



## *Fire On!*

The Newsletter of the Royal  
Australian Engineers  
Association of Tasmania Inc



Welcome to the April 2022 issue,

### **President's Report**

Hello fellow Sappers,

We are pleased to announce that Maj John Opie (Retd) has accepted the role of Patron of our Association. Major Opie has a distinguished military career and has been a significant contributor to the success of the Anglesea Barracks Military Museum and Hobart Legacy. We look forward to his patronage and support.

1 July 2022 is the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Corps of RAE. The committee wishes to mark the occasion in Tasmania with some appropriate activities. Ideas are sought from you, the members. A possibility is a lunch, held somewhere centrally to enable people from all over the state to attend. Car-pooling, hire a bus etc. Please forward any ideas to a committee member.

**Anzac Day**, we will be participating in the Hobart March and Commemorative ceremony. Following this, members are invited to the Customs House Hotel for a reunion lunch. Our RAEME mates will also be there. Marchers gather at 10.30am in Macquarie St above Murray St, and we are in Section 5. Government covid regulations require you to check-in (App or manually), use hand sanitiser and observe 1.5m social distancing. Masks are optional. I encourage you and any other Sappers that you know to participate.

Subs are in many cases overdue, mainly due to the fact that we did not have a reunion dinner last year. Please pay on Anzac Day or EFT to our Mystate account, as follows.

Our Vice President, Major Bill Morley (Retd) is slowly and positively recuperating at home from a brain aneurysm. Thanks to everyone who made contact and forwarded their best wishes to Bill and Kerri. You can't keep a good sapper down for long.

Lindsay Hamilton has offered to be the Assn's historian and curator. This will open up new directions in the use and preservation of the RAE memorabilia collection held by the Assn. In addition, we have reached out to the RAE Foundation and the Military Engineering Museum at Holsworthy for assistance, no details available yet.

I encourage you to visit and participate on the Royal Australian Engineers Association of Tasmania Facebook page, kindly created by WO2 Cameron Elliott, and as always invite other sapper mates to participate.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible and some new faces on Anzac Day at the Hobart March and Service, or at the reunion lunch.

Follow the Sapper!  
Bogdan "Micho" Michalkowski

### **Anzac Day Participation**

Maj John Opie, will attend the Lenah Valley Service as Patron of the Lenah Valley RSL, Bogdan Michalkowski, will be Parade Marshall at the Lenah Valley march, then co-ord at the Hobart March,

Maj Bill Morley, will participate at the Dover Service, Sapper Turner, our NW representative, will be a flag-bearer at the Wynyard Service, Andrew Montgomery, will be guest speaker at the Arthurs Lake Dawn Service, WO2 Cameron Elliott, will attend the Hobart Service, and has been invited to attend afterwards at the Customs House Hotel.

We still seek a volunteer to place a wreath at the Combat Engineer Memorial in Launceston, anyone interested?

### **Payment of Subs**

Still set at \$20.00 annually,  
To Mystate Bank, BSB: 807-009, Account No: 51419745 (Cuscal Limited)

Please include your name as reference with the payment, so as to avoid upsetting our treasurer.

### **Major John Opie OAM, JP, (Retd)**

Enlisted and joined the Corps in the mid-fifties.

Service split between 1 Field Squadron and 17 Construction Squadron. Tours in the early '60s to PNG, working on a number of roads, bridges, and the build of a 300ton wharf at Vanim (northern coast of PNG).

Service with 1 Field Squadron on major exercises, and Vietnam with 3 Field Troop (The Tunnel Rats) in 1965/ 66.

Commissioned in 1969, posted as Adjutant of SME, and then for five years as Adjutant of the Army Staff College at Queenscliff. Promoted Major to command Depot Squadron at SME for three years.

Posted to Tasmania at the end of 1980 as SO2 Ops, and then as OC DSU Hobart, until retirement in 1993.

### **RAE Assn Committee Meeting Dates 2022**

The committee proposes to meet for the remainder of this year on the following dates ,

19 May '22

21 Jul '22

15 Sept '22

If members have any matters for the attention of the committee, please forward to the Secretary not less than seven days prior to any committee meeting.

### **TASSAPPERS Website**

John Clark and Ken Cusick are working together on updating the website with new contact details, and additional information.

### **Other Significant Dates for 2022**

Please note the following dates,

21 Jun '22, Waterloo Luncheon at Claremont RSL, details TBA

? Jul '22, RAE Corps Birthday (120<sup>th</sup> anniversary), details TBA, and may be held in northern Tas

29 Oct '22, RAE Assn AGM at Claremont RSL

### **Update of Personal Details**

The President and Secretary are still chasing some personal addresses and phone numbers in addition to your email addresses, to provide a back-up communications path. If not already done so, would you mind providing this information back to the secretary.

### **A few good men,**

#### **614749 Sapper Ross Hanigan**

A long story, I commenced my apprenticeship as a boilermaker welder with the Hydro Electric Commission at the Creek Road workshops in 1960, and on completion of my time I then moved to the Hydro works area at Poatina.

For something different, I volunteered to work as chain-man for the Hydro surveyors marking out the proposed road between Poatina and Miena, worked and camped in arduous winter conditions.

From early days I met and maintained contact with Bob (Big Bird) McKerrow (eventually WO2 GRes) and followed him to Queenstown to work as a linesman for the Hydro. Soon thereafter, I got a job as welder for the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company as they paid better wages than Hydro.

Meet Pauline, and along came Michelle, Stephen, and Mark (who unfortunately passed away last year).

In 1972 I enlisted with the unit based in Queenstown, 3 Troop of 12 Fd Sqn RAE, and together with Kevin (Pud) McDermott. As I recall the Tp Comd was Lt Geoff Surtees, and a few other names Capt Jim Young, Peter Abel, Max Giles? and Brian Triffitt ex ARA Vietnam Vet. Probably 30 or 40 Sappers who attended from Zeehan, Rosebery, and probably Renison Bell. I think by then Bob McKerrow was a Sgt with 3 Tp.

When the Tp was eventually disbanded, Pud, Brian, and I drove my (pale blue) VW1300 from Queenstown to Dowsing Point to attend the Sqn weekend activities. Stayed with the unit until it was disbanded in 1987.

A few highlights, several AFX's to SME, the '73 and '74 road construction camps at Buckland where I drove a tipper carting road gravel, and the Maria Island camp.

### **318716 SGT Wayne Quine**

Hi all, let me give you a summary of my life experiences that formed who I am.

I joined the Army in Victoria in 1976. Eleven days after I wedded my beloved, I went to Kapooka for basic training, (yes, she is tolerant and patient and still by my side today). Those who thought they knew better sent me to the School of Signals, thankfully my unique spelling and morse code interpretation saw a quick end to this and I was sent to the School of Military Engineering, (SME), thank God.

My first posting was to Enoggera, Second Field Engineer Regiment, 7 Fld Sqn and 2 Fld Sqn, where I gained my driving and plant operator certificates. I then went to 24 Spt Sqn where a unique opportunity allowed me to be the first defence personnel (plant operator), to live and work unattached with Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition, (ANARE), 79-80 summer season at Mawson station, Antarctica, building the new living accommodation. I give the above-mentioned wife much credit for being the sole parent to two preschool aged children for the six months I was away.

I had a yearning for adventure after that so made good friends with Tex Nevins, Tex also had a nose for adventure and in 1981 we were the first two plant operators to gain our wings, (this was after we dared each other). Later we did a ten-day adventure training exercise, walking across the Simpson desert, which was Tex's little project.

Whilst in Enoggera I organised a trailer push from Enoggera to the top of Mount Coot-tha via Brisbane city (15 Kilometres pushing a half ton trailer), to raise funds by collecting donations along the way for the Royal Children's Hospital appeal, I did this for a number of years until I was posted out of Enoggera, I have heard that this event is still running and now has become a competitive exercise between the corps at Enoggera.

I was then posted to 33 Terminal Sqn at Middle Head and Gosford as CADRE staff Cpl in 1982, following this in 1986 I was posted back to SME as a specialist trainer, (heavy cranes, forklifts and rigging) whilst looking after a small group of specialist trainers, who then travelled all over the country training all corps. I was promoted to Sgt in 1988 and was then posted to 18 Fld Sqn in Townsville as the PRA Sgt.

I retired from the RAE in 1989 to further my formal education. My wife Teresa and I have since worked and lived in several overseas countries and most of the Australian states, but believe we have chosen the best place to retire in, southern Tasmania.

Andrew Montgomery  
0418 125760

Secretary  
RAE Assn of Tas Inc.

