



Follow The Sapper

1 FIELD SQUADRON GROUP  
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS  
QUEENSLAND INCORPORATED

## 'FOLLOW THE SAPPER'

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June 2018 Edition 30

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**A RED LETTER DAY**

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## Greetings fellow Sappers and Friends.

2018 has been a year of significant memorials. The Centenary of Armistice has been a major event where we commemorated the end of 'The Great War – The War to End All Wars'. Yet our Globe continues to seek and find conflict. We have paused for commemorations that include the 103rd anniversary of those fateful landings at Gallipoli and all the following conflicts we remember on ANZAC Day. Many have commemorated the 50th anniversary of the battles of FSB's Anderson, Coral and Balmoral where our Squadron Group played significant roles and suffered tragic losses.

My wife and I attended the unveiling of a Memorial in Ayr on 7 April that honoured the life and work of Lieutenant Colonel James Bourke, OAM. Most will know of Jim's work in Operation Aussies Home. Along with one of our own, Peter Aylett who is a much respected member of RAE, and a small team, these determined people found, recovered and repatriated our six missing in action service-men from the Vietnam War. It was good to meet with Peter at this unveiling. A very good friend of ours, Mr. Bill Tweddell (Chancellor of James Cook University), was the Australian Ambassador to Vietnam and has told me that having a diplomatic involvement in Operation Aussies Home, was one of the most humbling and rewarding matters of his time in that role. As a poignant aside, we have just returned from a brief stay in Cooktown. We were listening to music from Les Miserable's. The character Jean Valjean (Hugh Jackman) sings 'Bring Him Home' – the rescue of Marius. Listening to this song was something of a reminder of Jim Bourke's and Peter Aylett's commendable efforts to bring home at last, our lost warriors.



Photos left to right – Peter Aylett, Keith Payne VC and Graham Buchan. Peter Aylett and Derek Smith. Keith Payne VC, Brigadier Scott Winter, COMD 3 Bde and Major General Mark Kelly (ret'd) AO, DSC.

Most of us will have attended ANZAC Day commemorations. I attended the Dawn Service at the Avenue of Honour, Yungaburra. This beautiful place overlooks Lake Tinaroo. The time was about 5am and the Lake was shrouded with mist. There was a fine crowd and the Catafalque party was provided by C Squadron, 5th Aviation Regiment. The Squadron had a Chinook on display. There is something special about any Dawn Service but what struck me about this particular service was after the official wreaths were laid, two little girls placed posies of flowers at the Memorial. Standing back was a young lady wearing medals on her right side. This must have been the girls' Mum. There was no Dad. It chocked me up. I got quite a surprise when I noticed a chap sitting behind me. It was fellow RAE mate, Merv Lewis who now lives at Yungaburra.



Pictures left to right – The Avenue of Honour, the Catafalque Party and old Sapper mates Merv Lewis and Derek Smith

... Continued on the next page .

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Next stop was the ANZAC march at Malanda which was another big crowd. I found myself marching beside chaps who had served in 17 Construction Squadron RAE. Great to see Sappers. This service involved lots of local school children. It was such a joy to have little tackers coming up and asking about medals, then deciding which was their favourite. I had a few to pick from as I wore my Grandfather's (5th Australian Light Horse), my Dad's (1st Australian Paratroop Bn) and my own. The school kids laid wreaths at the Cenotaph, most of which were hand-made, probably in class. I have heard of ESO's criticising the involvement of children in ANZAC services. This old Sapper loves it. How else will the kids learn of our past military history?



Pictures left to right – Lining up for the Malanda march. Primary school children carrying the flags. On the march in Malanda 2018.

A couple of days later we pushed further north to Cooktown. It was such a beautiful town and I highly recommend a visit. While there we visited

the Memorial where Cooktown had held its ANZAC Day service. Our youngest son, Stephen, attended the Dawn Service in New York.

I trust our members have enjoyed their involvement in services here and abroad. Catching up with old mates is such a precious thing but remembering those we have lost is what such commemorations are all about. Age shall not weary them.

LEST WE FORGET.  
Editor: Derek Smith

Your erstwhile Editor kept diaries. This extract dated 25th April 1966 on board AS3051 John Monash. "Today is ANZAC Day. No service was held on board. The seas are still calm but we are getting quite a bit of rain. We should be in the Philippine Straits on Thursday. It will be good to see land again."

ANZAC Day 1969, I was in hospital at Vung Tau. However ANZAC Day 1971 I was in Nui Dat. This extract from the Nui Dat News. "It is also fitting to note that this is an ANZAC Day issue. Because of this we would like to pay tribute to the brave men and women of our country who have paid the supreme sacrifice . . . We pay a special tribute to those of this the 1st Field Squadron Group who have laid down their lives for their country."



Cooktown Memorial Park

Dawn Service. - New York

### Vale - 1 FD SQN GP RAE members:

SGT Ken Barker  
 SPR Rollie Cannon  
 SPR Matthew John Carroll  
 SPR James Wade  
 SPR "Nipper" Simpson  
 SPR Michael Earl Dunn  
 SIG Albert Land  
 CPL William Tonkinson  
 LTCOL Rex Rowe  
 SGT John Pendergast  
 SPR Peter Gammon  
 LTCOL Paddy Martin  
 WO1 John Scorse  
 WO1 Robert James Silk  
 SPR Steve Dunn  
 SPR Athol Leslie Busk

1 FD SQN GP 1970  
 1 FD SQN GP 1968/69  
 1 FD SQN 1968/69  
 1 FD TP Malaya 1959/61  
 1 FD SQN GP 1968/69  
 1 FD SQN GP 1968/69  
 1 FD SQN Borneo 1965  
 1 FD SQN GP 1966/67  
 1 FD SQN GP 1969/70  
 1 FD SQN 1966/67  
 1 FD SQN GP 1966/67  
 1 FD SQN 1966/67  
 AATTV 1967/68  
 1 FD SQN GP 1966/67  
 1 FD SQN 1968/69  
 1 FD SQN GP 1969/70

Passed away 22nd November 2017  
 Passed away 29th November 2017  
 Passed away 30th November 2017  
 Passed away 21st February 2018  
 Passed away 22nd February 2018  
 Passed away 24th February 2018  
 Passed away 27th February 2018  
 Passed away 11th October 2017  
 Passed away 6th February 2018  
 Passed away 13th March 2018  
 Passed away 23rd March 2018  
 Passed away 3rd May 2018  
 Passed away 7th May 2018  
 Passed away 16th May 2018  
 Passed away 11 June 2018  
 Passed away 25 June 2018



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## STOP PRESS – A RED LETTER DAY



G'Day my fellow Sappers,

Our Corps made history on 13 May 2018. The Sovereign's Banner of the RAE was paraded on ANZAC Parade in Canberra and received our first **Unit Citation for Gallantry**. Our "Colours" were paraded with those of 1RAR, 3RAR, A SQN 3 CAV REGT, C SQN 1 ARMD REGT and 12 FD REGT Royal REGT of Australian Artillery. These Corps/Regiments together with the 1ATF (Fwd) troops are officially recognised to wear the Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry as a result of our service at the Battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral from 12 May to 6 June 1968. Some Australian logistics detachments and allies from NZ and the USA are able to apply for it as well.

The **Unit Citation for Gallantry** is awarded to a unit for extraordinary gallantry in action.

The insignia of a **Unit Citation for Gallantry** is a gilt rectangular frame surrounding a deep green ribbon. The frame has a design of flames emanating from the outer edges of the frame to the centre.

Members of uniformed services wear the insignia in accordance with the dress rules of their Service. In civilian dress serving and ex-serving personnel generally continue to wear these insignia in the same way as they are worn in uniform.

The Sappers who were at the Battles will be issued with the award, including the Federation Star, and are to wear it on the right breast. Personnel who were members of the unit when an award was made wear a Federation Star in the centre of the ribbon and continue to wear the insignia after leaving the unit. Army and Air Force dress policy allows personnel who are subsequently posted to the unit to wear the insignia without the Federation Star, but only while actually posted to the unit.

### How do you apply for the UCG?

Go to [www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Content/Applications.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Content/Applications.asp)  
You can also contact the personnel that manage this on 1800 333 362.  
Complete the form and either respond electronically or print the form and mail it to:

Directorate of Honours and Awards  
CP2-1, Department of Defence  
PO Box 7952  
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Do not put anything in the PMS Key section (not applicable to us).  
If you find the on-line process too hard, just print the form out, write your details clearly and send it by snail-mail.

### How are we going to celebrate this award in the Association?

Keep your diary free for the weekend 23/24/25 August 2019. Register for the 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association reunion at Tweed Heads – see the registration form in this newsletter - and there will be a special event to recognise the participants in the battles by ceremonially pinning the UCG on to them. If you are not a recipient, come along anyway and help us to recognise the huge significance of this on our Corps of Royal Australian Engineers.

Please bring your UCG to the reunion so that we can give this extraordinary award the recognition it deserves.

The UCG for our deceased brothers will be applied for through the Association should the NOK authorise us to do so on their behalf.

Congratulations Engineers!

We have received the recognition as a Corps that we truly deserve.

#### Follow The Sapper

George Hulse - President  
25 May 2018



Unit Citation for Gallantry

### The Wannabees

I have had any number of guys trying to convince me that they were at the Battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral – but were not. A couple of these guys were not in-country when the battles occurred. So, I have compiled a nominal roll of the Sappers who were there and sent that to the Directorate of Honours and Awards for their due diligence if they need it. They have assured me that a due diligence check on all applicants will be conducted. This means that you can expect to wait for about three months before your UCG arrives in the mail.

The nominal roll includes the HQ and three Troops of Combat Engineers, 21 SPT TP, Plant TP, HQ TP drivers, our Padre and our RAEME WKSPS personnel.

### How Many Australian UCG Have Been Awarded?

Just six. They are these:

1. *No.1 Special Air Service Squadron. Awarded 27 November 2004*
2. *Special Air Service Regiment and 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando). Awarded 22 November 2006*
3. *Delta Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. Awarded 31 March 2010*
4. *HMAS Yarra II. Awarded 4 March 2014.*
5. *HQ 1 ATF (Fwd), 1RAR, 3RAR, A SQN 3 CAV REGT, C SQN 1 ARMD REGT, 12 FD REGT Royal REGT of Australian Artillery and 1 FD SQN RAE. Announced 13 May 2018.*
6. *The Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam. Announced 1 June 2018.*

Note: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/austraalanwarmemorial/albums/7215696800472895> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxelGy4sIGU> for images of the UCG Last Post Ceremony at the AWM on 13 May 2018. RAE Colour Party bearer is LT Ian Thompson – TP COMD 3 TP, 1 FD SQN, 1 CER.

## The Corps Banner on 13 May 2018

The photograph shows a line-up of famous people. The Chief of Army, LTGEN Angus Campbell AO DSC made a point of coming over to the engineers and congratulated us on receiving the **Unit Citation for Gallantry**. Standing behind the CA is the RSM of the Army WO1 Don Spinks OAM, toward the right of the photo are Brigadier David Wainwright DSC (HOC of RAE), next right is Major John Leathley (OC 1 FD SQN), next right is WO2 Mark Everingham (SSM 1 FD SQN), next right is WO1 Craig Egan (Command WO Joint Operations Command). The other uniformed person on the left of the photo is WO1 Stephen Di Tulio (RSM RAE). The veterans include Michael McCallum, Ben Benningfield, Bob Austen, Blue Rantall, Tom Hagan and George Hulse holding the 1 FD SQN flag.

The 1 FD SQN flag was graciously loaned to us for that day by the SSM 1 FD SQN, WO2 Mark Everingham. Mark had the flag flying over the 1 FD SQN Sappers in the Northern Territory for a while before it was exchanged for a newer version.

The flag is made up of the RAE Corps Colours overprinted with a large white number 1 in its centre. We loved it because it was not new. It had that touch of dust and character that symbolises the work-ethic of the Australian Sapper. It was our rallying point for the march on 13 May 2018 down ANZAC Parade in Canberra and our contingent followed our 1 FD SQN flag as if it were the Sovereign's Colour. I couldn't pinch it because Mark had his eye on it from the moment the parade ended to the time he got it back. It now resides with him in Darwin. He has agreed to loan it again for 'special' 1 FD SQN events. The second picture below is CA, George and others with the Banner.



## Sir Ninian Martin Stephen

15 June 1923 – 29 October 2017.

I did not know that Sir Ninian was a Sapper and what is more, a knee deep one. I served in 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE from 1964 to 1967. Some of our officers had seen service in World War 2 and probably knew Sir Ninian. Someone kindly sent me this on his World War 2 service.

In December 1941 following the end of his first year at University, Stephen enlisted in the CMF to serve part-time in the Melbourne University Regiment. Following Japan's entry into the war, Stephen completed full time military training from 8 December 1941 until 15 February 1942 and was then posted to the 10th Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery, serving in Western Australia. He subsequently transferred to the Royal Australian Engineers, serving in New Guinea from April to August 1944 with the 43rd Australian Water Transport Company. He then attended courses, culminating in a commissioning course in April 1945. As a lieutenant, he served in the 41st Australian Landing Craft Company in New Guinea and New Britain. In August 1945 he was posted to Labuan, Borneo, arriving after the war's end and serving there until January 1946. After returning to Australia, he was discharged on 5th February 1946.

## A Change In The Wind

3 TP of 1 FD SQN is going to be taken out of 1 FD SQN and placed in 9 FD SQN. This in response to a new battle space capability with mechanised forces. The principal Mechanised unit is 7RAR and 9 FD SQN is their affiliate engineer capability. The new combat equipment to be introduced into the Mechanised team is the Abraams Tank mounted bridge, along with some other equipment. 3 TP has been allocated the responsibility of operating this equipment in the battle space – hence the requirement to move 3 TP into 9 FD SQN. 1 FD SQN's affiliate unit is 5RAR – a Motorised unit. 1 FD SQN is mounted in the highly modified and upgraded M113 APC albeit it has been made longer than the 'tracks' we rode in Vietnam. And probably less noisy, smelly, uncomfortable and safer – but hey – third class riding is better than first class walking! This information is provided to our Association as a desire by CO 1CER to keep all ex-Sappers aware of what is going on in his REGT.

Thank you LTCOL Barry Mulligan.

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## President's Report June 2018

### Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry

1 FD SQN RAE has been awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry. This is the highest level of bravery that Australia can bestow on a unit of the ADF. There are two levels of Australian Citation bestowed on ADF units. They are:

1. **Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG):** The UCG is awarded to a unit for extraordinary gallantry in action. The word "gallantry" comes from the French word (*galanterie*) meaning courage, bravery, daring, valour, heroism. In this context, it is the highest level of courage to be awarded by Australia on an ADF unit for an act of exceptional bravery on the battlefield. It is designed to be awarded to a unit and for that unit to emblazon its Corps or Regimental Colours with a streamer signifying the award.
2. **Meritorious Unit Citation (MUC):** The MUC is awarded to a unit for sustained outstanding service (not necessarily courageous acts) in warlike operations. MUC worn by RAE personnel have been the result of engineers being a part of another combat team that was involved in sustained outstanding service in an Operational area. RAE personnel, or units, received it because they were attached/embedded as part of a major unit that delivered exceptional operational service over a period of time, and because the major unit was awarded the MUC, the attached/embedded units in that Operation also receive it.

The UCG and the MUC are worn as distinctly coloured patches on the right breast. Details on who and where to wear the UCG are given in this edition of Follow The Sapper.

The take-home message here is simply this: **The UCG has been awarded to 1 FD SQN RAE for acts of exceptional courage in the face of overwhelming enemy attacks between 12 May and 6 June 1968 at FSPBs Coral and Balmoral. This is in our own right. Not as an attached or embedded entity of another major unit. This is the first and only award that our Corps has received at this exceptionally high level, and we should be proud of it!**

And we should also be grateful for it.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the following people for their input into the submission for the UCG that eventually won the day:

1. *The Coral Balmoral Veterans Working Group consisting of Gary "Pepe" Prendergast (passed away during the work-up of the submission), Neil Weekes AM MC (passed away during the work-up of the submission), Alan "Jack" Parr (the pivotal person of the submission) and myself. We campaigned for every unit involved in the battles to be awarded the UCG. In support of this we submitted a 224 page manuscript supported by supplementary notes, maps and diagrams.*
2. *The Honourable Dan Tehan MP – the then Minister for Defence Personnel who directed the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) to open a public inquiry into the battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral. Jack and I visited Dan in his Canberra office in 2017 and all we asked him for was a 'fair go'. He gave us all the time we needed to get our message across and Jack and I noted that he listened intently. Without Dan Tehan's intervention, the UCG may never have happened.*

3. *The Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) whose open mindedness and thorough, meticulous and patient work lead them to the findings and recommendations that convinced the Malcolm Turnbull Government to award the UCG. Their names are: Mr Mark Sullivan AO, Mr Graham Mowbray, Mr David Ashley AM and Air Vice-Marshal John Quaiife AM (Retd).*
4. *Countless numbers of individual submissions, government politicians who supported our mission, CPL Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC MG, and a host of media and TV personalities who gave voice to our cause.*
5. *The on-going audio-visual magic of Doctor Leonie Jones of the University of Southern Queensland (currently with Griffith University). Leonie has produced a number of documentaries, video presentations, and audio-visual short run clips on the battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral. So impressed were the 1 FD SQN GP RAE lads at our valedictory dinner in Canberra on 13 May 2018, that we conferred on Dr Jones the rank of 'Honorary Sapper'. OC 1 FD SQN, Major John Leathley, is working up an appropriate promotion garb for her and we intend to formalise her promotion from PhD to Sapper during our reunion at Tweed Heads in August 2019.*
6. *The Department of Veterans Affairs and Defence for their magnificent contribution to the success of the parade on ANZAC Parade and the lunch afterwards on 13 May 2018.*
7. *The Australian War Memorial, under the brilliant stewardship of Doctor Brendan Nelson AO and his team for the unforgettable and very moving Last Post Ceremony conducted at the AWM at last-light on 13 May 2018, in respect for our 26 brothers lost and the 109 WIA at the battles 50 years ago.*

The award of the UCG is carried on our Corps Colours – also called The Sovereign's Colour.

Every Sapper past, present and in the future can be justifiably proud of the legacy that has been created by 1 FD SQN GP RAE during the Vietnam War. Our unwritten mantra at the battle of FSPB Coral was "No Surrender – No Retreat". It reinforces the fact that wearing the black lanyard and the RAE hat badge are not just for personal apparel. They are the backbone of our Corps and the UCG gives us another reason for Sappers to march with a spring in every step!

### Battle Honours, Theatre Honours, Honour Titles and Honour Distinctions

The submission mentioned in the previous edition of "Follow The Sapper" was sent to the Directorate of Honours and Awards and the Australian War Memorial. The DHA is still considering the content of it and Dr Brendan Nelson likes some of the ideas that were raised in it. More to follow.

### Engineer Monument to WWI Sappers in France

I met with the Mayor of Amiens in France, Madame Brigitte Foure in February 2018, and we discussed the idea of a monument, in her City, to all Australian engineer units that served during the Great War. She approved in principle the idea and appointed a project manager to investigate the feasibility and location for such a monument.

... Continued on the next page.

Continued from page 5.

The monument is to be designed in the form of a bridge as an icon of engineering. It will have two assignments. One is to provide an everlasting memorial to every Australian engineer unit that served in WWI and at the same time, to provide a useful piece of infrastructure for the people and visitors to Amiens in bridging one of the numerous water crossings in the City.

I became aware of the work of a vibrant historical society in Amiens Queensland. And yes, the town in Queensland, near Stanthorpe on the Granite Belt, is named after its namesake in France. There is a letter of friendship that has been signed by officials in both areas and a robust intention to keep the ties between them active. Your Association committee thought that we in the RAE could build a sister bridge in Amiens (Australia) to complement the one in France. These two identical bridges would symbolise the linking of two nations in coming together in the name of a great cause – freedom. I met the head of the Amiens (Australia) historical society, Professor Roger Willis, and he is keen to see such an idea go forward. Roger is searching for a conspicuous position for the bridge in Amiens (Australia) and will let us know of his preferences.

I will visit Amiens (France) on 8 August 2018 and keep the idea moving forward with our French friends. The RAE HOC, Brigadier David Wainwright DSC is interested in the 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association project and is supportive of it. Financial backing for the idea will be another challenge, but we will move into that space when we have solid estimates of the financial requirement to work with. Watch this space.

## Reunion 2019

Our reunion for 23/24/25 August 2019 at Tweed Heads is set to be a meeting of celebration as well as remembering our lost brothers. We will be pinning the UCG on to our Sappers who served at the battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral, promoting a Dr to the rank of Sapper, and meeting with our mates from past and present conflicts. The registration form is enclosed in this edition of Follow The Sapper.

## Membership Renewals

Our annual membership renewals are due on 1 July. May I ask you to renew your membership so that we can continue with our projects, produce the newsletter and keep faith with the legal and administrative costs associated with an incorporated organisation such as ours. Every member on our committee is an Honorary volunteer (we don't get paid).

George Hulse  
President 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association  
June 2018



## A Memorial to Explosive Detection Dogs

My wife Rhonda is a volunteer for National Trust. She receives the Trust News. The article below was printed in one of the editions. It was written by Peter Dowling, Heritage Consultant Di-Petaia Research. Some of our readers may have seen it but I reckon it is worth sharing and I just know President George will love it.

“Animals have been used in military campaigns for many hundreds of years. Horses, ponies, donkeys, mules, pigeons and even elephants and reindeer have been used for transporting equipment, carrying messages to and from the front lines and taking fighting troops into the midst of battle. The Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) used dogs in the trenches of France during the First World War and in 1944 the 1st Australian Dog Platoon, RAE, began to use search dogs. In modern day conflicts Explosive Detection Dogs (EDDs) and their military handlers have provided critical support to the Australian Defence Forces in peace-keeping and conflict regions during operations in South East Asia and the Gulf countries. The dogs help their handlers find the treacherous improvised explosive devices (EUDs) (sic) ammunition and weapons.

Strong relations develop between the human handler and their dogs and this deeply emotive bonding is expressed in the bronze sculpture of soldier and dog. The memorial suggests the end of a busy, dangerous but successful day detecting hidden mines and making the operations just a bit safer for the combat troops who follow. Both dog and handler can now relax and enjoy warm contact with each other.

The dog is atop a rocky outcrop which depicts the variety of foreign landscapes in which both canine and human work. At the base of the sculpture is a tunnel with embedded paw prints which depicts the rigorous training the dog must undertake. To the side, behind the soldier is a duffel bag with a ubiquitous tennis ball on top ready to be thrown and retrieved.

The memorial titled Elevation of the Sense was created by Ewan Coates and commissioned by Doug Thompson and his late wife, Monique. It was modelled on Sapper Darren Smith of 2nd Combat

Engineer Regiment (2 CER) and his beloved dog, Herbie, who were killed in the Mirabad Valley, Afghanistan together with Sapper Jacob Moerland, by a remotely detonated mine they had detected and were approaching.

The memorial is a dedication to all the dogs and their handlers who work in the perilous situation of explosive detection. On the base of the memorial are inscribed those dogs who have died. Razz 21 Sep 2007, Herbie with Sapper Darren Smith 2 CER 07 Jun 2010, Merlin 31 Aug 2001, Andy 23 Nov 2007, Nova 23 Oct 2009, Lucky 04 Jul 2011.

A plaque on the wall behind the sculpture is inscribed with an Ode to the Explosive Detection Dogs:

*My eyes are your eyes to  
Watch and protect yours,  
My ears are your ears to detect  
Evil minds in the dark,  
My nose is your nose to scent  
The danger of your domain.  
And so you may live, my  
Life is also your life.*



(Source: Trust News Vol 10 No 1 2016 page 20)

## 1 Field Squadron Report

### 1 Troop

1 Tp has sore shoulders this year. Carrying the SQN through its Ready Battle Group (RBG) and Emergency Support Force (ESF) commitment has been a challenging task, but 1 Tp has proved once again that it's got the goods to persevere through hardship and come out strong.

The year started early in January with commitments to both RBG and ESF. Early battle prep saw that we were ready deploy at short notice. This proved invaluable in the months to come, with constant call-outs at ridiculous hours of the morning.

A quick transition saw us move into the first exercise of the year. 1 Tp Combat Teamed under B Coy, 5 RAR for CTC Ex WARFIGHTER which took us east to Townsville, as a part of the RCT high-readiness call-out. After taking advantage of 3 Bde's hospitality for the week and providing the local Hungry Jacks with an endless stream of customers, we were airlifted by MRH90 to our destination in the High Range Training Area; and so started the long week of IMT's and resilience training. 1 Tp was pushed to their limits, conducting multiple Sect through to CT level patrols and attacks through harsh scrub and rocky terrain by day and night. We had two choices, cry about it or laugh about it, and 1 Tp chose the latter.

Another short turn around saw the Tp move into Ex GOANNA SHAKEOUT. With 1 Tp already thoroughly shaken from Ex WARFIGHTER, Ex GOANNA SHAKEOUT was a good bit of respite, focusing on IMTs and Engineering skills at a Sect and Tp level. The Sect Comds had their work cut out for them, having to conduct reconnaissance and send reports that most hadn't touched since Subject 4. It was a good way to blow out some of the cobwebs and train and teach skills that we rarely touch. The culminating activity was an overnight serial where 1 Tp rigged the 1CER Bailey Bridge to blow.



1 Tp hosting a multi-national football match during Ex TIGERS RUN

Immediately after setting our charges, we stripped it out and slipped into our MOPP gear. The remainder of the morning (if you can call 2AM "morning") was spent conducting a Personnel Decontamination Station – SPR Smyth taking the lead in setting it up. The PDS went smoothly, however seeing everyone stripped down like that, we might want to consider doing a little more cardio.



1 Tp conducting early morning PDS

1TP attached to B Coy, 5RAR for the conduct of Ex TIGERS RUN and SOUTHERN JACKAROO at MBTA. These two exercises saw the latest MRF-D rotation attach a Squad of CEs to 1TP. Our MRF-D attachments made themselves at home, and by the end of the first day they were part of our family. The exercises culminated with 1 Tp attaching Sects to support the US Army and Japanese Army CTs assisting in a combined arms live fire.

The last major field exercise saw 1TP pushed out to Shoalwater Bay for Ex TALISMAN SABRE as the initial enemy party and, later, the white role civilian role players. After arriving at the picturesque Stanage Bay, we immediately started ripping it up, building a defensive position overlooking the beach. With the pits dug and another week left until the main force landed, we set about winning over the locals.



1 Fd members completing the obstacle course during Ex GS

We conducted routine "reconnaissance" of the beach that definitely didn't involve swimming and eating coconuts. 1TP transitioned to civilian role players for the remaining time, enabling 3 Bde certification as the ready Bde.

2017 has been a rollercoaster of a time. 1 Tp has proven to be first by name and nature, and it has been a pleasure to work alongside the finest men and women that the service has to offer.

#### Where are they now?

*LCPL Powers retired to his new life at Bunnings Warehouse.*

*SPR Lee has moved into the SME Transport yard. After crashing the duty wheels, the Regiment thought he could use a little bit of practice.*

*SPR Dallavanzi is now an entertainer in London.*

*SPR Becker is upset about his new posting to 6 ESR. Apparently 2 weeks out field a year is too long. And the cans just aren't as cold as they were in 1 Tp. You're joking?!*

*SPR Hogan was last seen on a plane to Mexico. He hasn't been heard from since.*

#### Best on ground

*SPR Aspey- for reading every Pam imaginable... out field. Cool.*

#### Honourable mentions

*LT Ivers- for providing good training value until exactly 1600, Monday to Friday.*

*LCPL Magro- for writing up a piquet list for a night we didn't need piquet.*

*SPR Rizk- a lot.*

*SPR Lewitzka- for demonstrating Steyr drills to the Americans by dropping his barrel, receiver AND the bolt.*

Corporal Dugand

Continued from page 9.

## 2 Troop

2017 seen highs and lows for 2 Troop. We committed to provide support to contingency force elements, which has seen the troop fractured for most of the year's activities, as we helped to prop up the 1 Troop contingent of the Ready Combat Team.

The first exercise of the year was Ex GOANNA SHAKEOUT which saw 2 Troop involved in multiple serials that achieved the desired outcome in and around Robertson Barracks, and saw CPL David and 5 Section take out the coveted best Section trophy.

Ex TIGERS RUN was next in order of march and saw 2 Troop members conducting and intimately supporting the execution of urban live fire training conducted in MBTA through mobility support and construction.

The next Exercise in the line-up was Ex SOUTHERN JACKAROO. 2 Troop's main effort

was the supporting of 5 RAR Combat Teams as well as the Marine Corps. We also worked to provide BNS support and the provision of search teams. This saw 2 Troop closely tie in with the USMC, having several of their Marines attached for the duration of the exercise, allowing for cross pollination of procedures and a lot of laughs along the way.

2 Troop was also a headline act in Ex TALISMAN SABRE which saw the Troop act in a hybrid enemy threat for the earlier exercise, then switch roles to civilian role players. It was during this time that 2 Troop inadvertently halted the entire US Navy advance south through the select application and removal of key USN and USMC cryptographic items. This act was of great value to 1 Bde, as delay of advancing enemy forces was at that stage was untenable by the whole of the Bde. 2 Troop has also provided support numerous other activities across Army.

A Section and a BNS team was deployed to support Battle Block 2A of the Royal Military College Training continuum in Cultana, which saw the search team work its self into the ground providing the best capability it could. The BNS team had great success and it is safe to say everything went off with a bang (pun intended).

As I write this we also have a Section down at the School of Military Engineering supporting the testing of the new footbridge rolled out as part of the Land 155 procurement.

### Best on ground

*SPR John "Sippy" Broadbridge is well deserving of this due to his consistent enthusiasm despite being heavily tasked all year, and enduring much self-inflicted adversity.*

Sergeant Guthridge

## 3 Troop

Ex GOANNA SHAKEOUT was the first hit out of the year with a focus on Section and Troop level engineer training conducted over a week period. Members participated in MGB builds, CBRN personnel decon stations, reserve demolition tasks, engineer recon reports and Section attacks.

### Tigers Run/Southern Jackaroo

Ex TIGER RUN was the first field exercise for the year and saw the troop providing Sections to support the other troops within the Squadron with the majority supporting 1 Troop. Ex Tigers Run was a good opportunity to work closely with USMC Engineers.

Ex SOUTHERN JACKAROO saw the US Army and the Japanese Ground Self Defence Force (JGSDF) come to Darwin for a two week exercise; this also saw the Japanese visit Darwin for the first time in 75 years. 8 Section had the opportunity of supporting the JGSDF which provided valuable experience due to the language barrier and cultural difference but worked out well and culminated with a company live defence range.

### Talisman Sabre/Koolindong

Ex TALISMAN SABRE saw 8 Section attached to Bravo Company for TS(N) and Ex Koolindong. 8 Section provided Manoeuvrability and Survivability with search, breaching tasks, urban clearance, and force protection in the way of wire obstacles. This exercise was a good opportunity to work in a Combat Team environment with snipers, recon, JFTs, engineers, DFSW, infantry Company and a Platoon of MRF-D. Team Ubique (Engineers and Artillery) enabled the Combat Team victory with most confirmed kills throughout both exercises. 8 Section got the opportunity to attach to India and Kilo Company from MRF-D and work with the CAB engineers trading TTPs, SOPs and experiences.



3 Tp constructing an MGB

3 Troop again combined with 1 Troop for TS(E) and provided OPFOR and civilian role players for the exercise. The first half of the Ex saw the troop operating in Stanage Bay providing ISR for the OPFOR Bde and struggling to maintain morale with extensive ocean views. The second half of the Ex saw the troop provide the human terrain element for 3 Bde and had front row seats to observe the infamous Raspberry Creek Massacre.

Post TS, 3 Troop entered Reset and the beginning of a period dedicated towards NPSRs including a Section to support RMC, promotion and specialist courses, as well as detailed maintenance on vehicles and equipment.

### Members farewelled from 3Tp in 2017

LT McCarthy | SGT Mouat | CPL Donaldson  
CPL Luck | LCPL Franks | LCPL Reynolds  
LCPL Aldridge | SPR Colleran | SPR Jones  
SPR Room | SPR Wade.



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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 [dsmith@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dvsmith@ozemail.com.au).

## Snippet from Jim Weston.

Our young Jim is pictured with his mate Pete Frost who served with D Company, 4 RAR in 1971/72.



This article was published in the Otago Times. Thanks Jim.

## 1 Field Squadron Report

... continued from previous page

### Ex Southern Jackaroo

Ex SOUTHERN JACKAROO was a combined joint exercise which saw four separate combat teams conduct various task throughout MBTA, with the focus being on interoperability, and international engagement.

1 Field Squadron divided itself into four Sections, and each Section attached to a different Combat Team. Integral to each Section we also took a brick of Engineers from USMC, so that we could share knowledge and build relationships at every level.

CPL Albion leading 8 Section from 3 Troop overcame linguistic and cultural boundaries to provide engineering support to the Japanese Combat Team. CPL David and 5 Section had a more familiar arrangement working alongside Delta Company 5 RAR.

### Ex Talisman Sabre

Ex TALISMAN SABRE 17 was the culminating exercise for 1 Fd Sqn in 2017, and also signified the end of a busy READY cycle. This exercise let the Troops perform a less intense function than previous iterations – OPFOR for the amphibious landing which was the Bde's Main Effort and civilian role players. 1 Fd Sqn consolidated down again to two Troops, and departed from Robertson Barracks to Shoalwater Bay.

The initial phase of the exercise turned out to be the most kinetic, where 1 and 2 Troop adapted to living as Kamarian Motorised Infantry. Situated in the picturesque Stange Bay, pattern of life was established early with defensive positions atop of the most premium ocean views and regular reconnaissance patrols of the beach. The

CPL Dugand and 1 Section provided support to the US Army, and CPL Magro took 4 Section to team up with the always enthusiastic Keystone Company of the USMC.

Whilst the Sections were out supporting the nations interests, the Troop headquarters elements provided BNS support across Mount Bunday. 2 Troop HQ managed to support the local back burn effort, by condemning around a square kilometre of the training area to bush fire, which considering the conditions, was a success.

Despite the fires, the four Combat Teams continued engage in a round robin of activities. There were complex ambush serials where, convoys were targeted by IED's and small arms. The favourite activity on the exercise circuit was the Airsoft practice at the UOTF.

Kamarian Forces also developed a working relationship with the local populace that would come to assist in ISR. The highlight of this phase would come only after a few days in position, with a 1 Troop Section clearing patrol compromising and destroying a small contingent of BLUEFOR Naval Clearance Divers. 1 Fd Sqn culminated it's involvement in Stange Bay as the OPFOR for the Amphibious Ready Element landing with a withdrawal under pressure before transitioning to civilians in vicinity of Raspberry Creek and surrounding supply routes.

The Troops took to civilian roles all too well, with the construction of churches, dining rooms and a Crossfit Gym in the simulated town of Tetta. This provided targeting

The activity culminated in a live fire defensive range. Two Combat Teams up per serial, with Tanks, Javelin and Artillery support, proceeded to fire the Brigade's yearly allocation of ammunition into the side of a hill to halt an enemy advance.

The exercise a success overall, in what was a trying time for the Brigade. In particular, it served as an excellent opportunity for the engineers to bond with the visiting engineers of the USMC, a relationship that hopefully can be built on with each marine rotation.

Best on ground for this activity was Staff Sergeant Cox (USMC), for providing freedom of movement throughout the AO by bribing traffic control points with orange juice and fresh fruit.

complexities for the Coalition BLUEFOR where 1 Brigade REDFOR used to their full advantage. Day-to-day life was shaken with Indirect Fire missions, constant UAV surveillance, and at times, collateral damage. Despite the slow tempo for many of the soldiers, the civilian roleplaying provided a perspective that not many have considered when working in a complex environment.

Overall, Ex TALISMAN SABRE 17 became an operational and strategic learning curve with the 'big picture' more in display than normal BLUEFOR participation. Added to that, many now have ties to the locals of Stange Bay and houses to stay at for their next RLLT holiday.



1 Field Squadron Group  
 Royal Australian Engineers Qld Inc.  
 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> August 2019  
**2019 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 your **'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 9th August 2019**

(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:  
 2019 Reunion Treasurer  
 1 FD Sqn Gp RAE Qld Inc.  
 P O Box 236 Raymond Terrace NSW 2324  
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Surname Ms \_\_\_\_\_ First Names \_\_\_\_\_  
(Family Name) Mr \_\_\_\_\_ (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. ) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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NO CASH IN MAIL PLEASE -

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**Location:** Harvey Bay Queensland.

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Beverly Thearle – rossnbev@hotmail.com  
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