



“SAPPER SUMMIT”
RAE CORPS NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Note

This is a short issue principally to provide details of ANZAC Day commemoration activities, Reserve Forces Day arrangements and forthcoming events.

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Colonel Commandant

Appointment

We wish to advise that Colonel John Wertheimer RFD handed over as Representative Colonel Commandant of the Corps to General Peter Gratton AC, OBE in January 2000, and Brigadier Bob Slater AM, RFD was appointed Colonel Commandant Southern Region also in January.

Colonel Wertheimer was Colonel Commandant Southern Region from 1992 to 1996 when he was appointed Representative Colonel Commandant. We wish to record our appreciation of the tremendous efforts of Colonel Wertheimer and his Company in supporting the Corps in a wide range of activities including work on Volume 4 of the Corps History, the RAE Foundation, the Sapper Summit, and publication of the Swan Street Sappers to mention just a few of his achievements.

A highlight of Col Wertheimer's appointment as Representative Colonel Commandant was his reception by HM Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace in 1998.

Further details of Colonel Wertheimer, General Gratton, and Brigadier Slater and will be included in the next Sapper Summit.

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ANZAC Day

ANZAC Day this year falls on Easter Tuesday. A dawn service will be held at the Oakleigh Barracks parade ground commencing at 0530 hrs with a Gunfire Breakfast followed by the formal service commencing at 0600 hrs and concluding at approximately 0630 hrs. Breakfast will follow in the Gym; because official funding of the breakfast is not available, a contribution will be requested to cover the cost of rations.

Busses will be available for members wishing to participate in the Commemoration March to the Shrine of Remembrance and the Shrine Service. and returning to Oakleigh Barracks. All marchers are encouraged to wear a hat as protection against skin cancer.

The Leader of the Commemoration March this year will be a sapper, Brigadier ATF Bell OBE.

This year we have official encouragement for all serving and retired Reserve members to march with their Corps or unit groups.

The ANZAC Church Service will be celebrated this year at Scot's Church, corner Russell and Collins Streets, Melbourne at 1100 hrs Sunday 16 April. This is indeed an impressive and emotional service and most worthy of attendance.

The Dawn service at Ringwood will be at 0600 hrs under RSL arrangements

Waterloo Dinner

(Officers)

Details will be advised in the next issue of Sapper Summit, and if necessary there will be a special mail out covering this event. Arrangements now under consideration are for the function to be held at RAE HQ at Puckapunyal on Saturday 17th June.

Reserve Forces Day

Reserve Forces Commemoration Day will again be held on 1 July, this year a Saturday. All serving and retired Reserve members are encouraged to march with their Corps or unit groups.

The Assembly Area is St Kilda Road immediately south of the junction with Linlithgow Avenue.

Assemble at 1130 hrs. March commences 1200 hrs and concludes at the Shrine with a short service.

The official guest this year is Glen Jones, a National Service Vietnam veteran, a sapper who served with Colonel Wertheimer, and who is now a Football League umpire.

All past and present members of 22 Construction Regiment are invited to meet at the Assembly Area and remain after the parade to move on to lunch. This will allow time for football enthusiasts to attend the match afterwards. Contact WO1 Norm Dodgson for details, Tel 9571 1428.

Similar arrangements will apply for past members of 3 Fd Engr Regt and its successor units, 16 & 7 Fd Engr Regt's as well as past and present members of 4 CER. Contact Eddie Vial on 9889 1105 for details.

22 Construction Regiment 50th Birthday

22 Construction Regiment will celebrate its 50th Birthday with a social day at Oakleigh Barracks on Saturday 12 August 2000.

The day will include a parade, lunch, demonstrations and other activities.

This advice is a Warning Order so that all past and present members of the Regiment can arrange their other affairs to enable attendance with their friends and families.

Full details will be included in the next Sapper Summit.

RAE Corps Officers Mess 3MD Golf Day 2000

Don't forget the Golf Day scheduled for 12/10/00 Green Fees \$50.00.

Memorabilia

Firstly our thanks to those of you who have offered articles for our collection.

Response to our appeal for memorabilia has so far been disappointing. If you have any items you wish to lend or donate to our collection please advise the secretary, at the address below.

It had been our intention to have an ad hoc display on the collection day but this has had to be postponed.

FIREPOWER 2000

18/3/00

The first thing we noticed about Pucka was that the ground was as hard and stony as ever, the grass dry and sparse.

We had left Melbourne on a warm, sultry morning with the threat of rain but the weather cleared to a sunny, warm day; our raincoats nothing but an encumbrance.

Turning off the bitumen beyond the tank wash stands the busses headed out on gravel roads for some distance to a little valley. To our left we saw the marquees where lunch would be served, to our right on a small hillside there was a static display and on the crest of this hill was a grandstand, temporarily out of bounds.

We were briefed by the RSM 2/10 Medium Regiment, our hosts, and split into three parties to wander freely round the static display of equipment of various units of 4 Brigade, until lunch at midday. Our hosts had a 105mm howitzer and 155mm gun on display, 4 CER had a modern tipper and some earth moving equipment on show. Of particular interest was a cross-country fork lift (shades of manhandling Bailey panels or coils of Dannert wire on and off trucks). Displays by other units of 4 Brigade included a cross-country ambulance, an M113 armoured personnel carrier, infantry weapons and a one-man bivouac. In the main the displays were manned by corporals and private soldiers who showed admirable patience cheerfully answering the same questions for each group wandering through. By now the original three groups had fragmented into threes and fours.

4 Brigade catering personnel served a buffet lunch, in two sittings, cold meat, cold chicken and a variety of salads, eaten in what shade we could find. Two utes selling cold cans, soft drinks only, did a roaring trade

Oh, by the way, there were rows of portable toilets: no more trenches and hessian screens.

From the grandstand we had a view out over a wide valley to hills about 3 km away that were the artillery targets. Immediately to our front were infantrymen defending our position with small arms fire at groups of attackers about 200 – 300 m away. The right flank of the infantry company was protected by a forward wire obstacle and away to the right was a bridge over which the defenders had previously withdrawn. Two M113's, one on each flank, moved in to support the infantry with 50mm cannon fire. The one to our right was partially concealed from the enemy position by a low ridge and the occasional round would graze the ridge kicking up a spurt of dust. A third M113 immediately to our front was the observation post

for the fire control officer. Fire control orders were relayed over the PA so we could hear the orders, hear the guns and, after an appreciable delay, see and hear their effect.

Artillery fire was called down, first the 105's followed by the 155's and later by a concentrated barrage. This was the pattern throughout, weapons demonstrated individually followed by concentrated fire and shifting targets.

After about half an hour the (simulated) aluminium bridge was demolished by 4 CER then as a finale 4 CER, the enemy this time, blew the wire with a Bangalore torpedo.

The whole demonstration effectively showed the capability of various weapons in a simulated tactical situation yet judging by some of the comments people thought it was all a lot of effort for half an hour's heavy weapon firing.

We then strolled leisurely back to the busses, some groups including RAA/RAE, to go out to inspect the gun position, expecting a variation of the morning's static display, but this was something much more. Talking to the gun crews it soon became known that there would be more firing later in the afternoon. All this had been very carefully stage managed to appear as an unplanned afterthought, with individual gunners saying that there was some surplus ammo to be used.

We were not disappointed. First there was quite a barrage from the 105's then several rounds from the 155, really the highlight of the day for many.

From there we were taken back, amidst clouds of Pucka dust, to Bridges Barracks where there was a marquee providing welcome drinks, soft drinks, beer and a variety of wine, and an opportunity to meet and talk while being entertained by the Regimental Band 2/10 Medium Regiment before a buffet dinner similar to lunch. Before dinner there was a welcoming speech by the Commander 4 Bde who announced a couple of promotions and by the president of the Defence Support Reserves Committee – Victoria.

The evening concluded with the Regimental Band playing the 1812 Overture with guns controlled by the RSM 2/10 Med Regt. Under the circumstances it was a good performance but the band was simply not big enough to do justice to the overture in an open-air performance.

The whole demonstration was supported by the DSRC-V who had certainly provided the busses and, no doubt had other financial commitments.

Apart from the RAA/RAE group there were groups of employers invited by DSRC - V to see what the Army Reserve was all about and so gain their support and at least 2 contingents of school cadets. At least some of the employers had been invited by reservist employees. Just counting

busses there were well over 200 spectators who had been picked up from 3 points in Melbourne and one in Geelong, as well as a few who came by car.

Overall the day was a success, certainly no one I spoke to had any complaints. A couple of employers I spoke to said they had a better understanding of what the Army Reserve was doing.

Eddie Vial

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Reminders

Corps Subscriptions 2000 Due

Officers are reminded that Corps subscriptions are now due for the year 2000. The rates are:

Rank	Subscription
Lieutenant	\$20
Captain	\$25
Major	\$30
Lt Colonel	\$35
Colonel	\$40
Brigadier	\$45
Retired	\$20

SAPPER SUMMIT SUBSCRIPTIONS,

2000.

Please note that payment of subscriptions for Sapper Summit for the year 2000 would be appreciated now. Members of the Old Sappers Association and of the RAE Association (that is, Ringwood) are not required to pay as your contribution is included in your Association membership.

Please also note that subscription envelopes should be clearly marked:

The Editor, Sapper Summit

to avoid confusion with other mail reaching the Oakleigh Depot.
Bruce Campbell