

Internet Newsletter – Issue 101 – June 2002

President's Report

Dear Members and Families,

The venue for this year's AGM was the Burwood RSL Club where we were given a function room to conduct our meeting. Our AGM was well attended with 38 members and several guests.

Some name changes occurred on the committee, particularly with the position of the secretary, with Michael Wilkinson accepting the role. Thanks Michael for your spontaneous response to fill this very important position. Unfortunately, Michael's career employment impacted on his time to carry out the job of secretary, however, he did find an instant replacement to fill the position, that being SGT Paul Luck, who volunteered to take over this important role. Many thanks Paul from all of the members. Chris Davis has volunteered to continue updating the members records, addresses etc, as well as organizing the Newsletter for postage to the members, thank you Chris.

ANZAC Day was a great day as usual with fine weather and great spectator crowds, although for some a long waiting time to march off. They were rewarded later with several lemonades and lunch at the Crown Hotel, where nearly all of RAEME must have gathered.

I would like to thank on your behalf the Banner Party for both the WW2 and Post-WW2 veterans. The OC Banner Party was LT Monica Goodheart of HQ 2 DIV and WO2 Michael Wilkinson of 1/15 RNSWL, who with their soldiers, did us proud, very well done, thank you.

Down near the quay, or so it seemed, the Reserve Forces RAEME Section found the Banner Party from 5CSSB. The OC Banner Party was MAJ Andrew Weatley, with WO1 Terry Spinks and his party of soldiers, and with the Association RSM Fred Jolly, all were eager to get away and to show the new RAEME CMF / ARES Banner, this being the first showing of this Banner, a very well done to all those involved, thank you.

At a recent meeting meeting of the Reserve Forces Day Council, in the company of RSM Fred Jolly, I accepted Certificates of Commendation for both 5CSSB, and our Association for the "Best Turned Out Unit Association" in the Reserve Force section of the March. Congratulations to all who marched on the day to achieve this high honour for our Corps.

Reservists will again have an opportunity to parade the new Banner on the 7 July 2002, at Reserve Forces Day in Sydney. Please note, regular army soldiers who trained with CMF / ARES are entitled to join this parade, and I hope many more will make the effort to keep this as an annual event.

The form up point is College Street on the Liverpool Street end of Hyde Park at 1100 hrs, march off following an inspection by the NSW Governor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC at 1205 hrs. The route will follow from College Street down Macquarie Street, past the saluting dais outside Parliament House, with an "eyes right", and on to Circular Quay. A reunion at the Crown Hotel, or closer suggestions near the Quay.

Petition sheets will be available to be signed by all for the recognition of past and present members of the ADF by way of the Government striking a suitable medal.

The medal is to be awarded to members of the Permanent and Reserve Forces for 24 months service, full time or part time, or a combination of both since 1 January 1948. The suggested name for the medal is the "Defence Force Volunteer Service Medal". The medal is intended to also encourage ADF

members to soldier on to swell the ranks of our Military Forces. Please support this petition and encourage others to do so by signing.

Recently our editor received a writing entitled “RAEME Head of Corps Newsletter”, dated April 2002. Older hands will remember the “RAEME Corps Committee”, which was the information arm of our soldiers and our Association. All the meetings of this committee were attended by a Senior RAEME Officer, whom reported his findings to our Association. More will follow on this Newsletter when more information becomes available to me.

Please remember that the welfare of our members is still our prime concern for the future of our Association, so please assist in this endeavour whenever possible.

Kind Regards, Michael O’Donohoe

From the Secretary’s Desk

I would like to begin by introducing myself, my name is Paul Luck and I am a current serving soldier within the Corp (ARA). I have served 20 years in the Corp and anticipate serving a little more depending on the time of year, as many of you would understand.

During my entire career within the Corp I have been continuously pulling people out of the sh... I find this to be a most gratifying occupation as I tend to see people in their true colours, especially if they have been stagnant for two or three days, awaiting my arrival.

Yes, it is true a Recovery Mechanic has taken over the reigns of the secretaries duties and just so you all no that I have researched the meaning of this position I have entered a short quote below.

I would just like to quote from the Collins Dictionary the true meaning of the position secretary, and I quote “ A person who deals with correspondence and general clerical work” unquote.

What can be hard about that? Well, I will let you know in the next newsletter.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the out going secretary Mick Wilkinson and to wish him well, as he remains on as a member of the committee.

New Members

Larry James HOW

5CSSB News

A lot has happened at our Unit since the last update in the RAEME Newsletter, a Brigade exercise to Shoal Water Bay, a number of support activities, some posting and new march ins, relocation of the Association Museum to 5CSSB and another ANZAC Day.

In my last update, I mentioned a support task to Nowra, this task supported 23 Field with their guns. It was a good opportunity to shake the bugs out before our Brigade exercise in September. We were able to get most of our equipment into the field, and lay it out for inspection and serviceability. The road move down proved the old adage, the most dangerous thing in the army is still a Lieutenant, a map and a compass. In spite, all eventually arrived at the exercise area. For those who had not heard nor seen guns in operation it was a great opportunity to observe the Gunnies doing their thing. The new Canter

4x4 EIR repair vehicle was fine on the road movement, but does appear to have some limitations off road. It had a very nice air-conditioned module that will make a nice hidey-hole for the boffins.

After our Nowra trip, we spent a great deal of time supporting 1/15, our main support came in the form of welding, and Cfn Crane was able to do some exceptional work out there. He was able to take some time from his normal job to spend quite a few days during the week with them. We were able to also send out some FRT's to carry out mechanical, electrical and other repair work as required.

Our main activity for the latter part of the year was our Brigade AFX, which was held in Shoal Water Bay training area. This was a great challenge for us to say the least. It involved a four (4) day road movement in each direction, support to the Brigade whilst on exercise, and the usual post exercise repairs when back home. As usual the RAEME tradesmen and women excelled in their challenge. We were bolstered by the addition of six (6) trainee mechanics and two (2) trainee fitters from the ALTC detachment at Moorebank, these young guns settled into the Workshop with a great deal of ease. They were able to assist our staff with the pre-exercise activities such as loading etc, and carried out any work prior to road movement up.

When we assembled for the move up we had a very good team that covers ARA staff, GRES members and the trainees. By the end of the exercise this team would carry out over 125 EME Fix's, book more than 650 hours of ART to jobs, carry out their training commitments and we were able to bring home all vehicles and equipment that we took up with us.

There were certainly some notable challenges for us when we first arrived in the exercise area including assisting in the repair of 23's guns, this was carried out in shifts with us supporting our RAEME brothers from 23 Field. The repair of a damaged Ambulance, which required a substantial amount of effort to get it TWY to carry out its role. The Recovery Platoon mopped up the road movement to and from the exercise and carried out their tasks with a great deal of professionalism. I was lucky to be chauffeured to and from the exercise by Cfn Jackson in one of the new Mercedes MRV's, they are certainly a great piece of kit.

On the road movements we stopped in the usual show grounds and we were afforded the hospitality of either system supplied catering, or as in cases, the local community supplied the catering. Unfortunately, box lunches are still box lunches, will someone please let the caterers know that tomatoes send the bread soggy when left for some hours on sandwiches. Our EIR Platoon powered everything that needed powering, and even if it didn't, they still ran a power lead to it. The new 16 KVA diesel powered generators are a vast improvement, they are relatively quiet, are reliable, and have a good capacity.

The Mech Platoon were always their happiest when covered in grease and dirt, and removing something from the vehicles. Under Cpl Pete Donnelly, they carried out the bulk of the work. They could always be found not far from the 30x30 (lucky the ASM thought to bring it), or the other allocated work areas. Like the fitters, there were some very late nights spent under vehicles, EIR provided the light, recovery provided the lifting capability when required, and as always in a RAEME unit, everyone offered assistance even though it was not their job.

With the assistance of the Workshop personnel, the Association museum was relocated from Lawrie's home to our Unit lines. This move took us quite a few trips, as there was a large amount of boxes, and also the display cupboard. The items are inside, in a container, under lock and key.

The end of the training year culminated in the obligatory range shoots, and the Unit Xmas party, but it did not seem very long before we were back in the grind. The year brought a change of OC, Maj Ray Mizzi has gone into semi inactive mode, and the 2IC, Capt Andrew Wheatley was promoted to Major,

and appointed OC. Our training WO, WO2 Kel Lyons, also moved on, and as yet is still to be replaced.

It did not take long for ANZAC Day to be upon us, and our ANZAC Day activities this year were only to the Concord RSL for the Dawn Service, and as you are now aware, to escort the new RAEME Reserve Banner. The Workshop paraded at 0400 hrs for the Dawn Service at Concord, and conducted themselves in a very professional manner with dress and bearing to match. After the Dawn Service and breakfast, it was into the city for the March. I was a very proud ASM on the day, as I asked for six (6) escorts and we had eighteen (18) turn up, including the OC, the CSM, several SNCO's, Cpls and Cfns. It was a great day culminating in the usual quiet beer at the Crown Hotel, and I would like to thank the Association for providing the boys with an ale or two at the end. As always, it was great to see the role up, people you don't see from one ANZAC Day to the next, and others you have not seen for years, like Mark Adamson, who was over from Perth, though Mark, I missed the spoons. On a personal note, it was sad that my old mate Jim Buman was not with us in person, but I am sure he still enjoyed the day from where he was watching.

Well, that's about it from me, about time I hear you say, I will try and be more regular with info from our Unit in the future, and all the best from 5CSSB.

Terry Spinks, ASM

Life's Real Cares

It had been months since I visited Vietnam Vets at Granville. I entered the office and Terry Loftus was sitting at his desk as usual, finishing paperwork for a veteran. He greeted me with his usual "You want to buy a raffle ticket?" I bought two and put the jar of coffee and biscuits on his desk. I put my hand out to shake his hand, he tried to lift his arm and winced with pain, but still did it, and every joint in his body is riddled with arthritis and the pain that accompanies it. What a man he is, always there working for the benefit of others, and always in pain.

Why am I telling you this, because Terry resigned in August after a great innings, and I admire him and Barry Dixon who have both been dealt tough hands in life, and neither complain, or envy all those dealt better hands.

Also, the practices of arriving at Vietnam Vets with donations of coffee and biscuits is being forgotten, so, please remember they need these items to exist and stay with it. Don't think Terry resigned because of lack of coffee or biscuits, he is more a man than that, but, anything these caring people need to help them through the days work on our behalf, should be there.

I know there will be many of us who will want to send Terry a card of thanks for his work, and wish him well with his family in retirement. The 'Secrets Act' stops me giving out his home address, but I am sure any mail addressed to him, via

Vietnam Veterans
8 Mary Street,
PO Box 170
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

will reach him.

We will all miss his presence at Granville, Thanks Terry, for all your time and efforts, from us all.

God Bless,

Sandy McHutchison

DNSDC Jottings

Hello to the brethren from the DNSDC. There has not been much going on at this site since I last reported. This edition has been sent in to save the editor making up what he feels that I was going to say, and or adding his poetic licence. The main changes this year has to be the turn around in RAEME staff. New names to come into the old 2 Base area (2 shop) are WO2 Kel Lyons from 5 CSSB, WO2 Danny Schuppli who comes to us from MAS Sydney, SGT David George who has arrived from Darwin, and SGT Robert (Doc) Murdock from sunny uptown Brisbane. The guys have had an eye opening experience coming to a civilian manned workshop.

Other news in the air is that Worldskills Australia is holding it's regional competition in Sydney once again. Worldskills is in effect an Olympics of all apprentice trades. The Sydney area is entering five (5) trainees in both the light and heavy vehicle sections. The competition is to be held at Wetherill Park Tafe on the 25th and 26th of June 2002. The winner of the nationals will then be big-brothered to hone his / her skills, so that he / she can represent Australia at St Gallen in Switzerland in June of 2003. So all those horses out there that are interested in the skills of the current tradesmen, both civilian and military, please come along to Wetherill Park Tafe on the 25th and 26th June to have a look. If you need further information, please contact me.

Other news at DNSDC is that DIDS is still alive. All tenders have been submitted to Defence and now an evaluation team is reading through the endless reams of documents to come up with a preferred tenderer. All this should be announced sometime in August. We will be waiting with baited breath to see if we will be working for Defence or Joe's garage.

Once again the ANZAC Day Banner Party (WW2 and Post-WW2) was filled by personnel from out this way again. The members used to all be from the DNSDC, now with the changing of responsibilities and the lack of RAEME personnel, the thank you's now go to HQ 2 DIV, the DNSDC, 1/15 RNSWL and ALTC Sydney Det (this is just to get eight people).

Will have more info in the next Newsletter.

Regards, Michael Wilkinson

Welfare Officer's Report

Greetings to another Welfare Report with the minimum of notices.

Firstly, Jim Elliot was reported as being in hospital, and on investigating, it was true, but he was at home and improving, which I was pleased to hear, so all the best to you Jim.

Unfortunately, Gordon James (Jim) Buman passed away on the 21 February 2002. The Service for Gordon, better known to so many as Jim, was held at Palmdale. It was well attended by family and friends, also well represented by members of the RAEME Association and RSL. R.I.P.

To be brighter. If a Bombay chef burns the entrée, he can change the menu to read: 'Curry with the singe on top'.

Did you know?

Some memories are so vivid, they hang in the living room of your mind like a giant painting, looming large and permanent.

Hard work spotlights the character people, some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.

That's all for now, wishing you all good health.

Jim and Dorothy.

Characters of the Corps

This is a tale of one of the many colourful types that one has had the pleasure of being associated with in the service, his name shall be changed to protect the innocent. Paderick Aloyisus Maloney was named by his poor Irish mother so that no person would have any doubts as to what he was. Of course, like Johnny Cash's "My Name Is Sue", PAM had to be able to fight. Now, Paddy had come to the Workshop after a stint as a Navy Petty Officer, followed by a period with 1 Commando Company. At the time of this story, he was a S/Sgt in the GE Pl. He was also the PMC of the Sgt's Mess, an appointment that he carried out with great style, for it is the luck of the Irish to be blessed with those noble attributes of a charm that would bring the birds down out of the trees, a wicked sense of humor, a spinner of yarns true and false, and a good judge of a cold drink, with the added ability to be able to drink every one else under the table. He also being a Matelote, had an affection for Nelson's Blood (rum to you squaddies).

With the unit in the field, Paddy had, as PMC, decided that this particular Saturday evening was to be one of his better efforts, and a party quickly developed, there was a number of visitors in the Mess that night, including a much respected former OC. The night turned out to be one of those magnificent, spontaneous blasts that are most memorable, we even ended up with a Battalion Band playing for us, and many a sore head surfaced on the Sunday Reveille. This writer was attending to the Company Roll when a Landrover pulled up, out of which dismounts a very young Padre. "Good morning Padre", says I, "what are you doing here?". "I am here to say Mass", he replies. This is news to me, as he was supposed to be at the RAASC Unit down the road. Now as the Padre was adamant that he would bless our unit with his service, it left no other course but to send a runner to fetch S/Sgt Maloney. "Staff, get the RC's together, and find some place for a Church Parade, and Mass".

After a while I wander off to check on things, and there and behold is the good Padre saying Mass at an FS table that had been pulled out from the previous nights festivities, and the Padre is stepping around amongst the dead marines of that roaring success, some may say excess. I thought that I might stay until the Mass ended, and point out to the good Staff that he had better get a few Sgts together to clean up. At he finish, Maloney is down the bank on which the men were sitting like a shot, offering to help the Padre carry his kit, at the same time he is kicking the empty cans and bottles back under the hession screen. Without battering an eye, and with a wicked smile on his face, he calmly said, "Sorry for the mess on the ground, but you must realize Padre, THERE IS A LOT PROTESTANTS IN THIS MESS".

No offence meant to the C of E's and OPD's.

"Patchout"

Another Letter to the Editor

The Editor
RAEME Association NSW Inc.
PO Box 463
MOOREBANK NSW 1875

Dear Sir,

I read with dismay Henry de Jong's recent letter, which was published in Newsletter Issue 100. As a reservist, I am, and have been, angered by the use of the word "choco" as a derogatory description of the part-time soldier.

The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "choco" as either "member of the 8th Brigade in World War 1", or "member of the militia serving in Australia and its Territories in World War 2". The term was a derogatory term adopted by the 2nd AIF to describe the militia who were conscripts, and were only for service in Australia and its Territories, whereas the 2nd AIF were volunteers who did not render restricted service.

The CMF was raised in 1948 as a **volunteer force** and with its transition to the Army Reserve in the mid 1970's, maintained the status of a **volunteer force**. From 1948 to the present time, the part-time soldier in Australia is able to be deployed anywhere that the Australian Government requires.

I recently had the honour to be the Commanding Officer of the 8th Combat Service Support Battalion, where in addition to RAEME officers and soldiers, I had the responsibility for officers and soldiers from twelve (12) other corps. For almost my entire tenure as CO, I had part-time soldiers continually deployed on operations both overseas and within Australia. Indeed, it was my privilege to present a Land Commanders Commendation to a **RAAMC** soldier for her efforts with the local Aboriginal community whilst deployed on an ACAP task. This soldier then later deployed as part of the Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville.

Many of these soldiers gave up their civilian employment in order to deploy, and were then faced with the problem of regaining civilian employment at the conclusion of their deployment.

In my current posting, I am required on a daily basis to find part-time soldiers to undertake full-time service in order to fill a critical vacancy. This is recognition that the part-time officer or soldier is able to perform tasks to the same standard as his full-time colleagues.

Surely this tells a story. Part-time soldiers are on operations today, standing side-by-side with full-time soldiers. The Australian Army went through a lengthy period without any major operational deployments.

Today that has changed and the part-time soldier is standing up and meeting his or her commitments in the same way as the regulars.

Let's cut straight to the bone. The term "choco" deserves to remain where it belongs, as part of First and Second World War history. Henry de Jong, and the part-time soldiers of his era, have no need to feel that they were "boy scouts' in army uniform". Indeed it was the guidance and training given to me by the Henry de Jongs' of this army that gave me the skills and knowledge to prepare Australian part-time soldiers to be able to stand in harm's way.

Furthermore, this training ensured that I was confident that my soldiers' training would ensure that they returned to their families, and would continue to serve their country.

Yours sincerely, Martin Wiltshire

17 Construction Squadron Workshop Troop

"No time to take it easy !!"

You'd think that being the quiet year it would be quiet, right? Well not at 17 Construction Squadron Workshop Troop. Usually the years in between AACAP (ATSIC Army Community Assistance Program) exercises are the ones to get the unit's heavy machines and equipment back up to scratch and maybe get a few courses out of the way. This year so much seems to be happening that it's far from quiet.

Last years' AACAP was the biggest and most successful to date. The NT communities that 17 Construction upgraded were two of the most remote, and required the most complex of constructions. As you can imagine, the logistics of the exercise were a nightmare. Two main construction sites some 300 kms apart required two separate self sustaining camps, which meant two separate Wksp's, RPS, B1, RAPs, messes, etc. Starting to get the picture?

The more remote Mialuni site required the upgrading of an existing airstrip, among other tasks, therefore the use of more heavy machinery. The 10 man Wksp detachment there had their 'ring gear' working overtime to maintain the equipment for the notoriously reckless engineers. As predicted, the only thing that restricts a good Wksp is its dependency on the supply of replacement parts and this was the case here. At times it also seemed like the Mialuni detachment was right at the bottom of the priorities list. Not only were replacement parts being delayed, the occasional food supply trucks would fail to arrive at the worst possible time. You knew the boys were getting edgy when they started eyeing up 'Betty' the broлга for a Sunday roast. Not to mention that the worksite was 30kms inside the Aboriginals self imposed 'no alcohol' zone, meaning it was a fortnight between drinks at the 'Fourcan Hell' bar outside the zone. Talk about personality challenging.

Meanwhile over at the main encampment at Yaralin, you'd think that the sappers would have the lion's share of equipment and manpower. Multiple residential and further remote tasks at Lingara drew heavily on all the available resources. Again this meant both the sappers and the Wksp were working at peak output the whole time. As I said, when the engineers are going flat out they are not exactly mechanically sympathetic. The Wksp used all available opportunities to keep up with the workload, often working through rest days.

The end result was more than satisfying. The enormous expectations had been met, and exceeded. The standard of construction across the many tasks was second to none. 17 Construction came home in early October 2001 with its reputation and ethics intact.

This year, 17 Construction's tasks are once again wide and varied. Selected members have rotated through East Timor and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea in both advisory and construction positions in our ongoing commitment to those countries. Locally, there are always a few minor construction jobs to keep the sapper's hands out of their pockets. Unit upgrades include laying several concrete slabs around the area to improve the positioning of Wksp containers and heavy vehicles. Currently the sappers are enjoying themselves building a long overdue battery storage shed at the rear of the Q store.

The latest job of choice has to be the upgrading of the military facilities in Lae, Papua New Guinea. As part of the Australian aid package to PNG, the Australian Defence Force is currently assisting in several construction tasks in and around Igam Army Barracks on the far northeastern side of the island. Fifty members, including a Wksp detachment of seven, will leave for PNG in early July for approximately six weeks of fun and sunshine. Tasks include the upgrading of several access roads to the base, as well as the long overdue repair and service of the vehicles and machinery required to do the job. Basically we have to repair the trucks and heavy equipment before we can even begin the other tasks.

This will prove to be fairly interesting in itself as there is minimal functioning anything in the area. Suspect power supplies, no air compressors, non-existent consumables. Sounds like we're lucky to

have a concrete hard standing on which to service the vehicles. But there again, being thrown in the deep end is nothing new to 17 Construction Wksp members, it soon becomes second nature. Preparation for the trip has fortunately been smooth. The reconnaissance party has done its job well, so the Wksp has got a good idea of what's required when we hit the ground in PNG. We can take anything we like as long as it fits into two containers. That's all our tools, equipment, everything. Hopefully there'll be room enough for a cricket bat and ball and perhaps a surfboard. Maybe we'll have a bit of time to do part of Kokoda, some fishing and bit of scuba diving. Some time to take it easy. Take it easy? Who am I trying to kid?

Detachment members are:

New Wksp 2IC:	Lt Fabriczy;
New ASM:	WO2 Richard Gladdish;
New EME OPS:	SGT Kevin Bishop;
RPS:	SGT Chris Jessen;
Mech:	CPL Mark Cragie;
Welder:	CPL Simon Shaw;
Mech:	LCPL Reid Ossington
New Mech:	CFN (crazy) Dave Owen

New comers to the Wksp for the year 2002 are:

OC: CAPT Nicky Bradley;
CPL Brad (Bargs) Bargaquist;
CPL Mark Warde;
CPL Rob Cooper and
CFN Rob (Jack) Gaddes

The Wksp also had to lose our legendary OC,

CAPT Warwick Gloster, as well as:

2IC: LT Kate (Mambo) Matchett;
ASM: WO2 Peter Beaton;
SGT Richard Hayes;
SGT Ben Smith;
CPL Paul (Dog) Cooney;
CPL Damien (Daymo) Kohlman;
CFN Paul (Blue) Haley;
CFN Adolf (Kal) Kalemusic;
CFN Nathan (Fingers) Fealy
PTE Brad (Rocky) Wells

Well, that's it for this edition, hopefully more to come for the next edition.

Regards, CPL Simon Shaw

ANZAC Day March 2002

After stirring up some controversy last year, I have been reluctant to comply with the editor's request for a report on this year's reunion of that erstwhile body of men, i.e. The RAEME Association of NSW. However I might point out to my friend with the famous Dutch name, that if he has a good look at this writer's Regimental Number, he will observe that it is a "Choco" number, not very far removed from his own.

My morning began with a sudden awakening at 0400 hrs, just in the nick of time to make the Dawn Service at Concord RSL. The Catafalque Party has been supplied by RAEME ARES (ACMF) Units since 1958. I had the honour of being selected for this duty, along with Don Jamison and the late Pete Green for the first five years. 103 Fd Wksp, now Wksp Coy 5 CSSB, has carried out this duty since 1964, and also supplies a formed body of troops to add to the occasion. A job well done. It is always good to catch up with past and present members of the old unit.

I must say that the March is now much reduced in numbers from those early days. Time does condemn.

I was once again honoured to be asked by our President Michael O'Donohoe to act as Reserve Forces Sgt Major. Any reservations that I held were quickly dismissed once I joined up with the past members in Phillip Street. We had around 30 stalwarts ready to do the Association proud. ASM, Terry Spinks, had supplied a Banner Party to parade our **NEW** Banner, which is nearly paid for, so all those that promised donations, please forward the same to the Hon. Treasurer Bob Joseph.

I had been told that certain persons had cast dispersions on our ability to march, and that we needed to lift our game. Well. It can now be said that any doubts held can now be put to rest as the marching by the Serving and Past Members was very good, or so my old Nasho mate "Jamo" informed me. Just need to watch the "Wheels" as we march in six ranks, inside men need to step much shorter! Any way, between the **NEW** Banner and the tall good looking men ??? We managed to get noticed by the ABC, and I am told we got a good showing on the television. Our thanks must go to the Band of the Senior Cadets, who being placed immediately behind us, kept us in step with their magnificent Martial Music. I did promise the Base Drummer a new skin if he busted it.

The Crown Hotel once again was packed to the rafters; upstairs was not to bad, so Don Jamison, my son David and myself headed upstairs. Here we found the Cooks, father and son, and a mixture of good RAEME hands, and settled down for a most enjoyable afternoon. It was good to see Eric Lindgren looking good after a bout of sickness, also Bob Mills on the mend I hope.

On the subject of venue, the Association will check out a couple of potential Hotels in town, as an alternative to the Crown. I noted that one in Hunter Street was closed, and this would accommodate the Association members very well. Here's hoping.

Regards,
2265126 (Proud to have served in any capacity)

An Interesting Story from One of Our Members

"Brit Bit"

An interlude with "The Blues"

In 1961 as a Cpl Elec on the LAD of the Royal Horse Guards, "The Blues", my main occupation on a Wednesday sports afternoon consisted of strenuous efforts to "make myself scarce".

Eventually, to the dismay of many, the following appeared on the orders board, "A number of personnel are constantly missing from organized sports afternoons. In future all personnel WILL participate in one of the following sports included in the list was 'Recreational Riding (If you cannot ride, we will teach you)'".

Afterwards, no one would admit to being the instigator of the idea but, true to the tradition that "Anything the Regiment can do, the LAD can do better", six (6) of us were misguided enough to apply, little knowing what we had let ourselves in for.

We were issued with coarse riding breeches, WW1 puttees, and spurs (the spurs were not to be worn until we had “Qualified”). The first blow fell on the following Tuesday, again on the orders board, “Owing to the shortage of mounts, and the heavy training commitments of the Equitation Wing, the following personnel (US), will report to the Riding School on Wednesday at **0500 hrs !!!!**”

After a horrendous struggle with the riding breeches and those diabolical puttees, we made our way to the Riding School, past the serried ranks of “Ferrets” and Landrovers looming out of the eerie Thames Valley morning mist (the main Regiment was an air-portable armoured recce unit), we finally lined up in front of a riding instructor “Corporal of Horse” (CoH, three stripes and a spur). In the Household Cavalry the word Sergeant does not exist, Corporal is used for all equivalents to SGT’s and WO’s, e.g. “Squadron Quartermaster Corporal Major, etc”.

With a less than happy expression, the CoH led us to the “tack” room, from which we eventually emerged bowed under the weight of saddles, straps and bridles etc. Then to the stables, and **the moment of truth**, when we came face to face with our future mounts. Mine was **enormous!** Black and with the biggest set of teeth I had ever seen on a horse (not that I was a student of equine dentistry). His name, on a plaque above his stall, was “Foursome”, and I promptly re-christened him “Fearsome”.

Under the watchful eye of the instructor we approached our mounts, snorting fiercely and rolling his eyes, “Fearsome” pawed the ground and edged away as I endeavored to festoon him with the assorted pieces of leather gear and “costume jewelry”. Eventually only one item remained, the girth strap, and Fearsome defiantly expanded his barrel like belly each time I tried to pull it tight. Until then I had a rather sentimental attitude towards horses (noble beast, faithful friend, riding off into the sunset together and all that rubbish). The CoH soon disillusioned me, shouldering me roughly to one side, he grabbed the strap in both hands at the same time as delivering his knee like a battering ram to Fearsome’s belly, which rapidly deflated, the CoH yanked the girth tight with a force that would have sliced a lesser beast in two, and Fearsome stood with his head bowed, temporarily beaten (how temporary I was soon to discover).

The next phase was the indoor riding school, we got the order to “Walk your horses”. We some how coaxed, cajoled and cursed our four legged friends into movement, then **THEY** took over and “walked their riders” to the hallowed, loam floored hall, the scene of countless initiations into the mysterious rituals of “Donkey Walloping”. The floor felt reassuringly soft underfoot, but coming into contact with it from a height of five feet or so might harden it considerably.

“Right, single line in front of me, NOW!, came the order from the CoH, resplendent in polished riding boots, perfectly tailored breeches, and tunic topped off with the red banded cal with gold bands on the black shiny peak. The horses some how managed to form us up in a somewhat ragged line, the CoH waiting **patiently** to address us. After a short introductory “pep” talk in which his feelings about REME fitters who did not know the difference between a fetlock and a bridle band were made colourfully clear, we were blithely informed that we were firstly going to learn to “mount” **without** stirrups, which he then demonstrated with the expertise of a trained athlete. It took just a few minutes of feeble standing jumps and futile scrabbling at the shiny leather of the saddle for the CoH to realize that this phase would have to be bypassed, and we would learn to mount **with** stirrups, which he again smoothly demonstrated, and then it was our turn again.

I clutched the reins and saddle pommel with one hand, and twisted the stirrup to accept my left foot with the other hand. Legs rigid in the coarse riding breeches and puttees, it took about five attempts to bring my foot up to the right level to jam it finally into the stirrup, during which time Fearsome remained deceptively placid. However, once he knew that my foot was irretrievably captured, he started to edge away from me in a series of delicate “mincing” steps, pivoting about his forelegs with

me frantically hopping on one leg to keep up. He finally let me catch up, and in sheer desperation I thrust as hard as I could with my earthbound foot and found myself sprawled most uncomfortably across the saddle, with my arms trying to link up around his gargantuan neck, again he had remained still for this period, but when I tried to straighten up on the slippery leather of the saddle, and fish with my right boot for the elusive other stirrup, he started his little dance again.

In all it must have taken about ten or fifteen minutes before we were all lined up again, we **riders** sitting hunched and petrified, hardly daring to move for fear of suggesting even the slightest desire for movement from mounts. An order rang out (which we all missed whilst trying to remain in amore or less stable position on our horses), but lo! and behold, we wheeled and were walking in single file with our right boots scraping against the wooden wall of the riding school, you guessed it, all those smart-rumped beasts had as one obeyed the order without bothering to consult the idiots perched on their backs.

After about five minutes or so of walking I began to gain confidence and thought, “This is a piece of cake”, then Fearsome realized he had dropped behind by about three lengths, and, being a sociable type (at least with other horses), he broke into a canter to catch up, bouncing me around like a cork, and having caught up, he slowed so suddenly I nearly sailed over his head, and his nose touched the rump of the preceding horse, which promptly flicked his four foot tail causing Fearsome to quickly raise his head, and once again I nearly parted company with him, but this time over his rear end. That was it for the first session, the horses could not wait to get back to the comfort of their stalls, and be divested of their trappings.

As for us, we were heading for breakfast when who should we confront, but one of the Squadron Corporal Majors, he froze in his tracks at the sight of six figures, REME from the waist up, and cavalry from the waist down. After a stunned pause, he burst out with “What’s all this then?” Our SSgt, with a perfectly straight face informed him that since they were under strength at the Household Cavalry Barracks in London, it had been decided that REME personnel would help out on State Occasions, such as escorting the Royal Coach to the State Opening of Parliament etc. The SCM’s jaw dropped, and mumbling to incoherently, with a dazed expression on his face, he wandered back the way he had come.

The following week our instructor seemed to think that we had improved enough to try something more elaborate. So the next order was, “Cross your stirrups over the saddle and ride without them”. Then came, “Swing your left leg over and rest it on the pommel, then the other leg”. It was during this exercise that our SSgt slid gracefully to the loam-covered floor, and as he got to his feet, a bellow came from the other end of the riding school, “And who gave you permission to dismount Staff?”

So it went on from week to week, and we really came to enjoy the sessions. Now you may ask, “Why did I not carry on and become a member of the Olympic Equestrian Team, and win Gold for Old England?” The answer is very simple (and typically army), half a mile away (still in Windsor), the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards required a corporal electrician, I was picked, I went, and that, my friends, is another story.

Noel Christian

One for the Public Servants

A Public servant dies in a car accident on his 40th birthday, and finds himself at the Pearly Gates.

A brass band is playing, the Angels are singing a beautiful hymn, there is a huge crowd cheering and shouting his name, and absolutely everyone wants to shake his hand.

Just when he thinks things can't possibly get any better, Saint Peter himself runs over, apologizes for not greeting him personally at the Pearly Gates, shakes his hand and says "Congratulations, we've been waiting a long time for you".

Totally confused and a little embarrassed, the Public servant sheepishly looks at Saint Peter and says, "Saint Peter, I tried to lead a God fearing life, I loved my family, I tried to obey the 10 Commandments, but congratulations for what? I honestly don't remember doing anything really special when I was alive".

"Congratulations for what?" says Saint Peter, totally amazed at the Public servant's modesty. "We're celebrating the fact that you lived to be 160 years old! God himself wants to see you!"

The Public servant is awe-struck and can only look at Saint Peter with mouth agape. When he regains his power of speech, looks up at Saint Peter and says "Saint Peter, I lived my life in the eternal hope that when I died I would be judged by God and be found to be worthy, but I only lived to be forty".

"That's simply impossible", says Saint Peter. "We've added up your flex sheets"