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The Purple Circle

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Memories of 1966

Sabah, Borneo

Passing Parade

Gregory William (Greg) Batiste passed away on 23 December 2020 aged 76 years and 8 months. Greg served with 32 Small Ship Squadron and sailed to Vietnam 4 times, in 1966 on AS3051 John Monash and 3 trips in 1969 – 1970 on AV1356 Clive Steele.

Raymond Alexander (Alex) Faulkner passed away on 10 January 2021 aged 74 years and 7 months. Alex served in Vietnam from November 1967 to November 1968 with Det 55 Advanced Engineer Stores Service and Det 55 Engineer Workshop and Park Squadron.

Kerry William Jones passed away on 21 January 2021 aged 72 years and 5 months. Kerry was a 20th Intake Army Apprentice electrician. He served in Vietnam from June 1969 to June 1970 with 17 Construction Squadron and Det 55 Engineer Workshop and Parks Squadron.

Thomas John (Paddy) Madigan passed away on 25 January 2021 aged 75 years and 3 months. Paddy served in Vietnam from May 1967 to January 1968 with 1 Field Squadron.

David Christopher Wood passed away on 5 February 2021 aged 74 years. Dave served in Vietnam from December 1969 to January 1970 with 17 Construction Squadron.

Gilbert Walter Harris passed away on 4 March 2021 aged 87 years and 8 months. Gil served in Vietnam from 21 May 1968 to 28 May 1969 with Det 55 Engineer Workshop and Park Squadron

LEST WE FORGET

Honours and Awards

The Sappers listed below received Awards in 2021 Australia Day Honours list-

Member of the Order of Australia (AM) - Frank Mallard (deceased) for significant service to the Indigenous community of WA and to veterans groups.

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) – **WO1 Michael Bates** in the appointment of RSM 21st Construction Regiment, RSM 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, Career Adviser RAE and RSM Army ceremonial. **WO1 Sean Chainey** as the RSM of the RAE and the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment.

Conspicuous Service Cross - **LTCOL Sharon Coates** as the Joint Task Group 646.2 Commanding Officer on Operation Bushfire Assist.

Conspicuous Service Medal – **CAPT Jonathan Glover** in the performance of duty as a Project Engineer at the 19th Chief Engineers Works. **LTCOL Renee Kidson** on duty deployed as the Commanding Officer of the 5th Engineer Regiment on Operation Bushfire Assist. **LTCOL Harry Stimson** as the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment whilst deployed on Operation Bushfire Assist

MEET OUR MEMBERS



David Price

David was born in Cottesloe in November 1946 and has 2 brothers. He attended Cottesloe Primary School and Christ Church Grammar School before attending UWA where he majored in mathematics.

David was called up for National Service in November 1966 but deferred for a year so he could finish his studies. He joined the army as an 11th intake Nasho in February 1968. He served with Det 11 Movement Control Group in Vietnam from November 1968 to November 69.

After leaving the army in February 1970, David pursued a career in IT and worked with a number of Companies including BHP, Wang Computers, AAPT Telecommunications and Optus until he retired in 2008.

David met Christine at UWA in 1966 and they married in 1972. They have a daughter and a son and 2 grandsons.

He is a keen golfer, a gym junkie and Docker supporter. He and Christine like to travel overseas, and they spent 6 weeks in Vietnam in 2009. He enjoys gardening and going to the movies.

David and Christine currently live in Peppermint Grove.



Robert (Bob) Poole

Bob was born in Wagga Wagga in September 1945 and has 2 brothers (1 deceased) and 1 sister. He grew up on the family farm at Curramulka on Yorke Peninsula, South Australia.

He attended Curramulka Primary School and Minlaton High School, leaving school at 14 years old to work on the farm.

Bob joined the army in March 1963 and served with 21 Construction Squadron until 1966 and then with 22 Construction Squadron until discharge in 1968. He served in Borneo with both 21 Const Sqn and 22 Const Sqn.

Bob joined Lands and Survey Department in 1969 working as a field surveyor and involved with mapping control. After about 20 years in the field, he became a research office and later a cartographic draftsman until he retired in March 2004.

Bob met Phyllis in Perth after returning from Borneo in 1966 and they married in 1969. They have a son and a daughter and 6 grandchildren.

Bob spends his retirement with his grandchildren, is a Life Member of the City of Belmont RSL and goes to the gym twice a week as well as Pilates once a week.

Bob and Phyllis currently live in Kewdale.

13 Fd Sqn

Correction – In the Christmas Edition of the Purple Circle, WO2 Keith Williamson was listed as the new Trg WO however this was not correct, the new Trg WO is WO2 Keith Williams. My apologies to Keith.

Award Night – After training on Tuesday 15 December, the Squadron held their award night and the awards for Top Sapper and Junior NCO of the Year were presented to Spr Troy Burch and Cpl Will Rickard.



MAJ GEN Craig Williams, Cpl Will Rickard and Spr Troy Burch

A presentation was also made to the Sappers who were involved in the NSW Bushfire Emergency, they received the NSW Premiers Bushfire Emergency Citation.

The Sqn was also involved in a “Goodwill/Remediation” exercise in the Bullsbrook area cleaning up after the Wooroloo bushfires. About a dozen Sappers took part in the work.

RAE Excellence in Military Engineering Awards 2020

Along with a number of Sappers across Australia to win awards in the 2020 RAE List, a member of 13 Fd Sqn picked up the following award:

The **WO1 R “John” Raddatz AOM Award for Most Outstanding Non Commissioned Officer** was won by – **Cpl William (Will) Rickard**.

Building the foundations



Australian Army and Republic of Fiji Military Forces engineers have been working side-by-side, renovating a number of buildings at the Force Training Group Barracks in Fiji as part of Exercise Coral Sapper.

Maj Fiona Bickerstaff

A SOLID building, just like a solid military education, is underpinned by a strong foundation. With this in mind, a team of Australian sappers and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces partnered to shore-up these foundations at the Forces Training Group facilities in Suva as part of Exercise Coral Sapper.

OIC of Coral Sapper, Capt Taya Cropper, said she appreciated the importance of what the team was really building.

“We’ve partnered with a section of RFMF engineers to conduct renovations on a number of buildings at the Force Training Group facilities,” Capt Cropper said.

“The renovations are in support of RFMFs courses, with a focus on increasing international attendance as well as international instructor participation in the future.

“We’ve also partnered with the RFMF Engineers Works Office to conduct scoping for future, similar tasks.”

Cpl Michael Young, of 2CER, previously worked with the RFMF on Operation Fiji Assist 2016 and through various PMV exchange training courses at Gallipoli Barracks.

As part of Coral Sapper, Cpl Young has been conducting a series of site management lessons and is proud of what they are building together.

“Completing the construction works

has been a great experience, especially sharing knowledge and finding ways to complete jobs with minimal tools and equipment,” he said.

“It’s been very rewarding, building relationships and friendships with the RFMF and the Fijian community. I’ve enjoyed learning new things while working with them.”

Spr Joshua Boshier, of 6ESR, has built some solid relationships as well as new skills during his time in Fiji.

“It’s been very rewarding, working with the RFMF and building relationships,” Spr Boshier said.

“Together we’ve completed meaningful construction works.

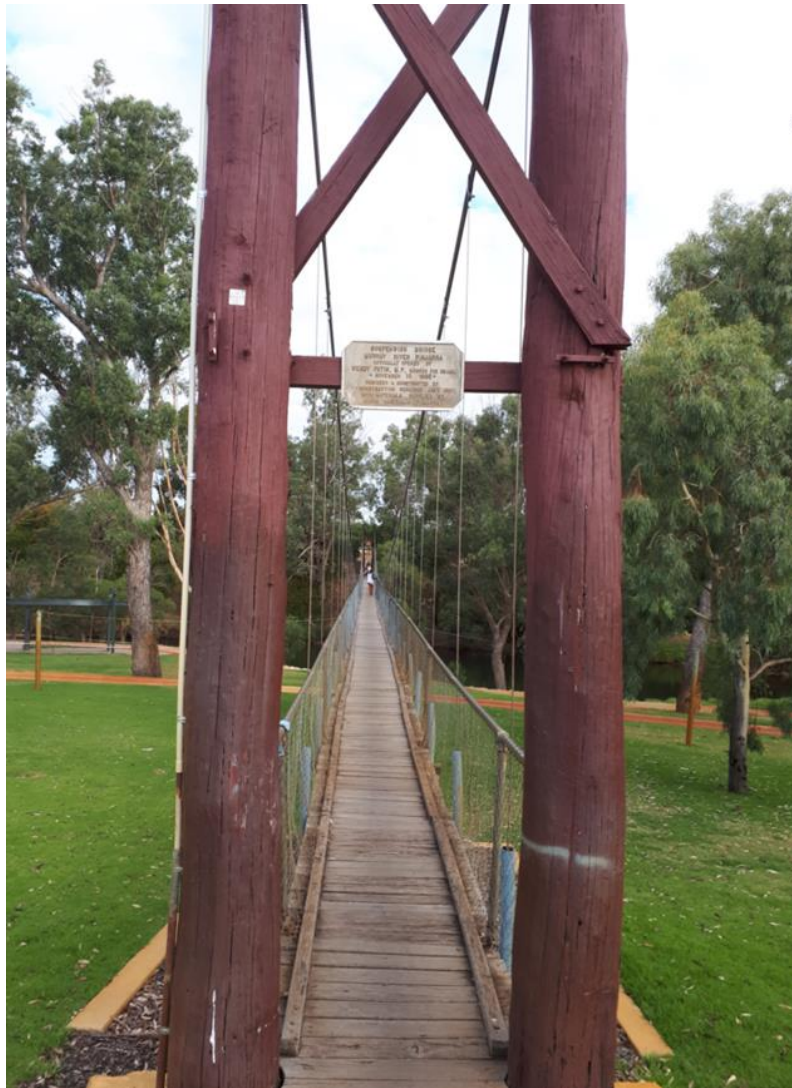
“I’ve learnt a lot from the RFMF during my time here, as the scope of works was more than I would do in my particular trade.”

Through the construction works completed during the exercise, these engineers have built so much more, Cpl Young observed.

“I’ve really enjoyed this trip and have gained a better understanding of Fijian traditions through working with the RFMF during the day and visiting different villages and locations on weekends with some of our RFMF counterparts,” Cpl Young said.

“I’ve made new friends over here who I’ll keep in contact with. On return to Australia I’ll be looking into studying the Fijian language as I’ve enjoyed learning some new words.”

Pinjarra Suspension Bridge



Our first luncheon for the year will held on Thursday 18 March at the Premier Hotel, Pinjarra. If you want to attend but haven't put your name in, contact Trevor Johnson (0419 918 912) by no later than midday Wednesday 17th, so enough tables can be booked.

Before the lunch, everyone will meet at the suspension bridge over the Murray River for one last look before it is upgraded and renovated. The bridge was built by 22 Construction Squadron back in 1985 as a means for the residents living on the east side of the river to walk across to the main shopping centre on the other side.

Plans are in the wind for members to revisit the bridge later in the year after all the upgrades and renovation have been completed to attend the re-opening ceremony.

2/2 FIELD PARK COMPANY - 2/22 FIELD PARK COMPANY

2/2 Fd Pk Coy was formed in June 1940 at Northam, WA as part of the Engineers for 7 Inf Div but when the Third Convoy was diverted to the UK with the 2/1 Fd Pk Coy, the unit was transferred to complete the 6 Aust Inf Div Engineers and left for the Middle East in September. They arrived at Qastina Camp, Palestine in October before moving to Amiriya in November to join CRE 6 Inf Div for their final exercises. When 6 Inf Div relieved 4 Ind Inf Div in the Western Desert in December, the 2/2 Fd Pk Coy moved to Maaten Bagush and then supported the attacks on Bardia, Libya and Tobruk. They stayed at Tobruk for a short while before moving to Tecnis where they worked to restore services and infrastructure. 1 March they were ordered back to Egypt to prepare to move to Greece.

2/2 Fd Pk Coy reached Greece in mid-April, after the German invasion was well advanced and they played some part in the demolition program that accompanied the confused withdrawal before they were evacuated to Crete by the end of the month. Here they joined 2/1 Fd Coy and 2/8 Fd Coy to form an adhoc RAE composite battalion which was given an infantry role at Kalives as part of Cremor Force. Large parties also worked on the wharves at Suba Bay until the German airborne invasion forced an evacuation from the south coast beaches, but significant numbers of men were left behind. Along with the rest of 6 Inf Div, the units concentrated eventually at Hill 69 Camp, Palestine for retraining and re-equipping after the losses of Greece and Crete and here the unit name was changed to 2/22 Fd Pk Coy in June.

While occupying Syria, 1 Aust Corps had been developing fortress areas around Tripoli and D'jedeide and in September 2/22 Fd Pk Coy moved to Rayak to work with 6 UK Inf Div. In October, the 6 Inf Div moved to relieve the British division and 2/22 Fd Pk Coy rejoined the Division. In response to the Japanese advance in the Pacific, 1 Aust Corps was recalled to Australia with 7 Aust Inf Div to move first. Along with DivHQ, 19 Inf Bde Gp left the Middle East in February while the rest of 6 Inf Div were diverted to Ceylon supported by 2/22 Fd Pk Coy at Matugama. As the former HQ 6 Aust Inf Div had become HQ NT Force, HQ AIF, Ceylon was then renamed as the new HQ 6 Inf Div. The division was relieved in July and landed in Melbourne, Vic and after leave, 2/22 reassembled at Seymour.

When Div HQ and CRE 6 Inf Div left for New Guinea in September, 2/22 Fd Pk Coy was detached and moved to Grete, NSW under command of 2 CE Wks. In January 1943, the unit came under command of 2 CRE 2 Aust Corps Tps and moved to Rocky Creek, Qld for construction projects as part of the development of the Atherton Tableland as a training area for troops returning from New Guinea. In May they rejoined CRE 6 Inf Div and moved to Wondecla to take up their normal role in the division. Here they waited with the rest of 6 Inf Div for a role.

Commencing in October 1944, Australia took over responsibility for finalizing the fighting in New Guinea by relieving US troops who were holding perimeters around Aitape, on New Britain and Bougainville. 6 Inf Div was allocated the role in Aitape with 2/22 Fd Pk Coy moving there with CRE 6 Inf Div in October. Not content to sit out the war as a passive garrison, 6 Inf Div advanced down the coast

towards Wewak with one of the field companies supporting the forward brigade in succession while the others constructed and maintained the road back to Aitape base. As no workshop and park company had been included in the base units, 2/22 Fd Pk Coy found itself working for both the CRE and DCRE manning the base stores dump, the forward field dump, the only sawmill and workshop. A detachment moved to But under the CRE in March 1945 and by May, Wewak had been captured and all RAE units moved there to work on developing the base while supporting the infantry which were advancing toward the last Japanese position in the hills behind Wewak.

At the end of hostilities in August 1945, the Engineer units direction changed from road projects and priority given to accommodation for the 6 Inf Div on the coast working to consolidate the Scale A camp with huts for recreation and many other purposes.

Website

Our website has had a half yearly update. Changes have been made to our members lists to include new members and to reallocate retired and deceased members to their respective categories. The write-up in the “About” section was also rewritten to correct a couple of errors that had been pointed out by one of our members.

RAE Association Membership Fees

The Association membership fees have been increased to \$30, effective for the financial year commencing 1 July 2021. If you have paid fees in advance for the next year or so, there will be no additional payment for those pre-paid years.

Next Meetings

Due to the Perth Metropolitan area going into a 5 day Covid lockdown and a 7 day restrictions period, the February meeting had to be cancelled.

The next meeting will now be on Sunday 11 April by which time I hope to be able to pass on relevant information regarding ANZAC Day.

After that will be the Annual General Meeting set down for Sunday 18 July at which time a new committee will be elected.

My wife asked me to take her to one of those restaurants where they make the food right in front of you. So I took her to Subway and that’s how the fight started.

Memories of 22 Construction Squadron



1983 Head Quarters Troop



1990 Plant Troop



Montebello Island work force