



'FOLLOW THE SAPPER'

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June 2017 Edition 28

Greetings fellow Sappers and Friends.

We have just commemorated the 102nd anniversary of the landing at ANZAC Cove. Next year will see the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One - the war to end all wars. Yet here we are in 2017 with potential for another conflict. North Korea has us all very worried. The new administration in the USA seems to be daring North Korea to fire another missile. It is anyone's guess what will eventuate within the region of the South China Sea. The French elections would have had some worried. Germany is facing an election soon, and BREXIT! Well what impact will that have on us? Yet we continue to commemorate that sacred day - ANZAC Day. And rightly so.

I am sure most of our readers would have attended a service somewhere, be it dawn or the main service. I laid a wreath here at Townsville dawn service. I think it was the largest crowd ever for a dawn service. What was particularly striking was the number of younger veterans marching or simply attending, and proudly wearing their medals. I think it has been a challenge for Ex Service Organisations to have the young men and women of recent conflicts, to participate. Perhaps up to now they have not believed themselves part of ANZAC Day. My wife and I chatted to some of the Iraq veterans at the gun fire breakfast at Townsville RSL. They were such fine folks but tended to defer to my conflict as being of greater significance. I was quick to point out that their deeds were no less courageous and we honoured them as much as we honoured our forefathers who landed at Gallipoli 102 years ago.

Lesser thinking people would be stirred up by media reports that seem to decry ANZAC Day and the spirit it has enshrined in all who followed in the service of their nation. Such stirrings are best ignored I think. Why give a dissenting few a public voice? True, ANZAC represents a range of freedoms, including freedom of speech, and thank God for that, but if we blindly follow what we read in the tabloids, then we become bitter and twisted. Do we need that?

I was given a copy of an essay written by a young fourteen year old girl who attended St. Monica's School in Cairns. She submitted her work as part of an RSL competition. She won 5/- for her efforts. That was in the mid 1950's. I think her essay best sums up my feelings about ANZAC Day, and I suspect yours as well. Her last paragraph makes the point on the need for tolerance and good will. The picture above is a great illustration of that. You be the judge.

See the letter in full on Page 5

LEST WE FORGET.
Editor: Derek Smith

"2017 Sapper Reunion"

Make sure you have registered
This date should now be in your diary.
See Page 9 for details.

STOP PRESS

**LORD KITCHENER CALLS
AND SO DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION
REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2017 REUNION**



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Inquiry into Unit Recognition for Service at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral

Submission to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal from 1st Field Squadron Group, Royal Australian Engineers Association

The engineer unit's official name was 1st Field Squadron Group, Royal Australian Engineers (1 FD SQN GP RAE). Today's equivalent of this unit is the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment based near Darwin NT.

The history of the Royal Australian Engineers demonstrates that combat engineer units have been at the forefront of Australian military engagements going back to World War One. The secondary role of the engineer soldier (a Sapper) is to be able to fight as an infantry soldier if required to do so. There are several instances in Australian military history where a combat engineer unit has been required to organise itself as an infantry unit and operate as one in the face of the enemy. This occurred on two occasions in World War One. It occurred twice during World War Two. It occurred once in the Vietnam War. By comparison with the events of WWI and WWII, the Battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral for the engineers was more intense, over a larger battle-space and lasted for a longer duration of time. The Battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral was unique in the history of the Royal Australian Engineers in that it is the only instance where an entire engineer combat unit was deployed into an Area of Operations and where it was disposed, from the first day of its arrival, to fight as infantry. In addition to its secondary role (to fight as infantry), 1 FD SQN GP also operated within its primary role (as engineers) and provided a broad range of engineering support to the other combat arms and services involved in the Battle. It was an extraordinary experience that tested the resilience and courage of the Australian Sapper in a manner that has rarely been repeated in the history of the Corps.

1 FD SQN GP had three field Troops each of two officers and 63 Sappers, 21 Support Troop, a HQ Troop, a Plant Troop and an enormous Field Workshops manned by the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME). At its peak, 1 FD SQN GP RAE numbered around 450 all ranks including attached soldiers from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. It was commanded by an engineer Major.

In May 1968, the unit was ordered to deploy the necessary combat engineer resources to the Area of Operations in which FSPBs Coral and Balmoral were located, in support of the 1st Australian Task Force on Operation Toang Thang. The Area of Operations was located some 40 kilometres North of Saigon city.

Our prime task was to provide intimate combat engineer support to the infantry battalions, Tank, Cavalry and APC Squadrons and general engineer support to the Artillery, Signals, Task Force Headquarters (Forward) and Task Force Logistics elements. The role included search for/detect/clear mines, booby traps and expedient explosive devices, search and destroy bunkers and tunnel systems, clear landing zones for the evacuation of casualties, make roads and helicopter landing sites, construct command posts, construct the medical facilities under

ground, pump water, provide the Task Force (Forward) headquarters control elements (including Operations, Artillery, Air Contact and Communications) with underground facilities protected and hardened with steel sheeting and sandbags, dig burial sites for the NVA KIA, conduct battlefield clearance of the NVA KIA soldiers, clear perimeter vegetation where visibility was limited, plus a number of other minor engineering tasks on-site.

The Squadron's Advance Party (including a D4 bulldozer) was airlifted to FSPB Coral and air-inserted with the battalions on 12 May 1968. The main body conveyed by road from its base in Nui Dat to the Area of Operations via Long Binh (a huge American base near Saigon) and then on to its final destination at FSPB Coral arriving there during the morning of 13 May 1968. The plant and equipment taken by 1 FD SQN GP to FSPB Coral included combat engineer equipment, explosives, dump trucks, trailers, Land-Rovers, earth-moving plant, generators, air-compressors, water pumping gear, RAEME support, the Medics, the Cooks and the Signallers.

We were told that the Infantry and Armoured units would be facing dispirited groups of NVA soldiers trying to find their way back to safe sanctuaries to the north of Saigon, following the failure of their latest attacks. We would also be responsible for defending a part of the FSPB Coral perimeter.

When we prepared to drive from our staging place south of Saigon to FSPB Coral on the morning of 13 May 1968, we were told that 1RAR and the Artillery had been involved in a major contact with the NVA at FSPB Coral, and that together with our normal roles, we would be required to organise ourselves as an infantry company, dig-in like an infantry company and fight like one too. This was accepted as engineers are trained to fight as infantry in our secondary role. As we drove into the FSPB we saw a row of Australian war dead lined up by the side of the road awaiting evacuation. These were our dead mates waiting for evacuation from that morning's battle with the NVA. Welcome to FSPB Coral.

During the remainder of 13 May 1968, the four infantry companies of 1RAR formed a perimeter around about two-thirds of the FSPB. The engineer squadron group was allocated the remaining one-third in the South-Western segment. See map below. This meant that an infantry Lieutenant Colonel (LTCOL Phillip Bennett) commanded two-thirds of the perimeter and an engineer Major (Major John Kemp) commanded the remaining one-third.

The engineers dug-in, completed a large number of defence and fortification works, found some water sources and supported our Infantry and armoured Corps brothers with combat engineer teams (one Corporal and six combat engineers) and mini-teams (two combat engineers).

... Continued on the next page.

To all our avid readers and fellow Sappers - I am sure you have some great photos and yarns that we would all enjoy reading. We want more content for "Follow the Sapper". Please, if you have stuff you are happy to share, pass it along to me.

My email address is dvsmith@ozemail.com.au.



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Continued from page 2.

The unit plant operators also had the task of digging burial sites with a bulldozer and then assisted in battlefield clearance of the numerous NVA KIA, along with pieces of the human body, using a three cubic metre front-end-loader to act as an expedient 'hearse'. There were sporadic encounters with the enemy during 14 and 15 May 1968. To enable 1 FD SQN GP to cover its allotted sector of the perimeter, the 1RAR Assault Pioneer Platoon was placed under command of the Squadron.

Even with the inclusion of the 1RAR Assault Pioneer Platoon there was a big undefended gap between the engineers and Bravo Company 1RAR. The engineer commander, Major John Kemp, briefed his officers that the Americans were to fill the gap with two "Dusters". Dusters are a tank, armed with a pair of 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns, but instead of pointing up to the sky, the Bofors are pointed parallel with the ground.

They arrived to fill the gap between 1 FD SQN GP and Bravo Company 1RAR. On arrival in the engineer area, the turret of one of the tanks opened and an American voice called out "When we open fire, some of our shots will be at point blank range. Tell your buddies to keep their heads down when that happens". The head disappeared and a laconic reply from a Sapper said, "Yeah, thanks mate" - meaning how would we know when the point blank rounds were going to be fired? In war, there are acceptable risks and steep learning curves. FSPB Coral was resplendent with both.

On the morning of 16 May 1968, 141 NVA REGT attacked FSPB Coral with three battalions of infantry as well as NVA Artillery and Infiltration Groups. The NVA attacked Alpha Company 1RAR with intense force, followed by Bravo Company, 1 FD SQN GP and the D&E Platoon (defends the Task Force HQ).

There was an intense bombardment followed by bugle calls, whistle blasts, and green tracer from their heavy machine guns to delineate their direction of attack. They rose as one about 100 metres in front of the engineer position and launched their trade-mark human wave attack on us. They came at us yelling and screaming. We hit them with everything we had. Then the Dusters opened up. It was like watching a series of high energy horizontal fireworks, except that the explosions happened at about waist height. The anti-aircraft shells were devastating and tore into the forward ranks of the NVA. There were two pre-designated Artillery Defensive Fire tasks close to our forward fighting pits and both of these were engaged several times with Mortar bombs and Artillery shells during the NVA assault on 1 FD SQN GP. Several Squadron members were wounded but only three were evacuated. The forward Troops (1 TP and 2 TP) ran short of ammunition and called for urgent resupply. This was delivered, and then the Dusters ran out of ammo. They engaged reverse gear, tore out of their positions going backwards at speed and then re-armed again in their resupply area. A couple of minutes later they were back. The engineers would have loved the Dusters to remain with us, but once the main attacks on us had been repulsed, the Dusters moved away to another area where they were needed. We could hear the battle continuing on other parts of the perimeter and knew that the NVA were attacking in force and with determination. Enemy mortar bombs and RPG rockets were impacting in the logistic and maintenance unit areas behind us, and the inner perimeter units were standing by to fight as infantry should the NVA achieve a 'break-in'. The inner perimeter was a loosely coordinated second line behind our position and during the engagements on 16 May 1968, 104 SIGNALS SQUADRON suffered one Signaller KIA and two WIA in this line. Nowhere in FSPB Coral was safe from the NVA onslaught.

Immediately after the ground attacks on FSPB Coral on 16 May 1968, the engineers were tasked to clear minor vegetation to the front of the perimeter units, using bulldozers. The bulldozers removed small trees and scrub out to a distance of 150 metres. The aim of this was to give our perimeter units a greater visual distance to their front in order to limit the opportunity for the NVA to creep in close to

us immediately prior to launching their human-wave attacks. The bulldozer operators noted that battle field debris and small pieces of human body were seen traversing their 'caterpillar' tracks as they pushed forward. The areas where we saw this happening was to the front of Alpha and Bravo Companies 1RAR, 1 FD SQN GP and the D&E PL positions. This confirmed that the effect of heavy artillery on the charging NVA troops must have been devastating and that battlefield debris was cast over an immense area as a consequence. This brings into question an accurate quantification of the NVA casualties during the 16 May 1968 engagements.

3RAR occupied FSPB Balmoral on 25 May 1968 with support from 3 TP, 1 FD SQN GP. Four Centurion tanks arrived on 25 May and the FSPB waited for the major attacks that they expected to be launched on them. An infantry battalion from 165 NVA REGT attacked on 26 May 1968, and after a four hour battle, was repulsed. The NVA found a couple of weaknesses in the Australian defence lines to the front of Delta Company 3RAR. It was decided to lay two defensive minefields to the front of Delta Company. On 27 May 1968, two engineer officers each commanding a combat engineer team, laid the minefields. On 28 May 1968, two battalions of 165 NVA Regiment attacked FSPB Balmoral against (mainly) Delta Company 3RAR. One of the minefields was successful, but the other had been detected by the NVA Sappers and they dealt with it before the attack commenced. They did not capture any Australian mines as the minefields were designed to totally self-destruct if tampered with. This worked well. Ingenuity born from the bitterness of experience with Australian laid minefields in our home Province of Phuoc Tuy had taught us to be extra vigilant when dealing with explosive obstacles.

On 28 May 1968, an infantry platoon was deployed to the front of the gap between 1 TP and 2 TP to thicken up the engineer perimeter defence. By this time, many of the Sappers were absent supporting the infantry and armoured units and the forward fighting pits began to thin out of engineer soldiers. We needed more weapons on the ground, but we did not have the reserves to satisfy that demand. Most of 3 TP was redeployed to FSPB Balmoral under the operational control of 3RAR. The unit suffered three WIA personnel requiring evacuation. There were several lesser wounds treated on-site by the Squadron medics and most of these Sappers remained on duty. The unit could not afford to lose men from the fighting pits during the night, nor slacken the degree of support for the other units during the day. Sleep was a luxury that rarely came the way of the Sapper from 13 May to 6 June 1968.

On 6 June 1968, the engineers closed down all the defensive facilities left in both FSPBs, destroyed anything that could be recycled by the NVA, provided mine and booby trap clearance for other unit road convoys and brought the biggest convoy of vehicles ever raised by this engineer unit back to their home base at Nui Dat.

There is very little to describe the work undertaken by 1 FD SQN GP RAE at the Battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral in the books and references covering this iconic series of engagements. This is probably because most of the Sapper teams were under the operational control of the supported units and therefore were seen as a 'seamless' inclusion to those units. This was the way in which the most effective combat engineer support could be delivered. Unfortunately, 'seamless' becomes 'invisible' to some eyes and this is clearly the case with the lack of written records describing the work of the Sappers during this series of major engagements, contacts and patrols. 1 FD SQN GP, as a unit on the perimeter of FSPB Coral, was under the command of HQ 1 ATF, not 1RAR - possibly, another reason why the unit is hardly mentioned in the literature. This is a regrettable outcome because many of the squadron personnel have been contested that the unit was actually involved in the battle at all, despite defending one-third of the perimeter during the biggest of the NVA assaults of the Operation. One undesirable outcome of this situation is that many FSPB Coral Balmoral Sappers, who suffer from PTSD, were made to feel excluded from the conversation in respect of this major battle, and this has served to heightened their anxiety and depression.

... Continued on the next page.

Had 1 FD SQN GP not been able to defend it's segment of the perimeter and the NVA achieved their desired 'break-in', the outcome would have been catastrophic for 1 ATF. The Sappers adopted the unwritten attitude of our brothers in the Infantry, Artillery and Armoured units - there would be: -- NO SURRENDER - NO RETREAT.

We of the 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association are not seeking to identify our unit as a special stand-alone entity. We, Australians, New Zealanders and Americans, were all in this action together.

We ask the Appeals Tribunal to compare the merits of other battles that have received the Unit Citation for Gallantry with the Battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral. The levels of extraordinary courage, tenacity, resilience and determination demonstrated by every unit involved in this Battle justifies the award of the Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry.

Yours in soldiering
George Hulse
for and on behalf of every member of this Association.

22 May 2017
President 1FD SQN GP RAE Association

McNeill I, and Ekins A. (2003). On the Offensive. Vol 8, St Leonards NSW. Allen and Unwin, p376.

[illegible]

Map 12.5 Fire Support Base Coral, night 15/16 May 1968

Notes

1. H&B Company, 1A1F, included its Delonco Platoon (Del Pl).
2. 1 Troop, A Squadron, 3 Cavalry Regiment, shown concentrated for employment by sections for counter-competition tasks.
3. Assault Pioneer Platoon, 1RAR were under command 1 Field Squadron.
4. Battery A, 2/35th Armoured (US) included under command two armoured self-propelled M42A1 40 mm anti-aircraft guns from 5/2d Artillery (US). They were located on each flank for employment in a ground role to protect Battery A by assisting in covering the gap between the Assault Pioneer Platoon, 1RAR and D Company, 1RAR.
5. Most units deployed were less near elements, known as 'B' echelons, remaining in 1A1 Base.



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The Spirit of ANZAC

By Bernice FitzGerald - Age 14

The spirit of Anzac portrays the fearless courage and the willingness to serve, that was the initiative of the early settlers of our country. Its origin can be traced back in Australian history to the efficient leadership of such prominent men as :- Captain Arthur Phillip, the founder of the first settlement, and Governor Lachlan Macquarie, the Building Governor who later progressively developed it, and the men and women who, regardless of countless hardships and defeat, pioneered so loyally and courageously.

The Spirit was distinguished when in 1914 Australia's sons and daughters were called upon to support the "Mother Country" in the defence of freedom, and the maintenance of the rights of small nations. There was excellent response from every quarter, from country properties, from the mines and from the cities. On November 1st 1914, a convoy of Australian and New Zealand warships left Western Australia for Egypt where the Australians and New Zealanders combined to form the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. It was from the initials of this formation that the word "Anzac" was coined, whilst it was also claimed, that the word was coined from the lettering: A.N.Z.A.C., marked on the ammunition sent to the army.

After four months strenuous training on Egyptian sands, the Corps landed at dawn on 25th April 1915, on the tangled hillsides of the Gallipoli Peninsular. French and British troops also participated in the attack. The landing of the Australians at Gallipoli can be described as most heroic and significantly historic. Despite the heavy loss of troops and the indescribable sufferings endured by our men, they fought on, and the spirit of Anzac glowed with the outstanding courage that was identical with that of their forefathers, the early Australian settlers.

The introduction into history, at that time, of a very important point was the world wide recognition of Australia as a nation. Later our forces figured in further exploits in Europe. The sons of our gallant men have likewise fought in World War II and Korea. Many have paid the supreme sacrifice. The popular slouch hat worn by the "Digger" known the world over, is associated with the words, "Courage, comradeship, understanding and a willingness to serve."

On ANZAC Day, 25th April, each year we solemnly commemorate the landing of the Australians at Gallipoli. It is a public holiday throughout the Commonwealth. The day commences with dawn parades then later, with services in all Churches, and a Cenotaph ceremony. They are arranged to remind us of the actual happening, and of the gallantry of our men.

We pray for the fallen and for their endeared ones, and we honour those who still remain. Wreaths are placed on the Cenotaph as a token of our esteem for those who fell on active service. At an evening meeting it is customary for noteworthy citizens and members of the clergy to address the public and pay a glowing tribute to all those who were represented in this heroic event.

We can all help to revise the legacy of the fallen by carrying on with the same famed spirit of our brave predecessors. To maintain peace, we must practice tolerance and good will, but we must also be constantly vigilant to safeguard our prized heritage.



Taken by Derek Smith at Gallipoli 2015



Soldier on right is Derek's grandfather
5th Australian Light Horse, at Gallipoli 1915

Letters to the Editor:

I have had a few comments over the time I have been editor of FTS so I figured it might be appropriate to stick in a section where readers have their two bob's worth. I would welcome feedback on this idea, and of course, contributions. It all helps to make our newsletter a better read so come on folks, toss me some treats - PLEASE.



Under the Southern Cross I stand
A sprig of wattle in my hand,
A native of my native land,
Australia, you f***ing beauty!

This poem is one used by the Australian cricket team as their "victory song"; to be recited by the team following a win, usually chanted in the confines of their dressing room or at an after-match celebration. The last line of the "official version" is given as "Australia, you little beauty".[1]

The tradition of the Australian cricket team chanting "Under the Southern Cross I Stand" began in 1974, when Rod Marsh gave a rendition of the poem after Australia had beaten England at the Gabba (the Brisbane Cricket Ground, situated in Woolloongabba).

The unofficial role of "songmaster" has been handed down through the ranks of Australian cricketers; from Rod Marsh the role was passed on to Allan Border, then David Boon, Ian Healy, Ricky Ponting (also known as "Punter"), Justin Langer, Mike Hussey, and Nathan Lyon. Upon retirement from the team, or becoming team captain, each custodian of the verse appoints his successor.[2].

Rod Marsh (also known as "Bacchus", a reference to the town of Bacchus Marsh) had learnt the verse from the then captain of the Australian cricket team, Ian Chappell, who had heard it in 1963 from another Australian cricketer, Raymond Patrick Hogan. Chappell has expressed the belief that Hogan picked it up from yet another Australian cricketer, John McMahon, who had served in the Australian military during the Second World War.

Under the Southern Cross I Stand

[the Australian cricket team's victory song]

8 May 2013 by IAC

The Australian author Thomas Keneally has reported hearing the song from his father, who also served in the Second World War. This raises the possibility that the poem came from the Australian military.[3]

There is indeed evidence that a variant verse was used in the military and universities. Considering that there were many ties between the military forces and the university regiments, the connection between the two is not surprising.

Ralph Pridmore, who was a Major in the Australian army, says that the following version was used in the Royal Australian Engineers in the 1960s and 1970s:

Two arms, two hands
Two steely bands
Beneath the Southern Cross I stand
A hero of my native land- Australia!
Up the old red rooster
And more piss. [4]

An almost identical variant, considered to be the "unofficial hymn" of the Australian National University Boat Club, is believed to date back to the Intervarsity Regatta held in Adelaide in 1966:

Two arms, two hands, two steely bands
Under the Southern Cross I stand
A native of this Southern land, Australia
You bloody beauty.
Up the old red rooster.
More piss! [5]



Anecdotal evidence provides a longer version of the same poem:

Australia, Australia
Land of the waratah and ... dahlia
If ya land in gaol I'll bail ya Australia
Two arms, two hands
Two steely bands
Beneath the Southern Cross I stand
A sprig of wattle in my hand
A product of my native land
A voice within me cries aloud Australia
You bloody beauty
So up the old red rooster
And more piss! [6]

However, the origins of the verse go back much further, as it has apparently been based upon the chorus of the 1890s patriotic song "Australia; or Heart to Heart and Hand to Hand", written by the Rev. Thomas Hilhouse Taylor (1861-1925). A 1908 advertisement for the song described it as "the recognised Australian National Anthem". The chorus of Taylor's song is as follows:

For Heart to Heart and Hand to Hand,
Beneath the Southern Cross we stand
And shout "God bless our Native land"
Australia! Australia! [7]

The evidence suggests that this cricketers' chant began as a patriotic song in the late 1890s, was turned into a military drinking song in the 1940s, and then finally developed into the victory song of the Australian cricket team in the 1970s. From such beginnings has this raucous verse become popular with cricket fans in particular, and with Australians in general.

Ralph, thanks for that. You very kindly included all the references which I chose to omit. Readers, be assured Ralph noted all sources. Well researched - Dereck Smith Ed.

And this from Barry Hawthorne

Hullo Derek

Great work on the newsletter. Interesting article on the origin of the Red Rooster. Think maybe the Grunts might have beaten us to though. I was in Ebisu R and R centre in Toyko early in 1953 on a Guard Detachment when the RAR Digs from Korea were raising hell. Heard two versions "the more piss version" and the more "chutta mardi paper version" (Jap slang for wait a while paper) let you research the use of the paper (Family Magazine).

Later I was in 6Sec 11 PI Don Coy (so called in those days not Delta). Frequently heard the Red Rooster used in the Coy Boozer that was in 53 /54. So it came as no surprise when the Sappers reintroduced it. Perhaps some of the 21 Sqn boys were ex Korea there was a lot of Sappers attached to the Bns in Korea. Maybe the K force and 3RAR originals introduced it. Perhaps there are some Korea Vets amongst your readers who may recall its use in Japan/Korea.

Ok with me if the Engrs lay claim to its origin, buggar the Grunts. Hope to make it to the reunion but getting a bit dodderly now.

Best Regards always **Barry Hawthorne.**

Barry, thank you for yet a bit more on the Red Rooster. So Mr. Pfeiffer, back to the drawing board!

President's Report June 2017

Reunion 2017

Our reunion on 25, 26 and 27 August 2017 will be held at the Twin Towns Services Club at Tweed Heads. There will be a meet and greet in the Mantra Resort (opposite Twin Towns Services Club) 'Visions Room' on Friday 25 August from 11.00 am until 6.00 pm and Saturday morning 26 August 2017 from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm. The Memorial Service will be conducted in Chris Cunningham Park commencing at 3.45 pm Saturday 26 August 2017 with a Catafalque Party from 2CER and the Australian Army Band - Brisbane. Our parade of flags will require flag bearers, so please indicate if you would like to carry a flag during this service. The flags represent a fallen Sapper on overseas duty from 1945 to the present day. The reunion dinner will be held on Saturday 26 August 2017 commencing at 7.00 pm in the 'Visions Room'. On Sunday 27 August commencing at 9.30 am, we will hold our AGM in the RSL Board Room in the Mantra Hotel. Lunch on 27 August 2017, will be a buffet in the Mantra Hotel commencing at 12.00 noon with the bar available from 11.00 am.

Congratulations to Jim Weston on assuming the position of Secretary / Treasurer.

Jim has put his hand up to be the Association Secretary / Treasurer and we all thank him for his willingness to keep our group going. The Association thanks Robin Farrell for all the years of work at the helm of our finances and communication plus as an active member of our committee. Congratulations Robin on a job well done! Enjoy a well-deserved break.

Annual membership fee

Please don't forget that your annual renewal of membership is **due on 1 July** every year. Membership costs **\$30 per year** and the funds go toward the administration, fees for incorporation, newsletter printing and postage plus incidental costs involved in running a voluntary, not-for-profit association. The renewal form is a part of this newsletter.

Engineer Monument to WWI Sappers

Discussions between this Association and influential folk in Canberra continue in respect of the construction of a monument in France. Preliminary discussions suggest that the monument may be in the form of a bridge containing the Corps Badge or similar Australian icons. The final location for this monument is yet to be decided. However, there is a good chance that the date for the dedication of it will be 8 August 2018 in the area of Corbie - possibly the township of Cerisy - in northern France. The Head of Corps, Brigadier Wayne Budd AM CSC is interested in this project going forward. More to follow at the reunion.

50th Anniversary of the Battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral

Arrangements are under way for a civic reception in Canberra on 12 May 2018. On 13 May 2018, there will be a march in ANZAC Avenue and an afternoon memorial service at the Australian War Memorial. Planning stages at this time. More details at the reunion and in future editions of Follow The Sapper. Please mark your diary if you are a Coral Balmoral veteran of 1 FD SQN GP RAE - includes 1 TP, 2 TP, 3 TP, 21 SPT TP, HQ TP, PLANT TP, RAEME WKSPS, our cooks, medics and Signallers.

Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry

Following on from the previous edition of this newsletter, after some disappointing knock-backs from some high level Defence agencies in Canberra, we gained the support of Mr Dan Tehan MP, the Minister for Defence Personnel. He directed the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal to hold an Inquiry into the service provided by all units involved in the Battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral during the Vietnam War. The RAE submission is printed in this newsletter. The closing date for submissions was 16 June 2017. We are advised that the DHAAT Inquiry may take some twelve months before the Tribunal makes its recommendation to the Federal Government on whether or not the UCG should be awarded to the units involved. More to follow.

Battle Honours

There is a contentious issue about the RAE and some other Corps' inability to accept battle honours. This centres around Corps that do not have Regimental Colours (a certain type of flag). These Corps are not able to display battle honours on their Corps or unit flags. RAE is one of them. This is a carry-over from the Imperial system. A system that I have challenged a couple of times in the past. I propose that we take up a project where we seek to change to this anomaly. I ask for your support to mount a campaign to have an Australian system of battle honours where any unit or sub-unit is able to accept and display a battle honour on its Corps or unit flag. The details and protocols to be worked out under a joint RAE Association management committee. This could take years to resolve and could end up in failure, but I am certain that other Corps would be interested in this proposal. I will take this up with you at the reunion.

George Hulse
President 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association
June 2017

Vale - 1 FD SQN GP RAE members:

Sergeant Bob Shepherd - Served in 1 FD SQN GP. Passed away 28 January 2017

Captain Eddie Brannigan - Served 1 FD SQN GP (21 SPT TP) 1970/71. Passed away 5 February 2017.

Corporal Phil Ryan - Served 1 FD SQN GP 1966/67 and 21 SPT TP 1971. Passed away 23 February 2017.

Sapper Warren Murray - Served 1 FD SQN GP 1965/66. Passed away 23 February 2017.

Mrs Edna Coolburra (wife of Billy) passed away 2 May 2017.

Sapper John Smith - Served 1 FD SQN GP 1969/70. Passed away 11 May 2017.



LEST WE FORGET

Back to Borneo by Ivan Giles (Grumpy) RAE rtd

I served in Sabah, Borneo from 1964 to 1965 in 1 Field Squadron. I left my wife and 2 small children behind and headed into the jungle to build a road from Keningau to Sook. During the conflict 23 Australians were killed and 8 wounded.

I heard about a 50 year reunion trip planned for August 2015 and decided to go along and see how the country had changed and maybe run into a few mates from the past. My daughter Keryn accompanied me due to my age and she was also interested in seeing where I had served during part of her early years.

After overnighing in KL we landed in Sandakan and met the other travellers in our group. We were welcomed by Bernadette and Roland from Borneo Trails who presented us all with a beautiful traditional necklaces; they were to be our guides for the next 10 days.

The President of Sandakan put on a magnificent dinner for us at his residence and it was attended by approximately 200 local dignitaries and prominent business people as well as The Australian and British High Commissioners.

We then travelled from Sandakan to Kundasang and attended an early morning Memorial Service to honour the Royal Australian Engineers who served during the Indonesian confrontation and also to honour the men who perished during the Borneo death march. Our designated group leader Mr Rod Bramich was presented with a 200 year old poison blow pipe which we had to leave behind in the local museum until it can be safely shipped back to our own War memorial in Canberra.

We continued to travel through the country and our next stop was Keningau which is the place that I had served as an engineer and remembered well. It had changed a lot and the local people greeted us warmly, the reception we received was nothing short of amazing. We attended several dinners and lunches during our stay which were hosted by the local community. We had to extend our stay in Keningau due to people wanting to catch up with us and chat about our shared history and how the city had grown since we were there. They are very grateful to us for assisting in building the roads etc. which helped their economy grow and become what it is now.



We attended the opening of the Royal Engineers Memorial Park as we departed the bus we were met by a line of local men, women and children who wanted to shake our hands and have photo's with us. We felt like celebrities. We then attended another memorial at the Australian Garden and we had the opportunity to plant shrubs in the garden.



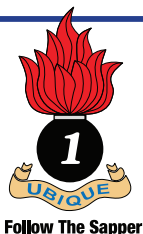
Our next stop was to Kota Kinabalu which took us most of the day on a bus, again another wonderful dinner in our honour which was hosted by The State Tourism Minister. It also happened to coincide with my 83rd birthday and I was presented with a beautiful cake and everyone sang "Happy Birthday".

I was overwhelmed by the welcome we received from the local people everywhere we went. I had no clue of the impact the RAE had on the local people and their cities. It was a trip that just got better and better each day. I talked with my fellow travellers and heard their stories about what they had done in Borneo 50 years prior and heard some familiar names in their stories. Whilst a lot of us served at different times we seemed to know familiar names and we all got along wonderfully. My daughter and I made some new friends during this trip and we will always have this beautiful happy memory to treasure.



Thanks Keryn and Ivan for this. It must have been a wonderful visit that brought back many memories. Ed.

My dad is the one sitting down in front row with white sneakers on, next to him in the middle is Lloyd Morey (he was not in 1 FD SQD) but went to Borneo under another group of engineers, back row younger gentleman with blue shirt no jacket is the son of one of the men that went. James Bramich, the man behind my dad in light beige coloured jacket is Jock McDougall, the man far right back row with pinkish coloured shirt (end of row) is Doug Canning. The rest I can't remember, they all served in Borneo under different groups. Cheers Keryn Lawless



1 Field Squadron Group
Royal Australian Engineers Qld Inc.
25th, 26th & 27th August 2017

2017 FAMILY REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Venue: Twin Towns Services Club – Tweed Heads NSW

Personal Details

Family Name: _____ Contact Phone: () _____

First Name: _____ E-mail Address _____ @ _____

Postal Address: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

'Nickname' or

Preferred Name: _____ Partners Name: _____

(Required for ID Tags at Reunion)

(Required for ID Tags at Reunion)

Other guests attending - Number () Preferred guests names: _____

It is preferred by the Executive Committee that all Members Guests are over the age of 18 years.

Cost of Events

Cost: \$175.00 per person.

Covers all events, Friday Meet and Greet, including Saturday Memorial Service,
Saturday Evening Family Reunion Banquet and Sunday Luncheon.

Payment Details

Please accept my Registration for:

Number attending: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Method of Payment: ☐ Cheque. ☐ Money Order. ☐ Direct Deposit into account.

When making a Direct Deposit, ensure you mark it **'Reunion'** and then you're **'Family Name'**
Heritage Building Society: **BSB 638-070. Account No: 10045570.**

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Make cheques, money orders payable to: **1 Fd Sqn Gp RAE Qld Inc.**

All registrations to be pre-paid by Friday the 11th August 2017

(This is a huge catering event. Much goes on behind the scenes, therefore

'No Late Numbers will be taken—DEFINITELY.')

Please send this Registration Form to:
2017 Reunion Treasurer
1 FD Sqn Gp RAE Qld Inc.
P O Box 703 WARWICK QLD. 4370.
e-mail: info@1fieldsappers.org

DONATION FORM

AMOUNT: _____ Receipt required: Yes

No

NAME: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

Back Yard Aussie Humour sent by one of our members.

They were funny looking buildings, that were once a way of life,
If you couldn't sprint the distance, then you really were in strife.
They were nailed, they were wired, but were mostly falling down,
There was one in every yard, in every house, in every town.

They were given many names, some were even funny,
But to most of us, we knew them as the outhouse or the dunny.
I've seen some of them all gussied up, with painted doors and all,
But it really made no difference, they were just a port of call.

Now my old man would take a bet, he'd lay an even pound,
That you wouldn't make the dunny with them turkeys hangin' round.
They had so many uses, these buildings out the back,"
You could even hide from mother, so you wouldn't get the strap.

That's why we had good cricketers, never mind the bumps,
We used the pathway for the wicket and the dunny door for stumps.
Now my old man would sit for hours, the smell would rot your socks,
He read the daily back to front in that good old thunderbox.

And if by chance that nature called sometime through the night,
You always sent the dog in first, for there was no flamin' light.
And the dunny seemed to be the place where crawlies liked to hide,
But never ever showed themselves until you sat inside.

There was no such thing as Sorbent, no tissues there at all,
Just squares of well read newspaper, a hangin' on the wall.
If you had some friendly neighbours, as neighbours sometimes are,
You could sit and chat to them, if you left the door ajar..

When suddenly you got the urge, and down the track you fled,
Then of course the magpies were there to peck you on your head.
Then the time there was a wet, the rain it never stopped,
If you had an urgent call, you ran between the drops.

The dunny man came once a week, to these buildings out the back,
And he would leave an extra can, if you left for him a zac.
For those of you who've no idea what I mean by a zac,
Then you're too young to have ever had, a dunny out the back.



Executive and Committee Members 2016 - 2017

Patron:

LT.GEN. Frank J. Hickling. AO. CSC (Retd)

Executive Committee:

Hon: President: George Hulse

Email: eddsniffer@optusnet.com.au

Ph: (07) 3399 7659

Mob: 0412 341 363

Hon: Vice President:

Hon: Secretary - Treasurer: Jim Weston

Email: james.weston5@icloud.com



Honorary Committee Members:

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Email: info@1fieldsappers.org

facebook

1 Field Squadron Group Web Site

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Visreal Productions - Warwick, Queensland. 4370
Phone 61-7-4661 5222 Mob. 0421 045 100
Email: info@visrealproductions.com

1 FIELD SQUADRON GROUPTHE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS
QUEENSLAND INCORPORATED

(Including 1 Field Squadron Workshops and 21 Engineer Support Troop)

'NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION'

Surname _____ First Names _____
 (Family Name) _____ (Given Names) _____

Date of Birth _____ Wife/Partners Name _____
 (Confidential if ticked) ☐ (Confidential if ticked) ☐

Residential Address _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Private Phone () _____ Email _____ @ _____
 (Confidential if ticked) ☐ (Confidential if ticked) ☐

Veteren's Service Details or other appropriate information. (If possible)

Name _____ Service No. _____

Period of Service: From ____/____/____ To ____/____/____ Active Service: Yes ☐ NO ☐

Unit/Units _____ Which Country Served for? Australia or Other _____

Which duties? (F.E, Plant, Mine Clearing, etc.) _____

Membership Year is 1st July to 30th June in each year. Fees are accepted until 30th September, in accordance with the Association's Constitution. Unfinancial members will not be able to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

New Member Entrance Fee \$ 10.00 (Once Only - Inclusive of Association Badge.) *Lost Badge \$5.00 each
 Annual Subscription Renewal \$ 30.00 (Includes Newsletters)
TOTAL \$ 40.00

MEMBERS SIGNATURE _____ Date ____/____/____

**MEMBERSHIP 'RENEWAL / UP-DATE' FORM**

\$30.00 per year. (1st July to 30th June)

Name _____

Address _____

STATE _____ POSTCODE _____

Private Phone () _____ Email _____ @ _____

Wife/Partners Name _____
 (Confidential if ticked) ☐

EXTRA or 'LOST' Membership Lapel Pins Required, please tick - How many? ☐ \$5.00 each P&H included.

MEMBERS SIGNATURE _____ Date ____/____/____

Return Application with Cheque, Money Orders or Direct Deposit to:

Direct Depositing into account: Heritage Building Society. BSB: 638-070 Account No: 10045570

Ensure you mark it, 'Membership' and then your 'Surname' or 'Regimental Number' for identification.

IF YOU USE THE DIRECT DEPOSIT FACILITY PLEASE FORWARD THIS FORM AS WELL.

NO CASH IN MAIL PLEASE -



Reunion Accommodation Offer
Contact Mantra now for 10% Discount







I will stay the night

Mantra Twin Towns are pleased to extend to all guests of the **1 Field Squadron reunion group from 25-28 August, 2017** a 10%* discount off the best available accommodation rate. The hotel rooms or apartments are beautifully appointed with stylish and comfortable furniture and all the amenities you need to make yourself at home. Relax in the on-site pool or take a short walk down to Greenmount beach. For group accommodation blocks, please email twintowns.conf@mantra.com.au.

To book call **1800 19 20 20**
or email twintowns.res@mantra.com.au

mantra | twin towns, coolangatta

*Terms and conditions apply. Subject to availability at the time of booking and subject to change.

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1 Field Squadron Group Merchandise

NEW STYLE CAPS AND SHIRTS



1 Fd. Sqn Gp. RAE Tie - \$30.00 + P&H
'Aussie Made' 100% Polyester
1 Fd. Sqn. Gp. Logo at the bottom &
'1 Field Squadron Group' raised print diagonally across navy blue area.



1 Fd. Sqn. Gp. Polo Shirt - \$25.00 + P&H
Check out the fabric - breathable
and definitely no ironing.
*Note: Sizes are limited to Small
(Suitable for the Girls),
Medium, Large & Extra Large*



BUMPER STICKERS—\$5.00
Show your support for the Afghanistan veterans by
putting this under your Vietnam sticker.



Follow the Sapper Cap - \$17.50 + P&H
One size fits most.

ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

* 1 Fd Sqn Gp RAE Unit Tie.	[]	No. required \$30.00 ea + \$8.50 P&H=	\$
* 1 Fd Sqn Gp RAE Cap.	[]	No. required \$17.50 ea. + \$8.50 P&H=	\$
* 1 Fd Sqn Gp RAE Polo Shirts. Size: { }	[]	No. required \$25.00 ea. + \$8.50 P&H=	\$
* Veterans Supporting Veterans' Bumper Stickers	[]	No. Required \$5.00 ea.	\$

(Postage free with other purchases)

ALL Order Forms to the Honorary Treasurer

Total \$ _____

'Cheque, Money Order or Direct Deposit by NetBank' (Confirm by email-Please)