



# SAPPERS ASSOCIATION (NSW) INC

ABN: 62 163 057 132

NEWSLETTER

## UBIQUE



Patron: Colonel Sandy MacGregor MC RFD (Retd)

September 2020

### Calendar 2020

- Annual General Meeting – Club Burwood - Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Oct
- Executive Committee Meeting– Burwood RSL-Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec TBC
- Sappers Quarterly Luncheon – TBA (probably early 2021)
- Sappers' Autumn Slosh – TBA (probably early 2021)

(TBA – To Be Advised )

## President's Message



Welcome to this “Spring has Sprung” 2020 Newsletter.

I trust you and yours are coping well with the current COVID-19 restrictions on our lives. Regrettably, the current restrictions have seriously curtailed Association activities throughout this year. We must, however, consider these restrictions to be necessary for the long-term health and well-being of ourselves, our families and our communities. It is with great anticipation that I look forward to our post-COVID-19 world.

Your Executive Committee has continued to conduct its scheduled quarterly meetings, via electronic means, to meet its administrative role and responsibilities. I thank each member of the Committee for their persistent contributions during 2020.

You may recall that on 20 July 2020 we advised our membership of the cancellation of the Sappers/Regimental Dinner 2020. This decision was made in consideration of attendees' health risks, Australian Defence Force protection measures and the ongoing high tempo activities of the 5<sup>th</sup> Engineer Regiment. We are hopeful that the next Dinner will proceed towards the end of 2021, and plan that it will more than compensate for any disappointment arising from the 2020 Dinner cancellation.

The Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled to be conducted on Saturday, 17 October 2020. We need to be flexible in the manner in which members can participate in the AGM, which will include in-person attendance at the Club Burwood and tele-conferencing (subject to any prevailing Club social distancing restrictions). You are encouraged to participate in the AGM, in the appropriate manner and as you are able. Our Secretary will distribute more

information to you about the conduct of the AGM, in the near future.



Younger members are requested to earnestly consider contributing to the successful future of the Association by becoming involved in the Committee, an “all ranks” team. Committee membership is not an onerous task and will ensure

we develop the wonderful Sapper *esprit de corps* for the next generation of soldiers. The current Committee members are more than willing to mentor enthusiastic members who may be initially prepared to fill “assistant” roles on the Committee.

You may recall that in the June 2020 Newsletter, our Honorary Secretary, Sjouke Havenaar, indicated that he would not be standing for that position at the AGM. Sjouke has given a decade of faithful and dedicated service to the Association. He has carried out his administrative duties in an exemplary manner, and has been an excellent “point of contact” for the Association. The Executive Committee will certainly miss his guiding hand, good humour, commitment and attention to detail. Sjouke has indicated he would be more than happy to provide every assistance to the new Secretary to transition into the position, as an important member of the Executive Committee team. Please consider nominating for the Honorary Secretary position at the AGM.



Members are always encouraged to communicate suggestions and new ideas to your Committee, to better provide for our membership's needs. The Association should not be considered a “Sydney-centric” organisation (in fact, only three of the Committee members reside in the Sydney metropolitan area). We would welcome suggestions how to be more inclusive for all our members, country or city, serving or ex-serving, young or not-so-young. Please assist us to plan and implement some good ideas for when we finally break free of the COVID-19 shackles.

Sincerely, Brian Malouf

## From the Treasurer's Desk

To use a Rugby League vernacular 2019/20 was a year of 2 halves. July to December was busy as usual, including our major annual event the successful Sapper's Dinner, and then, thanks to COVID-19, January to June was largely a non-event as far as our Association was concerned.

Our financial result for the 2019/20 year will be tabled in detail at the AGM on 17 October but, in summary, we returned an Operating Profit of \$709 for the 12 months. Our Equity position increased and is now in excess of \$11,000.

Membership numbers in the 2019/20 year resulted in a relatively small net increase of 4 members, but an increase is an increase.

Quarter 1 of the new financial year saw little activity, again due to COVID-19. That said, thanks to the efforts of members John Pritchard and Robert Ihlein, we gained 7 new members, which is a very encouraging result.

Please support your Association by attending the AGM next month and give favourable consideration to nominating for a committee position, or an understudy with the view of slotting into a committee position, possibly at the 2021 AGM.

Jeff James, Treasurer

## COVID-19 Test- It Truly Works

A new and easy test for the horror of COVID-19 is doing the rounds and it's simple, quick and positive (or negative if you see what I mean).

Take a glass and pour a decent nip of your favourite Single Malt Scotch into it; then see if you can smell it.

If you can, then you are halfway there.

Then drink it.

If you can taste it then it is reasonable to assume you are currently free of the virus because the loss of the sense of smell and taste is a common symptom.

I tested myself 7 times last night and was virus free every time thank goodness. Hic.

I will have to test myself again today because I have developed a throbbing headache which can also be one of the symptoms.

I'll report my results later.

**CORONAVIRUS  
THROAT SPRAY**



## Sappers' Quarterly Luncheons



Unfortunately with the current COVID-19 restrictions it has not been practical to hold these luncheons as we have done in the past. John Pritchard, who has been coordinating these luncheons has indicated that he will continue to monitor developments and is hopeful of being able to recommence them again in early 2021. We will keep you posted.

## Annual General Meeting.

The 2020 AGM will be held at **Club Burwood**, 97 Burwood Road, Burwood on Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 starting at 1400 hrs. Note that this is a different location to the Burwood RSL where we normally hold our meetings but unfortunately is not available on this day. A Notice of Annual General Meetings and Agenda will be sent out to all you shortly.

This is a critical meeting as amongst the usual business to be conducted we will also be discussing your **Associations direction and future**. Please make every effort to attend as we need to select your Committee and in particular will need to appoint a new Secretary. However, we do understand that due medical, distance and other considerations it may not be practical for you to attend and we will therefore be testing telephone conferencing for those that may still want to participate but can't attend. Details of this will be spelt out in the notice.



**"Your new pacemaker includes a Pac-Man game that gobbles up the cholesterol in your arteries!"**

## Greetings from the Front



Many Sappers have had the privilege for the last six months of serving on the front lines of the ADF's Op COVID assist or 'JTF 629' in Sydney's CBD.

Only a few days after demounting from Op Bushfires in March, many members of 5 ER were in uniform again serving in various roles.

For example, I was put to work with NSW Health's COVID-19 Contact Tracing team. NSW Health needed a massive increase in its capacity and the Army Reserve and RAN were assigned to the task of calling people from all over NSW, who had been exposed to COVID. After six week or so on the phones I moved on to the ADF's contribution to hotel security for international arrivals undertaking their 14-day quarantine period. Exceptionally long hours and a rapidly changing situation on the ground saw members of the Army Reserve 'live in' at the 5-star hotels, working *in situ* with the Police and various private security agencies. Although it may sound glamorous sleeping in a 5 star hotel, and it certainly was a contrast to the standard soldier's experience of sleeping rough, the long hours meant that soldiers only retired to their rooms to grab desperate opportunities to sleep.

The next phase of the operation saw my section representing the NSW Sheriff's department, issuing repatriation paperwork for persons under quarantine who had reached the end of their obligatory isolation.

On reflection, I was proud to be a member of the RAE as we (like usual) far out-represented the other corps in both leadership roles and in soldiers on the ground. The nature of the RAE soldier as being adaptable and having a diverse skill set really makes us ideal for DACC taskings.

*Ubique!* ~ CPL David MacLaurin

## Membership



As mentioned by the Treasurer earlier, we have recently gained 7 new members and I'm sure you will join me in welcoming Roderick (Rod) Stewart, Christian (Chris) Ducardus, Rebecca Kaltoum, John Roberts, Ronald (Ron) Brandy, Peter Todd and Colin (Smiley) Matthews to our Association.

## Bridge Over Queensland Waters



Soldiers from the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment build the medium-girder bridge during Exercise Sapper Span in Gayndah, Queensland.  
Photo: Warrant Officer Adam Keys

Gayndah, Queensland's oldest town, would have seen many things over its 170-year history, but this year marked the first time military bridges spanned its section of the Burnett River for an Australian Army training exercise.

Soldiers from 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment (2CER) brought the improved ribbon bridge and medium-girder bridge to the town, located four hours northwest of Brisbane for Exercise Sapper Span in August and September.

The three-week exercise allowed troops to further develop the regiment's bridging and watermanship capabilities.

Lieutenant Dan Kierath said the river banks proved to be an ideal and non-scripted training location to execute independent troop level tasks. "It has been a fantastic opportunity to conduct troop level training of a Royal Australian Engineers corps capability within a non-defence training area, which has been well received by the soldiers," he said.

As well as improving troop technical skills, the exercise also focused on development of lance corporals and corporals and training for potential humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in regional communities. "Working in the community inspired pride, purpose and self-worth within each other and the community." CPL Adam Dunemann said training in the community was beneficial. "It's good to be able to take the section out from scripted tasking," he said. "Working in the community inspired pride, purpose and self-worth within each other and the community."

Seeing Army bridges being deployed proved a novel sight for Gayndah locals, with many observing from the river bank.

Sapper Paige Weddell said they appreciated local support and interest.

“Interacting with the public in uniform was a great experience, the interest they had in our involvement and training was refreshing,” she said.

Exercise Sapper Span was not simply a training activity for 2CER, but also an important community engagement opportunity.

"The Army is a direct reflection of the Australian people that we serve."



The regiment deployed trade members from the 24th Support Squadron to help with remediation works to improve the Jacob Moerland Memorial Park Reserve, named after Sapper Jacob Moerland, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2010.

## Renewal Reminder



A number of our members had their membership fees fall due on 30 June. Reminder emails have been sent but if you are unsure of your financial status please contact the Secretary or Treasurer who will be happy to let you know.

Unfortunately, unless you renew we will assume that you no longer wish to remain as a member and future communications, including this Newsletter will have to cease.

## Water Purification a Boon for Valley



Not for the first time since the bushfire crisis began, the Army has come to the aid of the Bega Valley region.

Recent rainfall has brought welcome relief

to the drought-stricken Bega Valley communities and the rolling hills that were devastated by bushfires have returned to a shade of green. The rain, however, brought with it an unfortunate flow-on effect from the bushfires, making the normally pristine water source for the north of the Bega Valley Shire undrinkable.

Bruce Powell is the Water and Sewerage Services Operations Superintendent at Bega Valley Shire Council. “Since the fires went through and we’ve had heavy rain, we’ve got ash and other debris coming down the river, which has impacted the water quality from that catchment. Unable to purify the dam water, the Bega Valley Shire Council imposed Level 4 water restrictions and resorted to transporting drinking water from Bega to supply residents in the north of the shire.

“It’s an extremely expensive process,” Mr Powell said. This water purification system is the single most important thing that the ADF will deliver for the Bega Valley Shire Council to assist in keeping our community safe.

With the ability to provide a more sustainable solution, the Army’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment set up a water purification and desalination system (WPDS) next to Brogo Tank One in mid-February. Capable of turning any water source into fresh drinking water, Australian Army WPDSs are normally used to supply drinking water during major ADF exercises and deployments.

To watch video of the operation, go to: <https://youtu.be/3vFRfkdxstE>

## Executive Meetings

We welcome all members who may wish to attend the Sappers Association Executive meetings. Unfortunately due to current health restrictions we have needed to hold the last 2 meetings via teleconferencing. This however has led to the possibility of future meetings also being held by teleconferencing, or maybe a hybrid of physical attendance and teleconferencing. This is something for the new Committee to consider. This could also facilitate greater participation in the Committee by those members who are reluctant to join the Committee due to the need to attend meetings at Burwood.



*“Obviously, we need to readjust to in-office meetings.”*

## Our Office Bearers 2018/2019

President	Brian Malouf (9839 6129 W)
Vice President	John Hanley (0424 841 581)
Secretary	Sjouke Havenaar (9624 7689 H)
Treasurer	Jeff James (0409 901 800)
Committee	John Ray, Warren Page, David MacLaurin

Note: Any opinion expressed by any contributor is not necessarily the opinion of the Association or it’s Executive.

