of dedicated service to veterans and their families.

We look forward to hearing Melanie's perspectives on supporting women veterans, strengthening community connections and advocating for meaningful, long-term change.

Also joining us: Julie Fedorniak, retired Warrant Officer Class Two



Julie's 21-year Australian Army career encompassed vehicle maintenance, technical leadership and training. After initially serving in the Royal Australian Corps of Transport, she transferred to RAEME in 1988 and qualified as a vehicle mechanic. Her postings included Townsville, Bandiana and Darwin. At the 5th Aviation Regiment, she became the regiment's first female "black trades" Artificer Sergeant Major. Following her Army service, Julie moved into civilian fleet management as Fleet Manager at James Cook University.

Julie will share her experiences of life in RAEME and the transition from military service to civilian fleet management.

Lieutenant Colonel Alison Lee, CSM (Retd)



An aeronautical engineer and former senior Army officer, Alison's distinguished career included operational service in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. As Officer Commanding Technical Support Squadron at the 5th Aviation Regiment, she coordinated aviation maintenance, supported operational deployments and oversaw the introduction of the MRH-90 Taipan. She was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal in recognition of her achievements and service. After retiring from the Army in 2013, Alison held senior defence industry roles and is now Head of Logistics – Australia for PentenAmio. She brings valuable insights into military service, aviation engineering and defence industry leadership.

RAEME NATIONWIDE

RAEME NQ Gathering

On Sat 19 Sept, the N-Qld crew held their latest gathering at the Fairfield Hotel, Townsville. They had a great turnout with around 70 Bluebells attending.

Raffle prize winners were:

- Member $100 draws: Chris Renall and Dave Packer
- $100 Taverns meat tray voucher: Michael "Juggs" Maloney
- Wine rack and two bottles of wine (donated by Bob Lauro): Tank Pontifex.



Thanks to the very welcoming staff of Fairfield for a great day.

Click here for more photos.

WA Newsletter

The WA Association recently released their newsletter, the *Horse's Mouth*.

In this edition, they provide a couple of interesting stories, including one about the late Don Horsely; a highly respected Corps member who his mates summed him up simply: "He was RAEME.";

Click here to get your copy.



The word from the Horse's Mouth

The Newsletter of the RAEME Association of WA

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What the Prez Sez

Welcome to the spring edition of the Horse's Mouth for 2026. Winter is gone and Summer is just around the corner, so make the most of Spring while you can!

I would like to thank Stino for the opportunity for our RAEME family to watch the footy at his place. I won't be there unfortunately but I ask you all to take some photos to remember it, no matter who wins. I will however be at the IBIS for our AGM on Saturday, 01 Nov and would be keen to see you all there.

We are also going to celebrate the RAEME birthday again with a Cocktail Party at RSL House on Friday, 4 Dec. (My tip - book and pay for your tickets at the AGM.)

SA Association REME Birthday

RAEME ASSN SA recently celebrated REME's birthday with their REME mates at the Cooper's Ale House Gepps Cross.





RAEME NATIONWIDE

Recovery Reunion 2026

A Recovery Mechanic reunion was held over 18-19 Sept at the Recovery School, North Bandiana. A great turnout of all generations attended. The crew witnessed new capability, visited the Museum, attended Friday night dinner and finished with BBQ at the Sergeant's Mess on South Bandiana. Thanks to everyone who travelled, and a special shout-out to the Staff at Recovery Pl for facilitating a great event. Can confirm no crayons were licked or eaten during the event. Here are some photos from the event.



RAEME NATIONWIDE

WA Family Get-together

The long weekend at the end of September was a great get-together for some of the WcA RAEME family sharing more than a few tall stories, laughs and drinks.



Mower races with 'Bruce' and 'Arty-Ficer' were a hit with the Swagmen...and Swagwomen as they chased Jolly Jumbucks around the Barragup Billabong. Ray Wharton had the best overall lap time but we suspect a few corners were cut...The race between Brycey and Kev Lawler was the only legit race with Brycey ahead with a six-second lead.



The 'Floating Spanner Throw' was hilarious. The dog decided to join in too.

- Gold medal: Alex Smithers
- Silver: Stino
- Bronze medal: Kev Lawler.





A special mention must go out to Alex Smithers for his efforts in recovering the Spanner after every throw.

A great team effort for a hearty campfire cook-off with a ripper stew, curry and damper. Al Surjan's famous home-made bacon was also a hit two days running.



Sunday was a great pub lunch at the Pinjarra Exchange Hotel before a hang out on the Pinjarra Suspension Bridge built by 22 Construction Squadron.





Planning for 2027 RAEME Retreat has started already. Looking forward to seeing some new faces along with our regulars.

More details and photos from this amazing event will be published in due course by the WA Association.

Keep an eye out for it in the next *Horse's Mouth* newsletter.

Great work WA Team!

ALTC Happenings

From a prank lucky door prize to a treasured piece of Army history…

Yesterday, the 23rd Intake of Army Apprentices returned to Bandiana to formally present their iconic “Lucky Door” to the Army Museum Bandiana, ensuring the story of their intake and the friendships it forged will be preserved for future generations.



Handcrafted by members of the intake, the door carries the names of every apprentice from the 23rd Intake alongside a poppy honouring those who have since passed away.



What began as a tongue-in-cheek reunion prop, inspired by a famously rigged "lucky door prize" raffle involving an actual car door, evolved into a symbol of mateship, memories and a brotherhood spanning nearly six decades.



As intake spokesman James Atkin reflected, many of the group have remained close since joining the Army in 1968, sharing life's biggest moments together, from weddings and children to reunions more than 50 years later. He described the door as representing "the camaraderie of our intake" and one of the many stories that still brings a smile to those who were there.

Commanding Officer Hans Hamilton said the presentation highlighted the enduring bonds formed through Army service. As he observed, "the apprentices scheme was the cream of Australian youth", with friendships formed early and strengthened through shared experiences that continue to bring the group together decades later. He noted that it always amazes him how Army relationships become "these amazing bonds, unbreakable bonds that last decades."



A fantastic day of stories, laughs, memories and a healthy dose of apprentice larrikinism.

Thank you to the 23rd Intake for entrusting the Lucky Door to the museum and for reminding us that while skills and trades may start a career, it's the people and friendships that stay with you forever.

RAEME NATIONWIDE

RAEME in Defence News

The following stories have been published by Defence in various forms, including Army News. Links to the full, original stories are provided where they are available.

Rough terrain, important mission – Qld to SA



Above: Soldiers from 7 CSSB prepare to support the 2026 Great Endeavour Rally.

A team of 13 vehicle technicians from 7 CSSB took on the ultimate outback challenge while supporting the 2026 Great Endeavour Rally.

The rally travelled along a gruelling 3,500-kilometre route from Toowoomba, Queensland, to Mount Dare in South Australia. Crossing red dirt, creeks and remote outback tracks, the team provided vital mechanical support to keep rally participants moving through some of Australia's most demanding terrain.



Above left: Mechanics from 7 CSSB carry out running repairs on a rally vehicle, helping to keep participants moving throughout the challenging 3,500-kilometre outback journey.
Above right: A member of the 7 CSSB support team presents RAEME merchandise to a young supporter during the 2026 Great Endeavour Rally.

Along the way, the team also engaged with regional and remote communities, proudly representing the Australian Army and the Corps of Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

The RAEME Association Queensland provided additional Corps merchandise to support the team during the rally and help promote the RAEME spirit throughout the journey.

Most importantly, this epic outback adventure helped raise crucial funds for the Endeavour Foundation, supporting lifestyle, learning and employment opportunities for people with disability.



Above: The team reached Opalton in outback Queensland

Congratulations to the members of 7 CSSB on completing this challenging and worthwhile journey. Their efforts demonstrated the technical expertise, adaptability and determination for which RAEME personnel are renowned, delivering practical support across rough terrain in aid of an important mission.

2026 QLD Employer Support Awards – Brisbane



Commander 11th Brigade, BRIG Mark Smith, CSC (middle), presenting the winner's certificate for the Defence Public Sector category at the 2026 Qld Employer Support Awards to LTCOL Isaac Leong of the Cargo Helicopter Management Unit (left) and Captain Aaron Gallagher (right) in Brisbane, Queensland.

The ADF Reserves and Employer Support Awards were held on 1 September 2026, at the United Services Club in Brisbane. The awards formally recognise the commitment of civilian employers to supporting reservists in their workplaces. The event acknowledges employers that have gone above and beyond for their reservist employees over a sustained period, enabling members to complete Reserve commitments.

The Employer Support Awards are held in each state and territory. Categories include small, medium and large private-sector employers, the public sector, the Defence public sector and not-for-profit organisations. Awards were presented by the Commander 11th Brigade, Brigadier Mark Smith, CSC.

RAEME NATIONWIDE

RAEME in Defence News continued

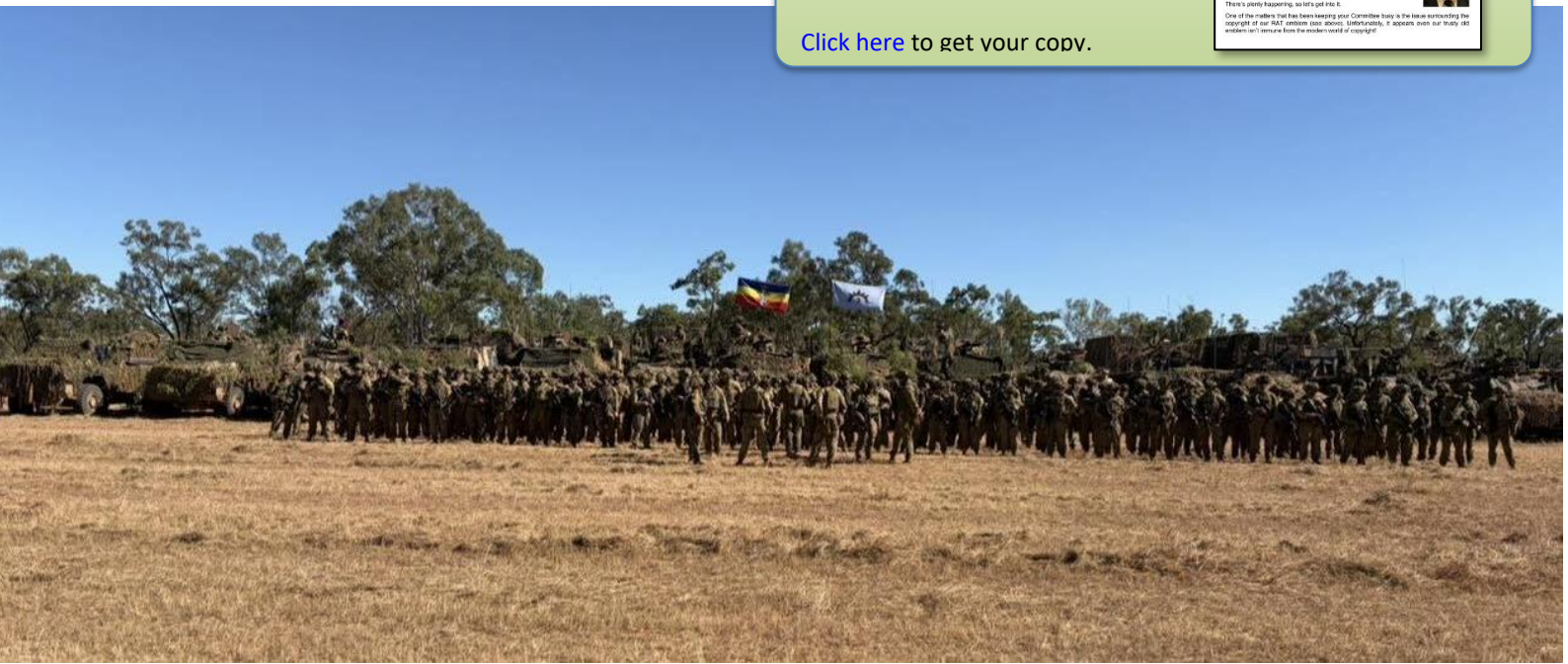
Welcome home to the Ship's Army Establishment



After 87 days deployed on Exercise Pacific Partnership 2026, HMAS Choules L100 returned on 14 Sept.

Ex Pacific Partnership 26 focused on strengthening humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities across the region.

3 CSSB in the field



Melbourne Spanner Club

The team from Melbourne recently gathered for their latest Spanner Club.

Another great turnout allowed many members to connect over a drink (or two).





RAEME Tasmania Newsletter

The Tasmanian Association recently released their latest newsletter.

In this edition, the President's report addresses a wide range of issues relevant to Tasmanian members but also the Corps as a whole.

This is well worth a read.

Click here to get your copy.


The RAEME Association Tasmania Newsletter

October 2026 Issue 33

RAEME NATIONWIDE

RAEME in Defence News continued

RAEME wins Bathurst!

The RAEME team recently supported vehicles Project Digger and Matilda at the 2026 Repco Bathurst 1000.









Spot the tri-colours ….. and the driver who may have been from Duntroon (not yet confirmed)

For more images, please click here.*!*

RAEME Rover Update

Early October was Workshop Day, and the Ipswich team were hard at it. The Nth Qld workshop was busy as well, working on the Cobra project car getting the last of the compulsory bar work fabricated in.





One week later, the humidity was building up in the north, but so is the project car. Massive efforts by Michael Pettit and Ian Baker saw them finishing off all the compulsory bar work and fabricating a new legal rear firewall. With several team members away with medical, the RAEMUS team were very happy with the progress. No workshop in the north next week, Wed 28th October we're back on deck.



WELFARE MATTERS

Vale

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

CFN Chris HARRIS retd



Chris passed away on 12 August 2026. Chris was a British immigrant from East Anglia who served in the army there doing automotive engineering work. Chris was a member of 16 Field Battery Tech Support in Launceston in the 1980s. Chris is survived by his wife Liz.

342634 Robert Keith 'Bob' PUNCH



Bob passed away on 6 October 2026 after suffering a massive stroke. A 9th Class Army Apprentice and Vehicle Mechanic, he was one of life's great characters, retaining his unmistakable Appy sense of humour and pride until the end. He will be fondly remembered by his fellow apprentices, mates and the wider RAEME family. Rest in peace, old mate. Odds are Gods!

CFN Graeme JOBLIN retd



Graeme passed away on 18 July, aged 82. He lived in Maryborough and spent his final months in Hervey Bay. Those who knew him recall a kind, loyal man, always ready for a chat and devoted to his partner. Graeme was cremated on 21 August. His celebration of life was held at 10.30 am on 28 September in the Memorial Garden at Maryborough Services & Citizens Club.

Luke Reginald Charles 'Rossco' ROSS



Luke passed away on 24 September, aged 45, after living with Huntington's disease. A Vehicle Mechanic who joined the ARA in 2000, he trained at Vehicle Trades Wing, completed on-the-job training in Sydney and served in Townsville with 5th Aviation Technical Support Workshop. He also supported the Australian Army on Operation Pakistan Assist in 2006. Mates remember Rossco's humour and big heart. His funeral was held on 29 September at 2.00 pm at Townsville Funerals & Cremations Chapel, 3 Railway Avenue, Railway Estate.

35785 WO1 Kevin Owen BURNS retd



Kevin passed away in Adelaide on 30 September 2026, aged 91. He served in RAEME in Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam, including as a Staff Sergeant with 106 Field Workshop from 14 January to 7 August 1970. We extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends and former colleagues. Funeral arrangements will be shared when available. Kevin was farewelled by Alfred James Funeral Service in South Plympton on 09 October 2026.

Nicholas "Nicko" HYGEN-THOLEN



Nicko, who was also known to his mates as "Hayseed", passed away in Brisbane on 16 Sept 2026. He was a fitter whose service included postings to the 1st Base Wksp Bn at Bulimba, Qld, during the mid-1970s and the 1st Armoured Regt at Puckapunyal, Vic, from 1977 to 1979. Throughout his service, Nicko worked alongside many fellow Bluebells and formed friendships that endured long after their time in uniform. He will be remembered by those who served with him as a valued member of the wider RAEME family and a good mate.

SGT Peter 'Phantom' OLIVER retd



Peter passed away on 19 August 2026. We have very limited details on Peter's passing, other than he had been in a retirement home in Tasmania for a number of years. Peter served in RAEME as a B2 Store Sergeant in the seventies.

174593 Lieutenant Colonel Ronald Thomas "Ron" McELWAINE OAM RFD ED (Retd)

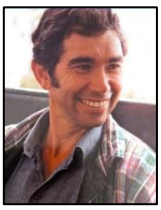


Ron McElwaine died peacefully on 21 September 2026, aged 90. Born in Queensland on 12 February 1936, Ron was commissioned in 1963 and served in RAEME. As a Captain, he undertook a Citizen Military Forces Officer Visit to Vietnam from 21 January to 4 February 1971. He later rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and commanded 1 EME Group at Bulimba. Ron was a highly respected member of the Corps community. He was also a long-serving President and Life Member of the Sherwood–Indooroopilly RSL Sub Branch and a tireless advocate for veterans and their families. Ron leaves an enduring legacy of service, leadership and remembrance.

WELFARE MATTERS

Vale continued

318320 Dennis Patrick BOWERMAN retd



Dennis sadly passed away in Emerald on 2 May 2026. A B1 Storeman, he served at TST, Armoured Centre, from 1985 to 1987. Dennis was later well known in Emerald as a respected instructor, teacher and mentor. Former students and colleagues remembered him as a true gentleman who was intelligent, humorous and kind, and always willing to offer advice or share a quiet conversation about life. Dennis was a greatly respected RAEME mate and is survived by his wife, Jenni, his children and his grandchildren.

46964 SGT Dean Francis 'Deano' TALLACK retd



Dean died on 18 September 2026 following a serious cardiac event. A Basic Entry Fitter and Turner, Dean served with 3 FER Workshop, 1 Base Wksp Bn, 21 Supply Bn, 5/7 RAR and the School of Artillery. His service included a three-month tour at Butterworth, Malaysia, and he had attained the rank of Sergeant by 1990. Following his Army career, Dean worked in several positions with Sealy of Australia before retiring after 21 years. Remembered as a fine soldier, a top bloke and a dear friend, Dean is survived by h is wife, Naree; daughters, Sandra and Donna; and his much-loved grandchildren.

Sick Parade

Gary BONNER. Gary underwent knee replacement surgery on 29 September 2026 and is recovering at home. We wish him a smooth recovery and look forward to seeing him back among us when he is ready.

Russ CLIFFE. Russ is still struggling with his post-stroke recovery. He is unable to use his left hand and is unable to walk without support. Russ has really appreciated the support from those who have reached out to him. If you can't visit Russ in Gladstone, he would welcome a call on 0413-732-917. It may also work better if you SMS him and await a return call as that will allow him support with the phone.

Brian DALEY. Brian underwent knee surgery in late August 2026 and is recovering well at home. We wish him continued progress and a full recovery.

Danny CRUMP. Crumpy is still undergoing treatment to fight against the throat cancer he was diagnosed with earlier this year. Whilst the chemo he had earlier took out the throat cancer, it had already gotten into his bloodstream so for now, he is taking every day as it comes. If you want to have to chat with Crumpy, give him a buzz on 0417-053-136. He will get a lot out of that.

Bob McKerrow. Big Bird continues to battle with his health since open-heart surgery two years ago. He is making steady progress.

Garry 'Soupy' SIEPEN. Garry has had recent surgery to his back and is making good, steady progress to recovery.

Tom STRANG. Tommy continues to fight on and is being cared for by his wife Irene at home in Tasmania.

Ian GILLESPIE. Ian recently had a condition resulting in the need to be transferred to the RHH from Launceston by the Royal Flying Doctors service. He is now recovering at home and is on the road to recovery.

How to provide welfare notifications

Should you wish to report the passing of a member or the change in health circumstances affecting you or another Corps member, you can do so by entering all known details on the RAEME Welfare Notification page.

